

Chapter 12. Can Japanese mythology contribute to comparative Eurasian mythology?

by Kazuo Matsumura¹

Abstract: Comparison of classical Japanese mythology and mythologies of various other Eurasian countries have been conducted by many eminent scholars: In Japan, by the late Taryo Obayashi, Atsuhiko Yoshida, and Hitoshi Yamada; in Europe, by late Nelly Naumann; and in the United States by Michael Witzel. After introducing the contributions of these scholars, I indicate a connecting threads to the following topics of classical mythology and history of Japan usually discussed separately; Jomon clay figurines; Flood myth and incest; the World Parent Izanagi and Izanami; Sun Goddess Amaterasu and her brother Susanowo; the Hidden Sun motif; Amaterasu as a Virgin Mother Goddess; Himiko, the Queen of Yamatai Kingdom; the Hime-hiko ruling system; Onari-kami in southern islands of Okinawa; male-female leaders of Japanese new religions. As mentioned, parallel examples of these motifs could be found not only in China, but in Taiwan, Siberia, Mongolia, Oceania, Southeast Asia, and even in North America. Tracing the origin of motifs is brilliantly conducted by the scholars mentioned above. What I am intending here is slightly different. I am more interested in transformation: how various motifs coming from abroad were organized as the classical Japanese cultural system of which mythology is an important element; what was the core of the idea. In my opinion, these topics could be classified into the following categories:

1. Brother-sister marriage: Izanagi and Izanami; Flood myth and incest; Amaterasu and Susanowo.
2. Brother-sister antagonism: the Hidden Sun motif.
3. Brother-sister rulership: Himiko; Hime-hiko system; Onari-kami in Okinawa; male-female leaders of new religions.
4. Mother-Son deities and / or Virgin Mother Goddess: Amaterasu and Hono-ninigi; Athena and Erichthonios; Mary and Jesus.
5. Corn mother: Amaterasu and Hono-ninigi. What is most notable is the brother-sister combination.

This combines separation and integration of two spheres: sacred and profane (or secular). The Mother-son pair is also prominent and shows the same combination. These two categories may indicate a strong female principle active in Japan through the ages. As the cases of Athena and Mary show, however, this combination of sacred (female) and profane (male) is not limited to Japan; under certain conditions, it could occur in other Eurasian mythologies as well.

1. Introduction

Classical Japanese mythology is mainly recorded in the *Kojiki* (dated to 712 CE) and

¹ Wako University, Tokyo, Japan.

Nihonshoki (720 CE). The production of these books was inspired by the introduction of writing and advanced ideas from China regarding technology, agriculture, philosophy, religions (Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism), and politics. Episodes in these mythological texts show motifs common not only to classical Chinese myths, but also to various mythologies from other Euro-Asian countries. Since Japan is situated at the eastern coast of Eurasian continent, it received many cultural influences from neighboring regions. Bordered on the north by Siberia, on the west by the Korean peninsula, and on the southwest by southern China and Taiwan, overseas influences could penetrate in Japan from various directions (Map 1). Yet despite the close proximity of others, the Japanese archipelago has for the most part been inhabited from ca. 10,000 B.C. to the present in relative isolation and safety from more powerful foreign invaders. Thus, the archaeological remains from the oldest pre-agricultural Stone Age to the Bronze Age, through the Iron Age, down to the more modern historical periods are well attested. This means that cultural strata discerned in the classical Japanese mythology can be compared with actual archaeological discoveries which enables the examination of the validity of mythological traditions.



Fig. 12. 1. East Asia.

The comparison of classical Japanese mythology and mythologies of various other Eurasian countries has been conducted by many eminent scholars. In Japan, mythological studies have been conducted by the late Taryo Obayashi (Psproth & Yamada 2002), Atsuhiko Yoshida (1977), and Hitoshi Yamada (2006). In Europe, the

late Nelly Naumann (2000; Matsumura 2006) and in the United States Michael Witzel (2005) have also closely studied comparative mythology and Japan.

As I mentioned, parallel examples of similar motifs can be found not only in China, but also in Taiwan, Siberia, Mongolia, Oceania, Southeast Asia, and even in North America. The scholars mentioned have done brilliant work in tracing the origin of similar motifs. What I am intending here is slightly different. I am more interested in transformation:² how various motifs coming from abroad were interpreted as classical Japanese mythology and what was the core of the idea. Among the contributors mentioned above, the most ambitious and audacious is doubtlessly Witzel. His approach is both philological and ethological (*Kulturgeschichtlich*). Mine is more of a structural interpretation. I wish to touch upon two topics. One is the myth of the sun and fire. The other is about the presumed common structure in classical Japanese mythology and culture.

2. Myth of the Sun and Fire

Witzel's paper (2005) presents excellent cases of parallelism in the mythological theme concerning sun and fire, all through Europe, India, Southeast Asia, East Asia, Siberia, North America, Meso-America, and South America. His argument is further supported by his methodology. Traditionally, in comparative mythology, not enough attention was paid to rituals. Witzel first compares the Indian pair of myth and ritual about the emergence of light with the Japanese pair of myth (about the rebirth of the sun goddess Amaterasu) and ritual (the coronation ritual of the new emperor, *Daijō-sai*) about the same genre.

There is no denying that Witzel is on the right track. The myth of the (re)emergence of light and related ritual must have been part of the large mythological structure shared by the common Laurasian heritage. After his comparison of India and Japan, Witzel expands the scope of his inquiry not only to include the Indo-Europeans, but the East Asians, Siberians, North American natives, Meso-Americans, and South American natives as well. What Witzel (2005: 50) suggests about the future directions of research about mythology is absolutely right, namely, that the

‘(Re)creation of sunlight, descent from solar ancestors, emergence of death, and the great flood, all brought together in one single, long myth.’

Among these various people, the basic frame is identical, while the differences are superficial.

Here I will pay more attention to these superficial differences and try to avoid the central issue. The reason is twofold. One, I am not capable of discussing the Indian material. I am much more comfortable with Japanese mythology proper. Thus my comparison is between the Japanese myth of the Hidden Sun and similar myths

² My previous papers touching upon this issue are: Matsumura 1996, 1998, 2003, and 2006.

about the sun or fire in the circum-pacific area, while the Indic and Indo-European materials are excluded. The scale is much smaller than the cases discussed by Witzel. Nevertheless, interesting insights can also be learned even if my comparison must stay at the superficial level.

Let me first summarize the main plot of Japanese version of the Hidden Sun myth. For convenience, the summary is divided into five sections (A~E).

A. The first important gods are the couple of Izanagi and Izanami. They are the parents of the world. The couple was ordered by elder gods to consolidate and fertilize the land from the chaotic primordial ocean. By sexually uniting on the newly created island, they produced other islands and a younger generation of gods of various functions. When Izanami gave birth to the fire god Kagutuchi, she was burnt to death. Izanagi followed his sister / wife to the land of the dead. His plan however failed. When he returned from the land of the dead, Izanagi purified himself in a stream. From his eyes were born the solar goddess, Amaterasu and the lunar god, Tsukuyomi; from his nose was born the violent god Susanowo.

B. The heavenly world was entrusted to Amaterasu, the night to Tsukuyomi, and the ocean to Susanowo by their father Izanagi. Since Susanowo was unruly, Izanagi ordered his son to be expelled to the underworld. Susanowo visited his sister Amaterasu under the pretext of saying farewell. Amaterasu however suspected her brother's hidden intention and confronted Susanowo in full armor. Susanowo proposed to make an oath and bear children. In his opinion that act would prove his innocence. The two then exchanged personal items (Amaterasu, jewels and Susanowo, a sword). Then each chewed the item and spat the pieces into air. Then from Amaterasu's jewels, three goddesses appeared, and from Susanowo's sword, five gods.

C. Thus, Susanowo declared his innocence and stayed at his sister's Heavenly domain. However, he engaged in several misdeeds and in anger Amaterasu hid herself in the Rock Cave of Heaven. This produced universal darkness. Gods and goddesses gathered and discussed how to restore the world. The solution was to have Ame-no-Uzume, Dancing Goddess of Heaven, perform an erotic dance in front of the cave. This caused great laughter among the deities, and Amaterasu, being curious, opened the door a little and peaked out. Then Tajikarao, the God of Might, took her by the hand and pulled her out of the cave.

D. Susanowo was expelled from the Heaven and descended to the earthly land. On the way, he murdered the Food Goddess Ukemochi. Among other crops that grew from her corpse were rice, wheat, and beans and these were eventually given to Amaterasu.

E. One of Amaterasu's grandchildren was elected as a ruler of the earthly world and with the accompaniment of five powerful gods and royal regalia given by Amaterasu, this divine child, Hono-ninigi, descended and became the ancestor of the Imperial line.

Here, we may discern the following elements:

1. the hiding of the sun;
2. an erotic dance;
3. laughter; and
4. a trick.

I shall list the myth of the hidden sun or the myth of fire-theft among the people of the circum-Pacific regions. The examples of myths from Northeastern Asia are found among the Ainu, Koryak, and Chukchee. The examples of myths from Northwestern America are found among the Tlingit, Thimshian, Kwakiutl, Sinkyone, and Pomo.

Numbers one to four in square brackets indicate the four elements above. Numbers with parenthesis are ones that are somewhat unclear or doubtful.

Ainu: The Sun Goddess was abducted by the Demon. The earth became entirely dark, and many gods and people died. Aynu-rak-kur, the Hero, was asked by gods to rescue the Sun Goddess. He together with the Mountain God of Kemushiri went down into the Underworld, conquering the Demon and saved the Sun Goddess (Kindiachi 1936: 130-144). [1]

Koryak: Raven-man swallowed the sun and kept it in his mouth. Big-Raven's daughter tickled him until he laughed, opened his mouth, and let the sun fly out. Then daylight appeared again (Jochelson 1904: 423). [1, 3, 4]

Chukchee 1: The Raven wanted to obtain the sun, which was in the possession of the Demon. The Raven went to a distant country and found the house of the chief. In that house, sun, moon, and stars were kept sewed up in black walrus-hide, like large balls. The Raven seduced the daughter of the Demon and successfully obtained the ball of the stars, the ball of the moon, and finally the ball of the sun.³ [1, 4]

Chukchee 2: In another version, the Creator made the Raven, and bit him to obtain the light. The Raven gathered various birds. They flew off toward the dawn and tried to pierce the stone wall of the day with their beaks. At last one bird succeeded in making a small hole, and the dawn passed through.⁴ [1]

Tlingit: There was no light. A chief kept the light in three small boxes. The chief had a daughter. El, the Hero, could assume any form. He became a tiny piece of grass, and let the chief's daughter swallow it when she drank water. Being conceived in this way, she gave birth to a baby which was in fact El. He kept crying demanding the three boxes that contained the heavenly lights. When he had the first box, he opened it, and instantly stars appeared in the sky. Then from the second box, the moon appeared. When El obtained the last box, he changed himself into a crow and flew away with the box. Then he gave the sun to the people. After this, El went out to an island in the middle of the sea. It was in this island that fire was kept. At that time, people did not have fire. El being dressed in magpie skin snatched a burning brand. Since the island was so far away, he had to drop the brand, and the sparks were blown on to the rocks and trees. This is why fire is found in rocks and trees.⁵ [1, 4]

Tsimshian: Finding the world always in darkness, the Raven (Giant) went up to heaven. There he found the daughter of the chief of heaven. When she came close to a spring, he changed himself into the leaf of a cedar tree and floated on the water. When the chief's daughter drank the water, the Raven in the form of a leaf was also swallowed, thus he succeeded in being born as her child. The child kept crying. He wanted a box that hung in the chief's house. Inside the box, the daylight was kept. The Raven got a hold of the box and then ran away with it. That is how the sun was

³ Bogoras 1902: 627.

⁴ Bogoras 1902: 640.

⁵ Golder 1907: 292-293.

obtained.⁶ [1, 4]

Kwakiutl: Counselor of the World wanted to steal the box containing the sun from Day Receptacle Woman. He transformed himself into a baby and entered the womb of the woman. After four days, he was born. The baby cried for the box. As soon as he was given the box, the Counselor of the World ran away. He then opened the box, took out the sun and the double-headed serpent mask of the sun. This is how the world obtained the sun. The mask is the daybreak mask used in the winter dance.⁷ [1, 4]

Sinkyone: There was no fire. A child kept crying. People did not know why. When he grew up, he said he feared the fire although people could not see it. People searched for it and discovered that the Spider was hiding the fire inside his body. Coyote gathered many animals. He ordered the animals to do ridiculous things. All tried hard, but the Spider did not laugh. Finally the Skunk came dancing in with his tail stuck up. All laughed and the Spider laughed, too. Then fire shot out of his mouth. Thus the fire was obtained.⁸ [1, 2, 3, 4]

Pomo: In olden days, the sun did not move across the heaven. It only rose above the eastern horizon and sank again. Coyote, wishing to find out the reason, set out to the east with singers and dancers. They arrived at the home of the Sun people. The sun was hanging from one of the rafters of the dance-house. The party of the Coyote entered that house singing and dancing. The Coyote party and the Sun people danced together. While dancing, the Coyote liberated four mice, and they gnawed the sun from the rafters. The Coyote and his party brought the sun back to their village. The people discussed where to situate it and decided to hang it up in the middle of the sky. Various birds try the task, but none succeeded. When finally the Crows volunteered, everyone laughed as they thought the Crows were too slow and too weak for the task. But after much effort, they accomplished the task and received lots of presents from people.⁹ [1, (2), (3), 4]

Most of these examples belong to cosmogony. They explain how in the primordial condition the sun was brought to this world through the workings of a cunning Trickster. In these cases, the sun is not deified. It is simply an object. So we may conclude that while the motif of the acquisition of the sun is identical, there are no parallels in religious significance between the Japanese Sun Goddess Amaterasu and the examples discussed above. Still the emphasis on dancing and laughing in the myths suggests that some kind of ritual for the appearance of light and the sun was important across the entire circum-Pacific area. We must turn our attention to another meaning of this identical motif.

In the case of the Indian myth concerning the emergence of light, it was the

⁶ Boas 1916: 60-62.

⁷ Boas & Hunt 1905: 395-397.

⁸ Kroeber 1919: 347.

⁹ Barret 1906: 44-46.

Dawn goddess who hid in the cave, and what was released from the cave was a horde of cows. The solar and fiery aspect of the original myth seems to be weakened here. However, the myths from Japan and the circum-Pacific region are all about the sun and/or fire. There is no mention of the dawn nor cows. Is this just a coincidence or is there a reason?

I think the persistence of the sun / fire element with the accompanying ritualistic elements of dancing and laughing are due to a common environmental factor which is frequent volcanic eruptions and earthquakes.

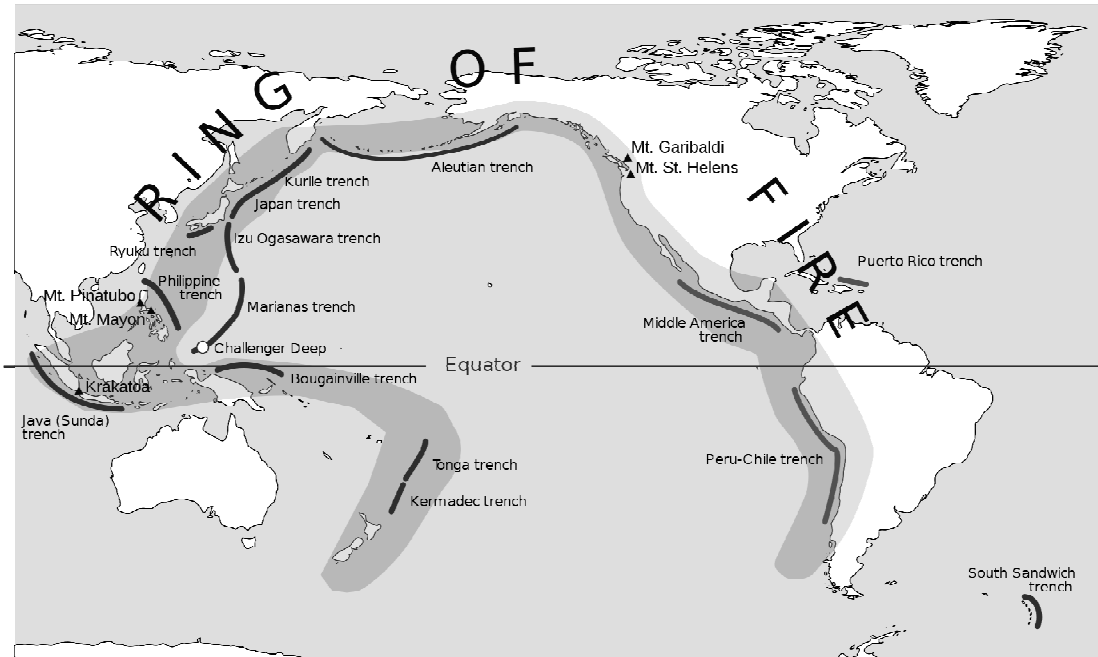


Fig 12.2. The Pacific Ring of Fire

The Pacific Ring of Fire (or sometimes called circum-Pacific belt or circum-Pacific seismic belt) is an area encircling the basin of the Pacific Ocean which frequently has earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. Stretching 40,000 km in a horseshoe shape along the Pacific rim, it is associated with a nearly continuous series of volcanic belts. The Ring of Fire has 452 volcanoes and is home to over 75% of the world's active and dormant volcanoes. In the northern section, the Aleutian Islands, the Kamchatka Peninsula, and Japan are included; in the southern portion, the Mariana Islands, the Philippines, Bougainville, Tonga, and New Zealand; New Guinea and the Indonesian islands of Sumatra / Sumatera, Java, Bali, Flores and Timor lie between the Ring of Fire and the next most active seismic region, the Alpide belt. Crossing the Bering Sea, the Ring covers all the western coasts of the North and South Americas (cf. www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacific_Ring_of_Fire).

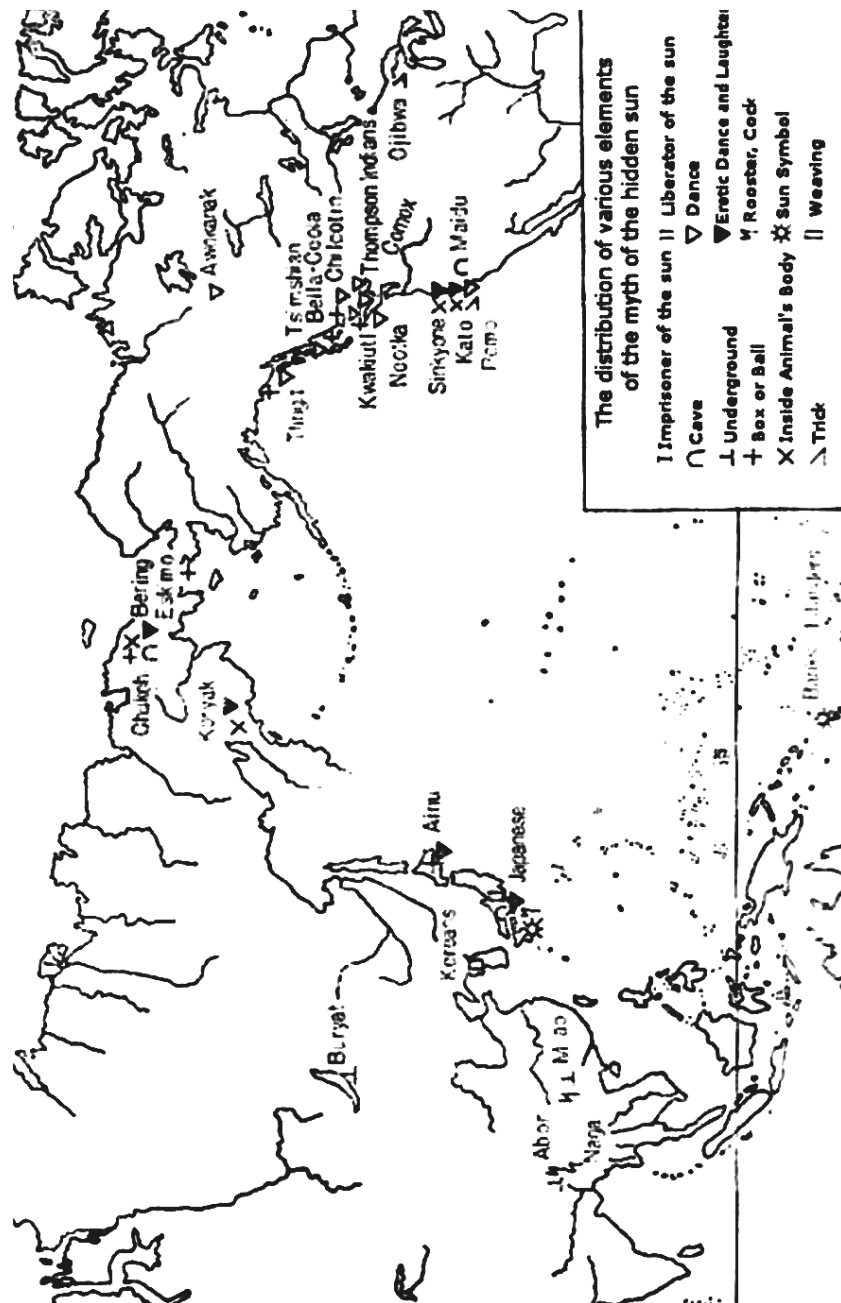


Fig. 12.3. The geographical distribution of elements of the myth of the hidden sun

Due to the dark sky and subsequent famine caused by huge volcanic eruptions, the people from these regions must have remembered these horrible memories in the form of myths, especially myths of the Hidden Sun¹⁰ The sun, volcano, light, and fire are often interchangeable in myth. It is not a coincidence that the Pacific Ring of Fire where volcanic activity is most prominent (Map 2) and the extensive distribution of the myth of the Hidden Sun (Map 3) are overlapping.

¹⁰ Barber & Barber 2004, especially chapters 2, 8, 17.

3. Common structure in classical mythology and culture

The second topic is about a thread that connects the following various topics of classical mythology and the history of Japan that are usually discussed separately:

1. Jomon clay figurines: the Jomon were basically a hunting and gathering society. The Jomon period began around twelve thousand years ago and lasted until the fifth century B.C. when the new agricultural age began which is called the Yayoi period. The Jomon period is characterized by many female figurines. Some vases also have female faces and are shaped like pregnant women. In Japanese myth, Izanami gave birth to the fire god Kagutuchi. The myth says that fire comes from the body of a goddess. This type of myth may have appeared already in the Jomon period. Along with this female symbol, there are examples of stone pillars shaped like penises. These seem to be two symbols visualizing the principle of harmony and cooperation between men and women.

2. World Parents Izanagi and Izanami: The couple of Izanagi and Izanami created the world and gods. They are the parents of the world in Japanese mythology. When the couple was ordered to create the land, there was only the chaotic primordial ocean. The couple were brother and sister. They united and created other gods, but their first child was a deformed leech-child and they let it float away. The motif of the story certainly reminds us of the Flood Myth found among the minority ethnic groups of southern China, including the Miao and the Lao.¹¹

3. Amaterasu and Susanowo: Just like Izanagi and Izanami, Susanowo and Amaterasu are brother and sister. As the ritual of oath-taking, they exchanged belongings, and by chewing and spitting out the pieces, they gave birth to children. This does not involve actual sexual intercourse, but this is certainly symbolic incest. However, with the Hidden Sun motif, their antagonism is clear.

Amaterasu as a Virgin Mother Goddess: As the summary above shows, Amaterasu never had a sexual relationship. She is a virgin goddess. Still, as the result of Susanowo's oath, she became mother of five gods including, Oshihomimi, father of the ruler of the terrestrial land, Hono-ninigi. Like Athena and Virgin Mary, Amaterasu is a Virgin Mother Goddess. She is the ideal type of goddess men dream of. Amaterasu is still worshipped as a titular goddess of the Imperial line since she is claimed as the ancestress of the Imperial family.

Amaterasu as Mirror: Amaterasu is symbolized as mirror. The largest bronze mirror discovered in Japan is 46.5 cm in diameter and weighs 7.95 kg. It is certainly not for cosmetics. The purpose was to reflect the sun beams. The bronze mirror was first imported from China and was believed to expel evil powers. That is why people of the Yayoi culture put mirrors in their graves. So far five hundred bronze mirrors have been discovered in graves.

¹¹ Dundes 1988.

Himiko, the Queen of Yamatai Kingdom: The name of Queen Himiko, the ruler of Yamatai kingdom, appears in the Wei dynasty history *Wei Zhi*, which is part of the history of the Three Kingdom Period (220-280 CE) in China. The text says: ‘The country formerly had a man as ruler. For some seventy or eighty years after that there were disturbances and warfare. Thereupon the people agreed upon a woman for their ruler. Her name was Himiko. She occupied herself with magic and sorcery, bewitching the people. Though mature in age, she remained unmarried. She had a younger brother who assisted her in ruling the country. After she became ruler, there were only a few who saw her. She had a thousand women as attendants, but only one man. He served her food and drink and acted as a medium of communication.’ Himiko seems to be a shamaness. Many examples of Japanese shamanism are of the female-possession type. Both Amaterasu, who hid in the cave, and Ameno-uzume, who became intoxicated through dance, may be included in this category.

Hime-hiko ruling system: The text says that Himiko did not appear in public and the important role of delivering her messages was done by a single man, her brother ‘who assisted her in ruling the country.’ The division of female / male is clear: Himiko, as female, represents the inner, sacred, spiritual and religious vs. her brother, as male, who represents the outer, secular, physical and political. This kind of division of authority is well attested in the *Kojiki* and *Nihonshoki*. Examples of brother and sister pairs whose names are produced by adding the male indicator -biko (hiko) or the female indicator -bime (hime) to the place names they jointly ruled are easily found: Saho-biko and Saho-bime; Nuka-biko and Nuka-bime; Kitsu-biko and Kitsu-bime, Usatsu-biko and Usatsu-bime, etc.¹²

Wonari-gami in Okinawa: Okinawa, that belongs to the southern Ryukyu islands, still preserves a strong tradition of female shamans. Moreover, there is a belief in the protective power of sisters. At the state level, the king was spiritually protected by the highest priestess, Kikoe-no-Okimi, who was no one other than the king’s sister. All sisters were regarded by brothers as a protective deity, *wonari-gami*.

Male-female division of rulership in Japanese new religions: In Japan’s new religions, often the founder is female. Tenrikyō was founded by Miki Nakayama (1798-1887); Ōmotokyō by Nao Deguchi (1836-1918); Reiyūkai expanded its size due to Kimi Kotani (1901-1971); Risshō-Kōseikai’s expansion due to Myōkō Naganuma (1889-1957); Tenshō-Kōtai-Jingūkyō was founded by Sayo Kitamura (1900-1967).

What is interesting is that in almost all these religions there were male organizers along with the female spiritual leaders. Miki Nakayama had as assistant her eldest son Shūji Nakayama (1821-1881) or the carpenter Izōburi (1833-1907); for Nao Deguchi, Onisaburō Deguchi, her son-in-law (1871-1948); for Kimi Kotani, Kakutarō Kubo (1892-1944); for Myōkō Naganuma, Nikkei Niwano (1906-1999).

In my opinion, these topics could be classified into following categories:

¹² Matsumura 1999.

- I. Brother-Sister marriage: 2. World Parents Izanagi and Izanami; 3. Amaterasu and Susanowo.
- II. Brother-Sister antagonism: 3. Amaterasu and Susanowo.
- III. Brother-Sister rulership: 6. Himiko; 7. Hime-hiko system; 8. Wonari-gami in Okinawa; 9. Male-female divisions of new religions.
- IV. Virgin Mother Goddess or Mother-Son Deities: 4. Amaterasu and (Oshiho-mimi) and Hono-ninigi; Athena and Erichthonios; Mary and Jesus.¹³
- V. Corn Mother and Corn-Spirit: 4. Amaterasu and Hono-ninigi

What is most notable here is the Brother-Sister combination. This combination means both the integration and the separation of two spheres. This is naturally one variant of the basic dichotomy model of the human brain: male and female; sister and brother; mother and child; *ying* and *yang*; the sun and moon; secular and profane, etc. Along with the Brother-Sister combination, the Mother-Son combination is also prominent and shows the similar combination of both integration and separation. These two combinations / divisions show the strong tendency of the active presence of females in Japanese history throughout the ages. Whether it stems from geographical or ecological or historical or social reasons is not clear. As the cases of Athena and Mary show, however, such a tendency is not limited to Japan; it could occur in other areas under certain circumstances.

References

- Barber, E.W. & Barber, P.T., 2004, *When they Severed Earth from Sky: How the Human Mind shapes Myth*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Barret, S.A., 1906, 'A Composite Myth of the Pomo Indians', *Journal of American Folklore* 19: 37-51.
- Boas, F. & Hunt, G., 1905, *Kwakwaka'wakw Texts*, Leiden / New York: Knickerbocker Press.
- Boas, F., 1916, *Tsimshian Mythology*, Government Printing Office.
- Bogoras, W., 1902, 'The Folklore of Northeastern Asia as compared with that of Northwestern America', *American Anthropologist*, N. S. 4, pp. 577-683.
- Dundes, A., 1988, *The Flood Myth*, University of California Press.
- Ei'ichiro, I., 1964, 'Mother-Son Deities', *History of Religion* 4: 30-52.
- Golder, F.A., 1907, 'Tlingit Myths', *Journal of American Folklore* 20: 290-295.
- Jochelson, W., 1904, 'The Mythology of the Koryak', *American Anthropologist*, N S. 6:, 413-425.
- Kindaichi, K., 1936, *Yukar*, Iwanami, pp. 130-144.
- Kojiki*, 1982, Chamberlain, Basil Hall trans., Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle.
- Kroeber, A.L., 1919, 'Sinkyone Tales', *Journal of American Folklore* 32: 346-351.
- Matsumura, K., 1996, 'Birds as Symbols of the Realm of the Sacred in Japanese Myth', *Tenri Journal of Religion* 24: 97-134.
- Matsumura, K., 1998, 'Alone among Women- A Comparative Mythic Analysis of the Development of Amaterasu Theology', Inoue Junko ed., *Kami*, Kokugakuin University, pp. 42-71.

¹³ Ei'ichiro 1964.

New Perspectives on Myth

- Matsumura, K., 1999, *Megami no Shinwagaku (Mythology of Goddess)*, Heibonsha.
- Matsumura, K., 2003, 'The *Koki* Story and the Femininity of the Foundress of Tenrikyo', *Women and Religion*, Tenri Yamato Culture Congress, 359-397.
- Matsumura, K., 2006, 'Nelly Naumann's Contribution to the Study of Japanese Religion and Mythology', *Religious Studies Review* 32: 163-168.
- Matsumura, K., 2006, 'Ancient Japan and Religion', in: Swanson, P. & Chilson, C., eds., *Nanzan Guide to Japanese Religions*, University of Hawai'i Press, pp. 131-143.
- Naumann, N., 2000, *Japanese Prehistory- The Material and Spiritual Culture of the Jomon Period*, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag.
- Nihongi (Nihonshoki)*, 1972, Aston, W. G. trans., Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle.
- Paproth, H-J. & Yamada, H., 2002, 'Taryo Obayashi 1929-2001', *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 127: 139-146.
- Witzel, M., 2005, 'Vala and Iwato- The Myth of the Hidden Sun in India, Japan, and Beyond', *Electric Journal of Vedic Studies* 12: 1-69.
- Yamada, H., 2006, 'Mythology of the Taiwan Aborigines: State of the Art', presented at Harvard and Peking University International Conference on Comparative Mythology, May, 2006.
- Yoshida, Atsuhiko, 1977, 'Japanese Mythology and the Indo-European Trifunctional System', *Diogenes* 98 (1977) 93-116.

Part IV. Theoretical and methodological advances

