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THE STARTING POINT OF YAMATO WA:*Homuda-wake (Ojin), the Founder – The Textual Approach*

As Saeki (1977) notes, “it is possible to reconstruct Japanese history in the second and third centuries to some extent on the basis of the account of the ‘Wo-jeu’ 倭傳 in Chinese history, the Wei-zhi 魏志.” It is also possible to reconstruct Japanese history in the fifth century to some extent on the basis of the accounts of the “five kings of Wa” 倭五王 (A.D. 421-478) in the section on Japan [Wo-guo 倭國] in the “Yi-man chuan” 夷蠻傳 of Song-shu. Never-theless as Saeki notes, “there are no extant sources for the fourth century” and “this is why this period is often referred to as ‘the mysterious fourth century’”

By the time the Kojiki and Nihongi were written, Wei-zhi was available to their writers, and apparently the story of Jingū was inspired by the story of the shaman queen Himiko 卑彌呼 recorded in this Wei chronicle. Indeed, Nihongi (NI: 245) directly quotes the Wei-zhi record of the Queen [Himiko] of Wa [for the year A.D. 239] in the chapter on Jingū. According to Tsuda (津田 1950: 161-162), the record on Jingū was made to correspond to the Wa Queen Himiko 倭女王卑彌呼 in Wei-zhi. As a result, the reigns of 𐰀𐰃𐰆 and following rulers had to be pushed forward and lengthened. Furthermore, the reigns of King Keun Ch'ogo 近肖古王 and King Keun Kusu of Paekche, which are said to have begun the connection 交涉 between Korea and Japan for the first time during 𐰀𐰃𐰆 reign 應神朝, also had to be pulled up by two sexagenary cycles 干支二運. Tsuda, however, thinks that the postulation that the reign of 𐰀𐰃𐰆 follows immediately after that of Jingū does not seem to have been planned from the beginning.^{<1.7>} Ledyard (1975) also notes that, since the Wei-zhi was available to the writers of the Nihongi, and since it placed Queen Himiko in the time frame of the 230s and 240s, “they had to arrange things so that the Wei-zhi’s information was fully reconciled.” They therefore gave Jingū a long reign [A.D. 200-269] that included a generation on either side of Queen Himiko, and “to do this they had to backdate the reign of Homuda wake 𐰀𐰃𐰆 by two cycles, so that it was made to begin in 269 rather than in the more likely 389 (120 years later).”

Kojiki and Nihongi made Homuda-wake 𐰀𐰃𐰆 the son of Jingū, and the record on Jingū (NI: 224-253) therefore mixes up the stories of the Yayoi period and those of the middle tomb period.¹ Furthermore, Nihongi somehow

decided to place the favorite myth of the Japanese people -- the conquest of Silla -- during the reign of Jingū.² Nihongi (NI: 230-232) narrates the story of Jingū's conquest of Silla in an almost amusing children's story fashion, but contemporary Japanese histories have made the story an absurdly serious business by using it as the evidence of the existence of a strong unified nation-state in Japan in the third century.

Bronze mirrors as well as bronze weapons were brought from Korea to Japan during Yayoi period. Bronze products (an alloy of copper and tin) were all imported until their domestic production began in the late Yayoi period (A.D. 100-300), mostly in the northern Kyūshū area. Katori Tadahiko (KEJ: 1. 174) states that: "In ancient Japan, bronze mirrors were more treasures or ritual implements than utilitarian items . . . It would appear that powerful rulers obtained several mirrors from the same mold and distributed them to their subordinate chiefs as authority symbols." Saotome Masahiro (KEJ: 1. 174) also states that: "Bronze weapons do not appear to have been used for their original purpose in Japan. None show damage through use in battle . . . bronze weapons in Japan were used . . . as symbols of power."

Egami (1964) states that "in the light of the content of the early tomb-mounds period, the bearers of this culture also lack[ed] the military element required in carrying out subjugatory activities, and the idea that these people of the early tomb-mounds period should have landed in south Korea, the inhabitants of which were better armed, should have succeeded in subjugatory activities, and should have returned home after fostering their horse-riders' culture is clearly contrary to the universal laws of history."

Mason and Caiger (1972: 10) note that the Chinese records "do suggest strongly that Japan was not yet a single political unit in the period from 221 to 265 A.D. of which the Chinese scholars were writing." Indeed, no Chinese record of Japan appears after that point until the beginning of the fifth century. Sansom (1931: 36 n) writes that "[i]t should be noted that there

¹Nihongi's record on Jingū prior to A.D. 203 seems to have been based entirely on the story of Himiko. However, the record for A.D. 205 is the story that occurred in A.D. 418. Nihongi's records for A.D. 203 and A.D. 213 represent the effort to link Jingū and 聖德太子 in a mother-son relationship. The records for A.D. 246 and thereafter are almost entirely composed of stories that had possibly occurred in the late fourth century (i.e., the middle tomb period).

²It seems to have been the extreme hatred harbored by the people of Yamato Wa against Silla that encouraged them to entertain such a daydream (i.e., the conquest of Silla). Apparently the writers of Nihongi thought that the Jingū section would be the right place to handle such a fantasy. Tsuda (津田 1972: 453) also states that the record of Jingū's military expedition 遠征 can not be a fact but a fiction.^{<1.6>}

is no evidence of direct official relations between the Yamato and Chinese kingdoms before A.D. 400.”

The Yayoi period (300 B.C. - 300 A.D.) was followed by the tomb-mounds period (300 A.D. - 700 A.D.), during which Japan was unified into Yamato Wa and entered the protohistoric era. According to Egami (1964), “the tomb-mounds period is one of the most important periods in the whole history of Japan, but opinions have been much divided over the question of how this period of Japanese history is to be conceived, and at present there appears to be little prospect of reaching general agreement in this matter.”

Book One of Kojiki 古事記 mythologically describes the activities of gods and their colonization of the Japanese islands. Book Two begins with the tale of Jimmu 神武 and finishes with 應神. Book Three describes the reigns of the post-應神 rulers. Barnes (1988: 10) notes that: “Jimmu is generally recognized as a fictitious personage and variously has been identified either with . . . Sujin 崇神, or with . . . 應神.” Barnes (1988: 13) adds: “The 應神 story echoes that of the eastward trek of Jimmu and . . . is thought to reflect the same grain of reality.”

The record of Kojiki on Okinaga-Tarashi-hime 息長帶比(日)賣命 [Jingū, 氣長足姬尊] ends with the successful conclusion of her fighting against King Oshikuma. Kojiki makes Homuda-wake 品陀和氣命 [應神 譽田別] the second son of Okinaga-Tarashi-hime. This second child of Okinaga-Tarashi-hime is called the August Child 御子 and Heir Apparent 太子, and Kojiki states that (KC: 283) it was known while he was in the womb that he would rule countries 知坐腹中國也. The authors of Kojiki as well as Nihongi postulated a mother-son relationship between Jingū and 應神, swallowing up the two cycles that separated them.³

According to Nihongi, Chūai [Tarashi-Nakatsu-hiko] died in A.D. 200 and Jingū [Okinaga-Tarashi-hime] died in A.D. 269. After the Wei records of the Queen’s country in the third century, there is no further mention of Wa in Chinese records until the beginning of the fifth century. Japan seems to have been very much divided into chaos during the 120-year period between Jingū’s death and the enthronement of 應神 [Homuda-wake] in A.D. 390.

³A brief note preceding the chapter on Homuda-wake (KC: 295-296) seems to reveal the agony of the authors of Kojiki in committing such a forgery. They were apparently forced to write that the name “Homuda-wake” was “the august name of the august child” of Okinaga-Tarashi-hime. Kojiki (KC: 295) states that a god wished to exchange his name for the august name of the august child 以吾名欲易御子之御名, and that they were “filled with awe”; but they had to comply, saying, “The name shall be respectfully exchanged according to thy command 恐隨命易奉.”

Nevertheless, the Japanese court histories made 應神, apparently for the sake of a “single line for a myriad generations 萬世一系,” the son of Jingū. The period A.D. 269-389 represents the two sexagenary cycles that are missing in Nihongi.⁴

Tsuda (津田 1948: 314) asserts that what the Kiki 記紀 intend to explain is the origin of an imperial family and state 皇室及國家起源 and not the origin of a people 民族.^{<1.2>} The records of Kojiki and Nihongi, which put the stories of the Age of God 神代 (that is, the age of the imperial ancestors 皇祖神) at the beginning and thereupon move to the stories of the Age of Man, are solely about the imperial family 皇室 and not about “our people.”^{<1.3>} Tsuda (津田 1975: 458) states that all kinds of situations that are considered to have taken place in the 4th and 5th centuries are reflected in the stories of the Age of God.^{<1.1>}

Tsuda (津田 1966; 110-111) states that even academic studies on the circumstances of the formation of the Japanese state 國家成立情勢 or the origin 由來 and nature 本質 of its imperial family have ignored the historical facts that can clearly be gleaned from them; when people with arbitrary opinions or those who wish to use history as a political tool 政略的道具 seize political power they begin to play with the power; furthermore, some scholars and writers curry favor 迎合追從 with those in power, fabricating 造作 and loudly supporting preposterous 虛偽迷妄 propositions that are bound to mislead people. Academic studies have been suppressed by those wielding political power and by the mass communication media 言論.^{<1.12>} Tsuda contends that all these obstinate ideas persist due to the lack of refinement 教養 and low standard of culture 文化程度 among Japanese people; it particularly betrays the absence of a critical spirit and the absence of an understanding of the value and nature of a scientific approach to the search for truth which can establish people’s ideology and behavior on the foundations of truth.^{<1.13>}

According to Hirano (1977), Tsuda Sō kichi (1873-1961) subjected the Kojiki and Nihongi to strict textual criticism and concluded that many of the early mythological sections were fabrications intended to legitimize the ruling imperial clan. That is, Tsuda regarded 應神 as the founder of the Yamato imperial clan on the basis of the fact that, while the fourteen emperors up to Chū ai 仲哀 are referred to only by their posthumous titles in the Teiki 帝紀 [compiled in the first half of the sixth century], the emperors from 應神 to

⁴Ledyard (1975) notes that it was Naka Michiyo (1851-1908) who “was able to demonstrate, by reference to Chinese and Korean history, that for the period of the 3rd and 4th centuries it was off by 120 years, or two sexagenary cycles.”

Keitai 繼體 are called by their real names used when they were princes. Tsuda believed that the names of the rulers in the former groups were merely fictitious.⁵ Indeed, many post-World War II Japanese historians believe that the original Teiki had listed only the twelve emperors from 天武 to Keitai. The form of imperial succession prior to Chū ai as recorded in the two chronicles (Kojiki and Nihongi) was exclusively from father to son, whereas in actuality this form of succession was established only after the reign of Tenji 天智 in the latter half of the seventh century, and the succession prior to Tenji had basically been fraternal. For these reasons Tsuda believes that the accounts in Kojiki and Nihongi can be divided between Chū ai and 天武. Tsuda regards the descriptions of the period up to Chū ai as legendary, dubious, and even, in some cases, preposterous. He denies the authenticity of the stories of Jingū's expedition to Korea, and consequently the story of 天武's birth in Tsukushi 筑紫. (See 井上 外3人, 1984: 271-272.)

According to Hirano (1977), Tsuda's criticism of the two chronicles should be taken as a model approach to the reconstruction of ancient Japanese history. Hirano (1977) summarizes the post-War development of theories of the 天武 dynasty as follows. Hayashiya Tomojirō 林屋友次郎 contends that the Yamato court started with 天武, and that Jimmu and Sujin were merely fictitious figures created through the glorification of 天武's deeds.⁶ Naoki Kōjirō 直木孝次郎 maintains that a new dynasty was established in Naniwa by 天武 and Nintoku, who belonged to a line other than that of the foregoing dynastical rulers. Yoshii Iwao 吉井巖 contends that the three emperors Keiko, Seimu, and Chū ai, who have appellations characterized by the word "Tarashihiko," are fictitious emperors inserted as stopgaps between the "Sujin dynasty" [i.e., Sujin and Suinin, whose names were Irihiko and Irihime], and the "Nintoku dynasty." 天武 was merely a legendary figure conceived of as the founder of the new dynasty. Naoki Kōjirō further elaborates this view by asserting that 天武 and Nintoku both originally represented the same person, named 'Homuda-no-hi-no-miko,' who later came to be regarded as two

⁵Ledyard (1975) notes that "[i]n May, 1942, Tsuda Sōkichi, after a long hearing and trial process, was convicted and sentenced to jail for insulting the dignity of the Imperial family. His books had already been banned for over two years."

⁶The contention that the Yamato Wa began with 天武 is also supported by the frequent quoting of following statement in Nihongi (e.g., NII: 9): "Since the days of the Emperor in the womb 自胎中之帝 [Homuda-wake] . . ." See also Nihongi (NII: 34). On the basis of *Harima Fudoki*, Aoki (1974: 42) states that: "It seems that Homuda's reputation as the conquering king was such that he could make anything an excuse to deprive a local chieftain of his title as a local ruler."

different sovereigns, Homuda-wake and Ohosazaki.⁷ (See also Inoue, et al. 井上 外3人, 1984: 272-274.)

Kiley (1973) also states that the “genealogies given in those works [Kojiki and Nihongi] for the first nine rulers . . . only confirm Mizuno’s conclusion, based on totally different grounds, that the first nine ‘emperors’ in the chronicles were late seventh century fabrications.” Kiley (1973) continues: “It may be repeated . . . that communities reigned over by sacerdotal rulers, such as Himiko and Sujin . . ., are not necessarily states in the strictest sense. The earliest reliable genealogical material on Yamato kings . . . relates to the fourth century conquerors and the polity they founded. The founding of the conquest polity in Yamato is, predictably, almost without documentation. Some historians identify the first historic ruler of this polity as the Emperor 聖德太子 of the chronicles, and others prefer his son, Nintoku. . . .”

Choi (1990c) has recently made a critical survey of these textual approaches by Japanese historians. According to him, Tsuda indeed made some positive contributions (Choi, 1990c: 46), but he proves that Tsuda’s approach was still far from a model approach. Likewise, the post-War Japanese historians made some positive contributions, but they still could not emancipate themselves from pre-War tradition. In any case, the post-War textual approaches were accompanied by studies on the formation of Yamato Wa within the larger context of development in Korea based on archeological discoveries. Egami’s reconstruction of ancient history, in particular, was very much, if not completely, unconstrained by traditionally preconceived notions.

Tsuda (津田 1948: 641) states that “as a historical fact, the period during which the imperial clan accomplished the unification of Japan was approximately the beginning of the 5th century.” And yet Tsuda reveals a strong distaste for the propositions that suggest a foreign origin of the imperial family. According to Tsuda (津田 1966: 120), the contention that the descent of Heavenly Children 天孫降臨 represents the ancestors of the imperial family 御祖先 coming into 渡來 this land from abroad, or the contention that

⁷The contention that Yamato Wa began with either 聖德太子 or Nintoku may also be supported by such statements in Shoku-Nihongi (Sansom, 1924: 23) as: “Inasmuch as during this time there has been born an Imperial Prince [Shōmu] as the Heir to succeed to the Heavenly Rule, We are pleased to appoint the Lady Fujiwara, who is His Mother, to be the Empress Consort . . . This is not only of Our time, for the Sovereign 額蘇麻呂 that ruled in the High Palace of Naniwa took to himself as Empress the Lady Iwa-no-hime, who was the daughter of Sotsuhiko of Kazuraki, and together with her ruled and governed the Realm under Heaven. This is not a strange new governing, but a Custom which has been followed since the beginning.”

the newly arrived foreign people conquered the aboriginal people 土着民族 is the result of interpreting each of the unreasonable stories recorded in Kiki as reasonable fact 合理的事實. This attitude may appeal to the intellectuals; however, since the stories of the Ages of God are essentially unreasonable, the effort to interpret each of them reasonably can not be regarded as an academic method. To regard the descent of Heavenly Children as the arrival of the people of Heavenly Children 天孫民族渡來 is to ignore the method of academic research used to consider the identification of race 民族異同 or the migration path 移住徑路.^{<1.4>} One can also observe Tsuda's emphatic denial of the arrival from Paekche of a company of seventeen districts 十七縣人夫 led by Achi no Omi 阿知使主. According to Tsuda (1972: 29), the statement of Shoku Nihongi 續日本記 that the province of Takechi 高市郡[今來郡] was so fully occupied 滿地而居 by people of the seventeen districts that people of other names 他姓者 amounted to only one or two out of every ten people counted 十而一二焉 is absurd 妄言. According to Tsuda, it was impossible for immigrants 歸化人 to occupy most of the land that was near the political center 政治上中心 of the Yamato Court 大和朝廷.^{<1.5>} As indicated by the criticism of Choi, all these statements reveal the limitations in Tsuda's thinking.⁹

⁸Shinsen Shōjūroku (Saeki 佐伯有清: 357-358) states that the people brought by Achi no Omi constructed the Imaki Province which was later renamed Takechi Province 建今來郡後改號高市郡, and since the area became overcrowded, they were eventually dispersed to other areas such as Settsu 攝津, 近江 and Harima 播磨. It also states that their descenants include an Asuka Village Chief 飛鳥村主, an Aya-bito Village Chief 漢人村主, and an Imaki Village Chief 今來村主.

⁹The following statements of Tsuda (1963) help us to see the basic framework of his thinking: "studies so far have succeeded in throwing no light whatsoever on the original habitat of the Japanese people, or on the route and period of their migration . . . The Japanese people differ from the peoples of Korea, Manchuria, and Mongolia, in point of physique, language, as well as mode of life . . . [E]ven in the immediate neighborhood of Japan, there are hardly any people related by blood to the Japanese." Possibly in order to support the so-called "Imna Japanese Government" story, Tsuda adds: "It is conjectured, however, that among those who inhabit the southern part of the Korean Peninsula, there are some who are blood-relations of the Japanese."