

Chapter 4 The Union of the Two Deities

[The two deities Izanaki no mikoto and Izanami no mikoto] descended from the heavens (1) to that island, saw there (2) a heavenly pillar (3), and [also] saw there a broad-spanned hall (4). [Izanaki] thereupon questioned his sister-spouse Izanami, saying, “How is your body (5) formed?”

“My body is formed, indeed it is formed,” Izanami replied. “Yet there is one place that is not completely formed.”

Izanaki then proclaimed, “My body is formed, indeed it is formed, yet there is one place that is formed in excess. I would like to insert the part of my body that is formed in excess into the part of your body that is not completely formed to close it up and give birth to the land (6). How about giving birth [to the land together]?”

“That would be good,” Izanami answered.

Izanaki then proclaimed, “So let us, you and me, go around this heavenly pillar, meet (7), and join our two parts (8).”

They agreed, whereupon [Izanaki] proclaimed, “You go around from the right and meet me; I will go around from the left and meet you (9).”

Having made this promise, they went around [the pillar], and Izanami spoke first. “Oh, what a handsome man!” she said.

Izanaki spoke after [her]. “Oh, what a beautiful woman!” he said.

“The woman spoke first (10); this is not good (11),” Izanaki declared to his sister-spouse after each had spoken.

Nevertheless, they [went into] a secluded place (12) and engaged [with each other] (13). The child they bore thereby was a leech-child (14). They put this child on a reed boat (15) and let it float away. Next they bore Awashima 淡嶋 island (16). This is not counted among their children either.

Thereupon Izanaki and Izanami took counsel together. “The children we have borne are not good,” they said. “Let us go and report this to the heavenly deities.”

Together they went up to attend on the heavenly deities and seek their command (17). At the command of the heavenly deities, a *futomani* (18) divination was performed (19). “It was because the woman spoke first that the result was not good,” the heavenly deities proclaimed. “Descend again and speak anew.” Izanaki and Izanami then (20) descended and went once again around the heavenly pillar in the same manner as before.

Text Notes

1. “Descended from the heavens” (*amorimashite* 天降坐而)

Several terms expressing the idea of “descend from heaven” and suggesting possible readings of the two graphs 天降 can be found in ancient texts. *Man'yōshū* poems include the phrases *amoriimashite* 安母理座而 (poem 199), *amorimashi* 安母里麻之 (poem 4254), and *amakudari* 安座久太利 (poem 4094).¹ Based on these examples, both the readings *amori* and *amakudari* would be possible in the present instance. *Amori* is an abbreviation of *amaori*. From his examination of the examples in the *Man'yōshū*, Motosawa Masafumi 本澤雅史 concludes that it tends to use the verb *oru* when emphasizing the result of the act of descending and *kudaru* when emphasizing the process of descent. He thus favors reading 天降 in the *Kojiki* as *amakudaru* or *amakudasu*.² Since the verb *kudaru* has both transitive and intransitive forms, a transitive reading of the compound 天降 as *amakudasu* is theoretically possible. The alternative option of *amoru*, however, exists only as an intransitive verb; there is no transitive form *amorosu*. If some form of *kudaru* is to be used, the intransitive mode *amakudaru* would thus seem more appropriate. The Kanekata-bon 兼方本 manuscript of the *Nihon shoki*, on the other hand, includes the gloss *amakutashimatsuramu* for the graphs 天降.

Mōri Masamori 毛利正守 points out a difference in the *Kojiki*'s handling of the graphs 天降 depending on whether or not the entity descending is linked to the imperial lineage. In describing the descent of imperial antecedent deities such as Izanaki and Izanami, Oshihomimi, and Ninigi, it uses the distinctive compound verb *amoru/amakudaru* 天降. In the case of other deities such as Susanoo and Amewakahiko, however, it treats the verb “descend” and the noun “heaven” as separate units in the form *ame yori kudaru* 自天降.³

2. “Heavenly pillar” (*ame no mihashira* 天之御柱)

Opinions divide as to whether the heavenly pillar is part of the broad-spanned hall mentioned subsequently or a separate entity. The first variant of the fourth section of the *Nihon shoki* Age of Deities chapter states that the two deities “built” (化作) a broad-spanned hall and then “erected” (化堅) a heavenly pillar.⁴ In that instance the pillar is presented as a separate element. The *Kojiki*'s description of the two deities' going around the pillar would also seem to depict the hall and the pillar as two separate entities. Another issue is whether the broad-spanned hall should be equated with *mito* 美斗 (“august place,” “august parts”) in the subsequent phrase *mito no maguwai* 美斗能麻具波比, or

¹ Kojima et al., *Man'yōshū*, SNKBZ 6, p. 131; 9, pp. 256, 347.

² Motosawa, “*Kojiki* ni okeru ‘kō’ ‘kō’ no kundoku ni tsuite,” p. 124.

³ Mōri, “‘*Kojiki*’ no hyōki o megutte: ‘Jitenkō’ to ‘tenkō.’”

⁴ Kojima et al., *Nihon shoki*, SNKBZ 2, pp. 28–29.

seen as the “place” (*to*) in the parallel term *kumido* 久美度, the “hidden-away place” where the two deities seclude themselves to begin procreation. (See text notes 4, 8, 12, and 13 below.)

Further comment: The pillar figures as a key element in the process leading to the procreation of the land, but the *Kojiki* does not describe it in any detail. Matsumae Takeshi 松前健 sees it as a “cosmic center” that connects heaven and earth and symbolizes the “axis of the universe,” a thesis that clearly has been influenced by the concepts of “cosmic pillar” or “universal pillar” (*axis mundi*) developed by Mircea Eliade.⁵ In his book *The Sacred and the Profane*, Eliade notes that in many regions of the world people plant sacred stakes and worship them. He sees in all these pillars the symbolism of a “central point” that produces a habitable world around itself. They also convey the idea of an *axis mundi* supporting the world, as with the Yggdrasil tree in German mythology.⁶

The procreation of the land and deities in the *Kojiki* similarly takes place in the vicinity of the heavenly pillar. In this sense, it, too, can be held to exemplify Eliade’s *axis mundi*, the central site that produces the world. Looking at the myths from the comparative standpoint of the history of religions brings out the pillar’s symbolism. A comparative approach also alerts us to the need to explore the pillar’s relationship to aspects of Japanese folklore, such as tree worship, the ritual of the sacred pillar (*shin no mihashira* 心御柱) performed at some Shinto shrines, the “pillar-riding ritual” (*onbashira sai* 御柱祭) of the Suwa Shrine 諏訪神社, or the series of oral traditions known as “legends of planting a walking stick” (*tsuetate densetsu* 杖立て伝説).

Hirafuji Kikuko, *Comparative Mythology*

3. “Saw there” (*mitate/mitatsu* 見立)

There is no established consensus about the meaning of this term. Hirata Atsutane and Saigō Nobutsuna interpret it as Izanaki and Izanami having represented something as analogous to a heavenly pillar.⁷ Tsugita Uruu, Nakajima Etsuji, and Shikida Toshiharu take it to mean that they erected the pillar after having personally surveyed the situation.⁸ Kanda Hideo and Ōta Yoshimaro hold that the graph 見 is an abbreviation of 現 (*utsutsu*, “actual”) and that the digraph 見立 (which they read as *utsushikutate*) means to actually erect a pillar.⁹ Maruyama Rinpei 丸山林平 interprets 見 as a phonetic substitution for the honorific 御.¹⁰ Ozaki Satoakira 尾崎知光 and Kurano Kenji take the digraph to mean erecting a pillar after carefully selecting the place.¹¹ Referring to the

⁵ Matsumae, *Nazotoki Nihon shinwa*, pp. 54–55.

⁶ Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, pp. 32–47; Eliade, *Traité d’histoire des religions*, pp. 238–39.

⁷ Hirata Atsutane, *Koshiden*, vol. 1, pp. 145, 160; Saigō, *Kojiki chūshaku*, vol. 1, p. 108.

⁸ Tsugita, *Kojiki shinkō*, p. 30; Nakajima, *Kojiki hyōshaku*, p. 35; Shikida, *Kojiki hyōchū*, p. 309.

⁹ Kanda and Ōta, *Kojiki*, vol. 1, p. 177n10. Kanda takes the same position in his *Shinchū Kojiki*, p. 14n9.

¹⁰ Maruyama Rinpei, *Kōchū Kojiki*, p. 6n5.

¹¹ Ozaki Satoakira, *Zenchū Kojiki*, p. 23n9; Kurano, *Kojiki zenchūshaku*, vol. 2, p. 93.

first variant of the fourth section of the *Nihon shoki* Age of Deities chapter, which uses the graphs 化作 / 化堅 (both traditionally read here as *mitatsu*), Ogiwara Asao interprets it as creating a pillar out of nothing.¹² Takeda Yūkichi 武田祐吉 and Nakamura Hirotooshi interpret it as suddenly bringing forth a pillar where nothing had been before.¹³ Nishimiya Kazutami sees it as meaning to carefully select an appropriate tree and make it into a pillar.¹⁴ Kōnoshi Takamitsu and Yamaguchi Yoshinori hold that it means to discover or discern.¹⁵

Several scholars have undertaken more extended treatments of this issue. Orikuchi Shinobu 折口信夫 developed the idea of *mitate* (metaphoric association) as a principle of Japanese culture. It is not, he held, that the two deities actually erected a pillar. Rather, they honored something by treating it as a pillar. The passage illustrates how in antiquity the Japanese viewed things associatively and made metaphoric use of objects.¹⁶ Building on Orikuchi's hypothesis, Nishida Nagao elaborated on the implications of the graphs 化作 and 化堅 figuring in the first *Nihon shoki* variant, which commentators have often used as a reference point in interpreting this passage. Chinese translations of Buddhist texts, he points out, used the digraph 化作 (“generate,” “transform”) to render terms that originally carried the sense of thinking of a nonexistent object as if it really exists and, conversely, thinking of an existent object as if it did not.¹⁷

Countering this line of argument, Mōri Masamori takes the position that *tatsu* means to erect or construct, but holds that the term “to see” would not be attached to a word signifying construction. In his view the graph 見 must be a phonetic substitution for the honorific 御.¹⁸ Holding that the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* likely derive from a single source since they share common content, Nakamura Hirotooshi posits that this source probably used the Chinese terms 化作 and 化堅 retained in the first *Nihon shoki* variant. The *Kojiki* compilers, he proposes, adopted *mitate* 見立 as the Japanese equivalent. As noted above, he takes the term to mean that Izanaki and Izanami brought the pillar and hall suddenly into being where nothing had existed previously.¹⁹ Having reviewed these theories, Yajima Izumi 矢嶋泉 rejects Kōnoshi and Yamaguchi's interpretation of *mitate* as meaning to discover. The act of looking, he asserts, has a magic power to make things materialize, and this is the case here. Izanaki and Izanami produced the heavenly pillar and the broad-spanned hall through the very act of looking.²⁰

¹² Ogiwara, *Kojiki, Jōdai kayō*, p. 53n12. See Kojima et al., *Nihon shoki*, SNKBZ 2, pp. 28–29.

¹³ Takeda and Nakamura, *Shintei Kojiki*, p. 22n6; Nakamura, *Shinpan Kojiki*, p. 24n6.

¹⁴ Nishimiya, *Kojiki*, p. 28n3.

¹⁵ Kōnoshi and Yamaguchi, *Kojiki chūkai*, vol. 2, pp. 88–98; Yamaguchi and Kōnoshi, *Kojiki*, p. 32n22.

¹⁶ Orikuchi, “Shintō ni arawareta minzoku ronri,” pp. 32–33.

¹⁷ Nishida, “‘Mitate’ no minzoku ronri: Orikuchi Shinobu-hakase no idaisa,” p. 143.

¹⁸ Mōri, “Kojiki no ‘mitate’ ni tsuite,” pp. 104–106.

¹⁹ Nakamura, “Mitate.”

²⁰ Yajima, “Kojiki ‘mitatsu’ shōkō,” p. 30.

Within the *Kojiki* the graph 見 means “to see,” while 立 is used for a person or object standing somewhere, or to express the idea of “emerge” or “appear.” The combination 見立 conveys that “when [someone] looked, [something] was standing there.” The implication would seem to be either, as posited by Kōnoshi and Yamaguchi, Izanaki and Izanami discovered a pillar and hall standing there, or, as proposed by Yajima, they brought them into being through the act of looking.

4. “Broad-spanned hall” (*yahirodono* 八尋殿)

This term means a spacious, large hall (structure). The element *ya* 八 (“eight”) here does not indicate an actual number; it is a figurative expression intended to convey spaciousness and largeness. “Eight” does not always have this meaning in the *Kojiki*, however. *Hiro* 尋 is said to be the span between a person’s two outstretched arms.²¹ As mentioned in text note 2, this hall can be seen as the “august place” (*mito*) or “hidden-away place” (*kumido*) where Izanaki and Izanami seclude themselves to engage in intercourse.

5. “Your body” (*na ga mi* 汝身)

Possible readings of the graph 汝 (“you,” “your”) include *na*, *nare*, and *imashi*. Kobayashi Yoshinori 小林芳規 argues that early Heian glosses largely adopt the reading *namuji* for this graph; there are instances of the readings *imashi* or *kimi*, but no examples of *na* or *nare*.²² Accepting Kobayashi’s point, Kōnoshi Takamitsu and Yamaguchi Yoshinori hold that *na* or *nare* likewise may not have been used as readings for the graph 汝 in the preceding ancient period as well. They thus read it in this passage as *namuchi*.²³ Since the graph occurs here in close conjunction with the parallel terms *a/are* and *wa/ware* used for “I” and “my,” we have opted to read it *na* or *nare* (“you,” “your”).

6. “Give birth to the land” (*kuni o uminasamu* 生成国土)

Motoori Norinaga holds that here the digraph 国土 should be read *kuni*.²⁴ It occurs in three other places in the *Kojiki*. The first is in the preface, in the sentence, “A council was held by the Yasunokawa 安河 river and the realm was pacified; debate occurred on the

²¹ Other examples of the word *hiro* found in the *Kojiki* include *chihiro nawa* 千尋繩 (“a thousand-*hiro*-long rope”), *hitohiro wani* 一尋和迹 (“a one-*hiro*-long [namely, small] shark”), *yahiro wani* 八尋和迹 (“a large shark”), *hiiragi no yahiro hoko* 比比羅木之八尋矛 (“a long spear made of holly wood”); *yahiro no shirochidori* 八尋白千鳥 (“a large plover”); see Yamaguchi and Kōnoshi, *Kojiki*, pp. 112–13, 132–33, 134–35, 222–23, 234–35, respectively.

²² Kobayashi Yoshinori, “Kodai no bunpō II,” p. 163.

²³ Kōnoshi and Yamaguchi, *Kojiki chūkai*, vol. 2, p. 102. Although Kobayashi adopts the reading *namuji*, Kōnoshi and Yamaguchi presume that in the ancient period people used the unvoiced form *namuchi*. (TN)

²⁴ Motoori Norinaga, *Kojiki den*, MNZ 9, p. 169.

beach, and the land (国土) was purified.” The second occurrence is in the first book, in the account of Susanoo’s going up to Takamanohara to meet his sister Amaterasu: “The mountains and rivers all thundered, and the entire land (国土) shook.” The third instance occurs in the second book, in the chronicle of Emperor Chūai 仲哀. A divine oracle has proclaimed that there is a land to the west. Chūai responds, however, that he has “climbed to a high spot and looked to the west but did not see any land (国土).”²⁵ Tsuda Sōkichi 津田左右吉 points out that Izanaki and Izanami’s “giving birth to the land” cannot be called a myth of the creation of the world; “land” here means the territory under the emperor’s rule, a hypothesis with which we concur.²⁶ As for the digraph 生成 (literally “give birth and form”), Norinaga states that “this means simply to give birth to.”²⁷ Subsequent commentaries do not show any significant disagreement with this interpretation.

7. “Go around this heavenly pillar [and] meet” (*kono ame no mihashira o yukimeguriaite* 行廻逢是天之御柱而)

Matsumoto Nobuhiro notes that the Chinese text *Guizhou tongzhi* 貴州通史 (A comprehensive history of Guizhou, 1741) describes a local custom in which villagers erect a tree in a field in spring, and men and women dance around it to choose a spouse. He argues that circling an object that rises high over its surroundings was an important part of marriage rituals.²⁸ Matsumura Takeo 松村武雄 points out that *Miaozu zhi* 苗族史 (History of the Miao) describes a similar custom. He sees the heavenly pillar as an object or a symbol through which the spirits (especially those of the ancestors) are summoned down to earth. The act of going around the pillar served to invite the spirits to descend and to seek their divine protection of the marriage. The heavenly pillar had a sexual symbolism as well.²⁹ Tsuda Sōkichi compares the heavenly pillar to the maypole found in European traditions. A pillar of this sort or a tree, he observes, symbolizes the universal vital reproductive force, and circling it and calling out to each other serves to encourage the couple’s union. Tsuda postulates that the *Kojiki* story likely reflects an actual custom of this sort.³⁰

As for other interpretations, Yasuda Naomichi 安田直道 suggests that Izanaki and Izanami’s circling the pillar may have been a rite of purification intended to remove an incest taboo. In his view the New Year’s ritual of a “naked rotation” (*hadaka mawari*) around the hearth was likely intended to reenact the primordial dance of Izanaki and Izanami, ancestors of humankind. This ritual, Yasuda argues, epitomizes the return to chaos. The fire in the hearth is linked to slash-and-burn agriculture, where fire is a crucial

²⁵ Yamaguchi and Kōnoshi, *Kojiki*, pp. 16–17, 54–55, 242–43.

²⁶ Tsuda, “Jindai no monogatari,” pp. 342–44.

²⁷ Motoori Norinaga, *Kojiki den*, MNZ 9, p. 170.

²⁸ Matsumoto Nobuhiro, *Nihon shinwa no kenkyū*, pp. 183–84.

²⁹ Matsumura, *Nihon shinwa no kenkyū*, vol. 2, pp. 203–32.

³⁰ Tsuda, “Jindai no monogatari,” pp. 352–54.

element, producing chaos by burning everything and thereby preparing the way for the birth of new life.³¹ Maruyama Akinori 丸山顕徳 holds that this myth may fuse representations of two different rites: a magic ritual performed to remove the evil effects engendered by a sibling marriage and a religious ritual intended to regenerate life through the reversal of female and male roles.³²

8. “Join our two parts” (*mito no maguwai* 美斗能麻具波比)

This phrase might alternatively be translated as “Let us join with each other in that place.” A gloss specifies that the seven graphs 美斗能麻具波比 are to be read phonetically as *mito no maguwai*. Motoori Norinaga interprets *mito* 美斗 as a phonetic representation of *mito* 御所 (“august place”).³³ Hirata Atsutane quotes Mutobe Yoshika 六人部是香 (1798–1863) as saying that *mito* has the same meaning as *mato* (真処, “true place”), with *ma* being a laudatory expression similar to *mi* 御. It is “a general term for the male and female genitals.”³⁴ Shikida Toshiharu also takes *mito* to mean the genitals.³⁵

Commentators agree that *maguwai* 麻具波比 means sexual intercourse, but diverge regarding the term’s morphology. Norinaga understands *ma* 麻 to be the same as *uma* 宇麻 (the stem-word for the adverb *umaku* 可美, “successfully,” “nicely”), and *guwai* 具波比 to be an abbreviated form of *kuiai* 久比阿比, “join together.”³⁶ He also points out that *ma* here might be the same as *me* 目 in the term used elsewhere in the *Kojiki* to describe male-female encounters and written with the graphs 目合 (“eye” and “meet,” “join”). 目合, too, he thus proposes, should be read as *maguwai*.³⁷

Nakajima Etsuji considers several morphological possibilities. *Ma* might be a prefix and *kuwai* a conjugated word that combines the stem of the verb *kuu* 咋ふ (“to eat”) with the inflection *fu* ふ, which incorporates the sense of the term *au* 合ふ (“to meet”). Or *kuwai* might derive from the nominal form of the verb *kuwau* 交はふ (“to conjoin” or “to lie with”), which is related etymologically to *kuwau* 咬はふ (“to chew”). Alternatively, *maguwai* might derive from the term *mekuwase* 目交わせ (“exchange looks”). It might even be the nominal form of one of the conjugations of the verb *maku* 枕 (“to sleep together”).³⁸ Mitani Eiichi 三谷栄一 takes Izanaki and Izanami’s *mito no*

³¹ Yasuda, “Izanaki-Izanami no shinwa to awa no nōkō girei,” pp. 87–88. The rite referenced by Yasuda is a ritual blessing of crops such as millet or barnyard millet in which a naked man and woman circle a hearth. In the 1970s, when Yasuda wrote this article, the custom was still found in some areas, such as the Agatsuma 吾妻 district in Gunma 群馬 Prefecture. Yasuda, pp. 73–74. (TN)

³² Maruyama Akinori, “‘Kiki’ Izanaki-kami, Izanami-kami no ame no mihashira meguri no imi,” p. 252.

³³ Motoori Norinaga, *Kojiki den*, MNZ 9, p. 172.

³⁴ Hirata Atsutane, *Koshiden*, vol. 1, pp. 173–74.

³⁵ Shikida, *Kojiki hyōchū*, p. 310.

³⁶ Motoori Norinaga, *Kojiki den*, MNZ 9, p. 172.

³⁷ Motoori Norinaga, *Kojiki den*, MNZ 9, p. 173.

³⁸ Nakajima, *Kojiki hyōshaku*, p. 37.

maguwai to be the mythological representation of a ritual in which the reproductive powers of nature are stimulated by the sexual union of a man and woman.³⁹

9. “You go around from the right and meet me; I will go around from the left and meet you” (*na wa migi yori meguriae, a wa hidari yori meguriawamu* 汝者自右廻逢我者自左廻逢)

Norinaga notes that his master Kamo no Mabuchi 賀茂真淵 (1697–1769) held that “although [the graph 右, ‘right’] has been read *migi* in later ages it should be read *migiri*. . . . [The poetess] Ise 伊勢 [872–938] writes in her *Teiji-in utaawase nikki* 亭子院歌合日記 (Record of the poetry contest held at the residence of His Highness Teiji-in) that the nobles participating divided themselves into two groups and took positions on the *hidari* (‘left’) and *migiri* (‘right’) sides of the stairs. [The graph 右] here thus should be read *migiri*.” Norinaga takes the position that the reasons for Izanaki’s designating the directions in this way cannot be known and criticizes earlier commentators for speculating on the matter.⁴⁰

Other hypotheses about this passage include that of Shikida Toshiharu, who notes that it is natural for peoples who see the sun and moon to the south to revere the left. When one faces south, the east is at one’s left; for that reason the east is said to be the foundation and the west secondary.⁴¹ Nakajima Etsuji suggests that the act of circling the pillar reflects an ancient marriage ritual wherein a man and woman fell into a state of religious ecstasy and danced around a pillar erected to invoke the presence of a deity.⁴² Ozaki Nobuo notes that the divinatory text *Shinsen kisō ki* 新撰龜相記 (traditionally held to date from the ninth century) connects circling to the left and right with dress customs: “This is why men fold their robes with the left [lapel overlapping the right] and women fold theirs with the right [overlapping the left].” Ozaki suggests that the authors of *Shinsen kisō ki* might also have had in mind the *futomani* divination that figures later in this episode and might be alluding to the practice of interpreting cracks in a tortoise plastron that run to the right as a good omen and those that run to the left as a bad omen.⁴³

Nishimiya Kazutami points out that the association of a woman turning to the right and a man to the left is found in Chinese thought, as in the statement in the Han period divinatory work *Chunqiuwei* 春秋緯 that heaven revolves to the left and earth moves to the right. Similarly the *Huainanzi* 淮南子, also of the Han period, states of the stars in the northern star constellation that “the males go to the left and the females to the right.”⁴⁴

³⁹ Mitani, “Setsuwa bungaku no bōtō daiichiwa to nōkō girei.”

⁴⁰ Motoori Norinaga, *Kojiki den*, MNZ 9, p. 173. The poetry contest took place in 913; Teiji-in was the retirement name of Emperor Uda 宇多 (867–931). (TN)

⁴¹ Shikida, *Kojiki hyōchū*, p. 311.

⁴² Nakajima, *Kojiki hyōshaku*, p. 37.

⁴³ Ozaki Nobuo, *Kojiki zenkō*, p. 37; *Shinsen kisō ki*, p. 191.

⁴⁴ Nishimiya, *Kojiki*, p. 29n10.

10. “Spoke first” (*mazu ieru* 先言)

Referring to the phrase *koto sakidachite* 言先立之 that appears in *Man'yōshū* poem 1935, Norinaga proposes that the graphs 先言 here should also be read *koto sakidachite*.⁴⁵ Kōnoshi Takamitsu and Yamaguchi Yoshinori point out, however, that in the *Kojiki* the graph 先 should be read differently depending on whether it indicates a sequence or is a temporal marker pointing to a past event. In line with the analysis of this issue in the *Nihon shisō taikei* edition of the *Kojiki*, they hold that *mazu* is the appropriate reading when the graph is used in the first sense and *saki* when it is used in the second. Here, they conclude, the reading *mazu* is appropriate because there is an explicit contrast between an action that occurs “first” and one that happens “after.”⁴⁶

11. “This is not good” (*yoku arazu* 不良)

Motoori Norinaga provides three readings for the graphs 不良: *yokarazu*, *saganashi*, and *fusawazu*. “After careful consideration of these three readings,” he states, “*fusawazu* sounds to me the most appropriate.” He does not offer any clear grounds for his choice, however.⁴⁷ Kurano Kenji holds that the most plausible reading for the graph sequence 女人先言不良 is *omina saki ieru wa yoku arazu*.⁴⁸

Various hypotheses have been advanced as to why “it is not good [that the woman spoke first].” Referring to *Man'yōshū* poem 1935 (see text note 10 above), Nishimiya Kazutami argues that the common custom was for the man to propose marriage.⁴⁹ Noting that the phrase expresses a view that a wife should defer to her husband, Nakajima Etsuji adds that “the notion that men should take precedence over women (*danson jōhi* 男尊女卑) owes much to Chinese influence.”⁵⁰ The editors of the *Nihon shisō taikei* edition of the *Kojiki* also see Confucian influence in the emphasis that the woman should follow the man’s lead.⁵¹

12. “A secluded place” (*kumido* 久美度)

Norinaga holds that “*kumido* means a place for the couple to seclude themselves to sleep together (*komorineru tokoro* 隠り寝る処).”⁵² Commentators who take *kumido* to mean “a place to hide” (*kakuremi tokoro* 隠み処) also largely interpret it as an inner recess to which the couple retreat to sleep together. Kurano Kenji in his *Kojiki zenchūshaku* commentary and Nakamura Hiroto describe it as the site of the two deities’

⁴⁵ Motoori Norinaga, *Kojiki den*, MNZ 9, p. 176; Kojima et al., *Man'yōshū*, SNKBZ 8, p. 58.

⁴⁶ Kōnoshi and Yamaguchi, *Kojiki chūkai*, vol. 2, p. 107. See Aoki et al., *Kojiki*, p. 565.

⁴⁷ Motoori Norinaga, *Kojiki den*, MNZ 9, pp. 176–77.

⁴⁸ Kurano, *Kojiki zenchūshaku*, vol. 2, p. 106.

⁴⁹ Nishimiya, *Kojiki*, p. 29n11. In the poem, the female speaker indicates that, like a nightingale, she will wait for the male addressee, who was the first to call out. (TN)

⁵⁰ Nakajima, *Kojiki hyōshaku*, p. 37.

⁵¹ Aoki Kazuo et al., *Kojiki*, p. 22.

⁵² Motoori Norinaga, *Kojiki den*, MNZ 9, p. 177.

hierogamy.⁵³ Referring to the transcription 奇御戸 found in a parallel phrase in the *Nihon shoki*, with the first graph meaning “wondrous,” Yamada Yoshio takes *kumido* to be a laudatory term for the sleeping place.⁵⁴ In the NKBT edition of *Kojiki*, Kurano Kenji likewise sees the term as intended to convey the sense of a “mysterious” (*shinpi na* 神秘な) place.⁵⁵ Ogiwara Asao and Saigō Nobutsuna surmise that the *kumido* is the broad-spanned hall (*yahirodono*; see text note 4).⁵⁶ All commentators agree on the point that *kumido* means the place where the two deities unite sexually. Whether *kumu* means “to hide” (隠む) or “to mingle” (交む) remains unresolved.⁵⁷

13. “Engaged” (*okoshite* 興而)

In the episode where Susanoo takes Kushinadahime 櫛名田比売 as a spouse, the text states that he went with her “into a secluded place and engaged with her (*kumido ni okoshite* 久美度迺起). [The child] he thereby bore [with her] was . . .”⁵⁸ Norinaga notes, “The term 興而 should be read *okoshite*. (The readings *tatete* or *tachite* both are mistaken.) Here the term refers to a man and woman engaging in intercourse.” He goes on to say, “This word always means the start of bearing a child. There are no examples where it refers simply to sexual intercourse.”⁵⁹ His point deserves consideration. Commentators agree that the basic meaning of *okoshite* is “to begin.”

14. “Leech-child” (*hiruko* 水蛭子)

Norinaga holds that *hiruko* 水蛭子 is not the name of one of Izanaki and Izanami’s children, but is a term used to designate a child who looks like a leech. He notes that the term may be interpreted in two ways: one, the child had no arms or legs and looked like a leech. The other (in line with the statement in the *Nihon shoki* that the child could not stand even at the age of three), its arms and legs were shriveled.⁶⁰

The *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* differ markedly in their accounts of the birth order of the *hiruko* and Izanaki and Izanami’s other children.⁶¹ Matsumura Takeo argues that the

⁵³ Kurano, *Kojiki zenchūshaku*, vol. 2, pp. 106–107; Nakamura, *Shinpan Kojiki*, p. 26n5.

⁵⁴ Yamada, *Kojiki jōkan kōgi*, pp. 178–79. The parallel phrase occurs in the first variant of the eighth section of the Age of Deities chapter, concerning Susanoo’s union with Kushinadahime; see Kojima et al., *Nihon shoki*, SNKBZ 2, pp. 94–95. (TN)

⁵⁵ Kurano and Takeda, *Kojiki, Norito*, p. 54n5.

⁵⁶ Saigō, *Kojiki chūshaku*, vol. 1, pp. 113–14; Ogiwara, *Kojiki, Jōdai kayō*, p. 53n19.

⁵⁷ For further discussion of *kumido*, see chapter 24, text note 1.

⁵⁸ See chapter 24.

⁵⁹ Motoori Norinaga, *Kojiki den*, MNZ 9, p. 178.

⁶⁰ Motoori Norinaga, *Kojiki den*, MNZ 9, p. 178. See Kojima et al., *Nihon shoki*, SNKBZ 2, pp. 36–39.

⁶¹ The main text of the fifth section of the *Nihon shoki* Age of Deities chapter has the *hiruko* born after Amaterasu (named there as Ōhirume no muchi 大日靈貴) and the moon deity and before Susanoo, all of whom it presents as being produced jointly by Izanaki and Izanami after they gave birth to the various islands. The second variant of this section also has the *hiruko* born after the

graphs *hiru* 水蛭 are used simply for their phonetic equivalence to a term that meant “sun-child” (日子). The *hiruko*, in other words, originally had the character of a solar deity. Matsumura notes that Takizawa Bakin 滝沢馬琴 (1767–1848) already suggested in his essay *Gendō hōgen* 玄同放言 that *hiruko* meant “sun child.”⁶² Saigō Nobutsuna and Yamada Yoshio take issue with such hypotheses.⁶³ The compilers of the *Nihon shisō taikai* edition of *Kojiki* note that various examples of the first-born child being deformed can be found in flood-type sibling marriage and first-founder myths.⁶⁴ Other hypotheses include Tsugita Uruu’s suggestion that the idea of a leech-child may have developed in an area located along a waterfront.⁶⁵ Noting that the *hiruko* is born at the beginning of the process of giving birth to the land, a process that takes the form of producing islands, Yamakawa Shinsaku 山川振作 sees it as a metaphor for an unsuccessful attempt at creating an island: “It is something that was supposed to be an island but failed to take the shape of one.”⁶⁶ Kōnoshi Takamitsu and Yamaguchi Yoshinori argue plausibly that the point is not actual resemblance; “leech-child” is a metaphor for something shapeless that cannot function as an island.⁶⁷ Nakamura Hirotoishi sees the *hiruko* as a metaphor for something misshapen, a child not suitable to be part of the land.⁶⁸

15. “Reed boat” (*ashifune* 葦船)

Norinaga offers two possible interpretations of the term “reed boat.” One is that given by Ichijō Kaneyoshi 一条兼良 (1402–1481) in his commentary *Nihon shoki sanso* 日本書紀纂疏: “They made a boat from a single reed leaf.” The other is that the boat was made by bundling reeds together.⁶⁹ Nakajima Etsuji, who rejects the second interpretation, holds that the term derives from a reed leaf’s boat-like shape.⁷⁰ Others focus on the associations of “reed” (*ashi*). Ozaki Nobuo and Nishimiya Kazutami suggest that reeds were believed to have the power to repel epidemics and disasters.⁷¹ Saigō Nobutsuna sees *ashi* 葦 (“reed”) as a homonym for *ashi* 悪 (“bad”). Because the *hiruko* was a “bad child” (*ashiki ko* アシキ子), Izanaki and Izanami put it in an *ashifune* and let it float away.⁷²

birth of the sun and moon and before Susanoo. The first and brief tenth variants of the fourth section have the *hiruko* born at the initial stage of Izanaki and Izanami’s giving birth. See Kojima et al., *Nihon shoki*, SNKBZ 2, pp. 28–30, 34–39. (TN)

⁶² Matsumura, *Nihon shinwa no kenkyū*, vol. 2, pp. 239–41.

⁶³ Saigō, *Kojiki chūshaku*, vol. 1, p. 114; Yamada, *Kojiki jōkan kōgi*, pp. 180–83.

⁶⁴ Aoki Kazuo et al., *Kojiki*, pp. 320–21n14.

⁶⁵ Tsugita, *Kojiki shinkō*, p. 31.

⁶⁶ Yamakawa, “Kiki ‘kuniyumi’ shinwa no kōsatsu,” p. 7; “Kojiki ‘kuniyumi’ shinwa hokō,” p. 253.

⁶⁷ Kōnoshi and Yamaguchi, *Kojiki chūkai*, vol. 2, pp. 107–10; Yamaguchi and Kōnoshi, *Kojiki*, p. 33n1.

⁶⁸ Nakamura, *Shinpan Kojiki*, p. 26n6.

⁶⁹ Motoori Norinaga, *Kojiki den*, MNZ 9, pp. 178–79.

⁷⁰ Nakajima, *Kojiki hyōshaku*, p. 38.

⁷¹ Ozaki Nobuo, *Kojiki zenkō*, p. 39; Nishimiya, *Kojiki*, p. 29.

⁷² Saigō, *Kojiki chūshaku*, vol. 1, pp. 114–15.

16. Awashima 淡嶋

Norinaga holds that the island Awashima acquired this name because its “parents,” Izanaki and Izanami, “disdained (*awame* 淡め) and despised” it.⁷³ Nakajima Etsuji and Kurano Kenji note that *awa* 淡 (“thin,” “faint”) is a homonym of *awa* 沫 (“bubbles,” “foam”). The name thus meant “an island of foam.”⁷⁴ Yamada Yoshio takes *awa* to derive from the stem of *awashi* (“thin,” “faint”). He affirms as plausible Hirata Atsutane’s suggestion that *awa* might mean “something faint and without substance,” and states that its use here “should be considered in conjunction with the debilitated condition of the *hiruko*.”⁷⁵

Some take Awashima to be an actual place. The divinatory text *Shinsen kisō ki* states, “This island is located in the sea east of the present Awa 阿波 Province. It has no inhabitants. It is not counted among the offspring [of Izanaki and Izanami].”⁷⁶ Kanda Hideo cites Yamakawa Shinsaku’s hypothesis that this island corresponds to a group of sunken rocks spread out like grains of millet (*awa* 粟) along the northern shore of Akashi 明石 Strait.⁷⁷ Takeda Yūkichi and Nakamura Hirotohi suggest that it refers to the Awa region (present-day Tokushima 徳島 Prefecture) and reflects a negative view of that area.⁷⁸

Many commentators, on the other hand, question trying to identify Awashima with an actual place. Kurano Kenji notes that “it is not clear what island this name indicates; it may be an imaginary place whose name reflects conceptual considerations.”⁷⁹ Indeed, it would seem most meaningful to see the name as having a mythological character linked to the implications of *awa* as the stem of words meaning thin or insubstantial. Kōnoshi Takamitsu and Yamaguchi Yoshinori hold that “although in contrast to the *hiruko*, Awashima somehow achieved the shape of an island, it nonetheless could not be considered a proper one.”⁸⁰ Nakamura Hirotohi similarly states, “It was a child unworthy of being counted as a proper part of the land.”⁸¹

This island is mentioned along with Onogoroshima, Ajimasa no shima 阿遲麻佐[檳榔]の島, and Saketsushima 佐気都島 in a verse (*kayō* 歌謡) listing islands that Emperor Nintoku saw while rowing out into Naniwa Bay. (See chapter 3, text note 8 on Onogoroshima island, for a discussion of this issue.)

⁷³ Motoori Norinaga, *Kojiki den*, MNZ 9, p. 179.

⁷⁴ Nakajima, *Kojiki hyōshaku*, p. 38; Kurano, *Kojiki taisei*, vol. 6, p. 53.

⁷⁵ Yamada, *Kojiki jōkan kōgi*, p. 184; Hirata Atsutane, *Koshiden*, vol. 1, p. 184.

⁷⁶ *Shinsen kisō ki*, p. 191.

⁷⁷ Kanda, *Shinchū Kojiki*, p. 15n18.

⁷⁸ Takeda and Nakamura, *Shintei Kojiki*, p. 23n13.

⁷⁹ Kurano, *Kojiki zenchūshaku*, vol. 2, p. 109.

⁸⁰ Kōnoshi and Yamaguchi, *Kojiki chūkai*, vol. 2, pp. 112–13.

⁸¹ Nakamura, *Shinpan Kojiki*, p. 26n7.

17. “Seek the command of the heavenly deities” (*amatsukami no mikoto o kou* 請天神命)

Yamada Yoshio notes that this phrase recalls the heavenly deities’ “command” to Izanaki and Izanami in the previous chapter “to put in order, solidify, and complete this drifting land.”⁸² Ozaki Nobuo as well as Kōnoshi Takamitsu and Yamaguchi Yoshinori likewise hold that this phrase reflects the *Kojiki*’s stance that things were carried out under the heavenly deities’ guidance.⁸³ Commentators vary as to what specifically “heavenly deities” means here. Tsugita Uruu holds that it is the “three creation deities” (*zōka sanshin* 造化三神), in other words, Ame no minakanushi, Takamimusuhi, and Kamumusuhi.⁸⁴ Kurano Kenji posits that it is the five “set-apart heavenly deities” (*koto amatsukami*).⁸⁵ Ozaki Nobuo argues that here *amatsukami* indicates specifically the two *musuhi* deities among the five “set-apart heavenly deities.”⁸⁶

18. *Futomani ni* 布斗麻迹尔

Norinaga holds that *futo* 布斗 is a laudatory particle and *futomani* 布斗麻迹 a type of divination performed in antiquity: “Among the different types of divination, it is said that it was of great importance and regarded as the main form.”⁸⁷ The Kokugaku scholar Ban Nobutomo 伴信友 (1773–1846) asserts in his *Seiboku kō* 正卜考 (Thesis on Divination, 1844): “*Mani* usually means much the same as *mama* (‘just as is’). Here it has the sense of ‘to leave up to divine will, to follow the divine will.’”⁸⁸ Kurano Kenji and Takeda Yūkichi postulate that the divination described in the Heavenly Rock Cave episode probably exemplifies a *futomani* divination.⁸⁹ Ozaki Nobuo hypothesizes that the inclusion of the *futomani* divination in the myth of the birth of the land probably reflects a mythologization of the divinations conducted as part of the spring Kinensai 祈年祭 rite to pray for a bountiful harvest.⁹⁰ Commentators largely agree that *futo* is an laudatory particle and that *mani* means “to be obedient to” (or, by extension, “submission to the divine will”). Many note that divination using deer bones was performed in the Japanese islands prior to adoption of tortoise-shell divination (*kiboku* 龜卜). Saigō Nobutsuna postulates that deer-bone *futomani* divination of this sort was the original official form used at the court and that the term *futomani* thus came to carry the connotation of an official divination even when applied to tortoise-shell divination.⁹¹ The range of interpretations found in current commentaries by and large focus on these points.

⁸² Yamada, *Kojiki jōkan kōgi*, pp. 194–95.

⁸³ Ozaki Nobuo, *Kojiki zenkō*, p. 42; Yamaguchi and Kōnoshi, *Kojiki*, p. 33n5.

⁸⁴ Tsugita, *Kojiki shinkō*, p. 33.

⁸⁵ Kurano and Takeda, *Kojiki, Norito*, p. 55n13.

⁸⁶ Ozaki Nobuo, *Kojiki zenkō*, p. 42.

⁸⁷ Motoori Norinaga, *Kojiki den*, MNZ 9, pp. 180–81.

⁸⁸ Ban Nobutomo, *Seiboku kō*, p. 467.

⁸⁹ Kurano and Takeda, *Kojiki, Norito*, p. 55n16. See chapter 18.

⁹⁰ Ozaki Nobuo, *Kojiki zenkō*, p. 43.

⁹¹ Saigō, *Kojiki chūshaku*, vol. 1, pp. 117–18.

19. “A divination was performed” (*uranaite* 卜相而)

The graph 卜 (“divination”) occurs as part of the term *ashiura* 足卜 (“treading divination”) in *Man’yōshū* poem 736.⁹² The Kanchiin-bon 観智院本 manuscript of the late-Heian dictionary *Ruiju myōgishō* gives the reading *uranau* for the graph 卜. Kōnoshi Takamitsu and Yamaguchi Yoshinori consider two readings that have been proposed for 卜相而: *uraete* (Norinaga’s preferred reading) and *uranaite*. They reject Norinaga’s hypothesis that *uraete* might be a contraction of *uraae*, with the lexeme *ae* in turn a contraction of *awase* (“join,” “meet”). In their view a reading of *uraete* would more likely result from a contraction of *ura* 卜 and the lower bigrade (*shimo nidan* 下二段) transitive verb *au* 合. As potential support for a reading of *uraete*, they note glosses in the Ichō-bon 鴨脚本 (1236) and Kitano-bon 北野本 (ca. 1336–1392) manuscripts of the *Nihon shoki*, but they also point out that it is uncertain whether such readings can be traced to the ancient period. They opt ultimately for *uranaite* as the more likely reading.⁹³ Shikida Toshiharu, who adopts the reading *uraete*, holds that *ura* 卜 here has the same meaning as *ura* 心 (“heart,” “mind,” “intention”) and that *e* 相 is an abbreviation of *ae* 合 (“join,” “meet”).⁹⁴

Divination is an act of inquiring about the deities’ intentions, but in this passage, it takes place at the command of the heavenly deities. As to why deities should engage in divination, Watsuji Tetsurō 和辻哲郎 writes, “There are no deities beyond the heavenly deities. Yet, if the heavenly deities are held to engage in divination, there must be some entity beyond them. This entity would not be a deity but, one might say, indeterminacy itself.”⁹⁵

20. “Then” (*kare shikashite* 故尔)

Onoda Mitsuo 小野田光雄 has identified 254 occurrences of the graph 尔 in the *Kojiki* (82 in the first book, 102 in the second, and 70 in the third). Typically it serves to set off a clause within a larger passage that begins with the combination 於是 (“thereupon”).⁹⁶ Chinese texts do not provide examples of such use of the graph 尔, and it is said to be found in ancient Japanese texts only in the *Kojiki* and the *Harima no kuni fudoki*. Kojima Noriyuki 小島憲之 suggests that this usage may have been an innovation resulting from familiarity with Chinese writing.⁹⁷

The combination 故尔 occurs 28 times in the *Kojiki*, but with an uneven distribution: 20 times in the first book, 8 times in the second book (6 times in the chronicle of Emperor

⁹² Kojima et al., *Man’yōshū*, SNBKZ 6, p. 359.

⁹³ Kōnoshi and Yamaguchi, *Kojiki chūkai*, vol. 2, pp. 120–22; Motoori Norinaga, *Kojiki den*, MNZ 9, pp. 181–82.

⁹⁴ Shikida, *Kojiki hyōchū*, p. 312.

⁹⁵ Watsuji, *Sonnō shisō to sono dentō*, p. 173.

⁹⁶ Onoda, “*Kojiki no joshi ‘ni’ ni tsuite*,” pp. 18–19.

⁹⁷ Kojima, *Jōdai Nihon bungaku to Chūgoku bungaku*, vol. 1, p. 251.

Jinmu 神武, 2 times in the chronicle of Emperor Keiko 景行), and not once in the third book. Ozaki Nobuo holds that the digraph serves as a kind of introductory phrase and likely is a legacy of oral recitation. Consequently it does not have the same meaning as the ordinary *kanbun* expression *yue ni* 故に (“therefore”).⁹⁸ This point may be related to the term’s uneven distribution. Ido Kōhei 伊土耕平 notes that the particle 故 has an adverbial function of confirming and emphasizing the narrative content, whereas the morpheme 尛 serves simply to connect a sequence of clauses. Instances of the combination 故尛 are concentrated, he argues, “in episodes of particular significance to the compilers.” It is thus possible that 故 is a later emphatic addition to a phrase that originally had only the particle 尛.⁹⁹

From the time of Norinaga, 故尛 has often been read *koko ni*, but this reading does not fit smoothly with its frequent combination in the *Kojiki* with a preceding 於是. Also, as Onoda Mitsuo has pointed out, the graph 尛 is typically read with an initial S sound.¹⁰⁰ As a result, today it is standardly read *shikashite*. Drawing from examples of Heian-period reading glosses, however, Kōnoshi Takamitsu and Yamaguchi Yoshinori read it as *shikakushite*.¹⁰¹

Bibliographic Data

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⁹⁸ Ozaki Nobuo, *Kojiki zenkō*, p. 56.

⁹⁹ Ido, “‘Kojiki’ no ‘koko ni’ ni tsuite,” pp. 42–43.

¹⁰⁰ Onoda, “Kojiki no joshi ‘ni’ ni tsuite,” pp. 23–24.

¹⁰¹ Kōnoshi and Yamaguchi, *Kojiki chūkai*, vol. 2, pp. 102–103. For a further discussion of this issue, see Tsukishima, “Kojiki no kundoku,” pp. 207–14.