

The Sujin Religious Revolution

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The *Kojiki* and *Nihonshoki* accounts of the reign of the Sujin emperor, Mimaki-iri-hiko, conventionally dated 97–30 B.C.E., make it clear that this era marked a decisive departure from what went before, above all in court religion and the relation of religion to the state. This paper argues that his reign should actually be dated much later, perhaps ca 300–318 C.E., and more significantly that it followed the reign (conventionally dated 201–269 C.E.) of the shamaness-queen known to those chronicles as Okinaga-tarashi-hime, or the Jingō empress. My case also depends on the common identification of her, or her era, with the Pimiko of the Chinese *Wei chih* 魏志.² In this light, certain cultic events associated with Sujin's era can be understood as nothing less than spiritual revolution. The removal of the great goddess Amaterasu from the imperial shrine to remote Ise, and the discrediting of the shamaness Yamato-totohi-momoso-hime in favor of revelations received through dreams by the sovereign himself, turned prevailing norms of imperial religion upside down. The upheaval's fundamental motif was the replacement of Jingō-era female deities above and priestesses below with male counterparts—the “patriarchal revolution” which certain theorists have suggested occurred in many parts of the world as Neolithic culture gave way to metallurgy and the dawn of history (STONE 1976).

¹ Some of the arguments of this paper were presented in preliminary form in ELLWOOD 1986, pp. 23–37.

² This history of the Wei Dynasty, 220–265, the northern of the “Three Kingdoms,” is a section of the *San kuo chih* (Three Kingdoms History) of ca 297 C. E.

Sujin and His Age

Let us look at Sujin and his age. The ruler's Japanese name, Mimaki, suggests Mimana, the southern tip of Korea associated with ancient Japan. His full title includes the expression *Iri-hiko*, "incoming prince," and the *Kojiki* actually speaks of him as *Hatsukuni shirashi shi Mimaki sumera mikoto*, "His imperial majesty Mimaki who first ruled the land," a phrase almost identical to that used by the *Nihon-shoki* to refer to the legendary first emperor, Jinmu tennō³ (PHILIPPI 1968, pp. 199, 208; SHINTEN, pp. 80, 85, 273; ASTON 1956, p. 133).

These expressions could be taken to imply that the Sujin emperor was actually an invader from Korea, and the real beginner of the imperial dynasty as we know it. If his reign was, as I propose, in the late third and/or early fourth centuries, it would roughly coincide with the onset of the Kofun period, with its new style of monumental tombs, succeeding the archaic agricultural Yayoi era, and the priestesses and shamanesses that so well fitted its spiritual style. Thus Egami Namio, in his celebrated "horseriders" theory, associates Sujin with the invasion of mounted conquerors he puts at the dawn of Japanese history. The invasion, among other things, supplemented the "horizontal" cosmology connected to Jingō and her world with "vertical" themes involving male deities ascending and descending between heaven and earth (EGAMI 1966; OKA 1958). Whether one accepts the "horseriders" theory in full or not, it is evident nonetheless that Sujin's coming to power represents a clear break with the past. New styles, new ideology, even new religion become central to national life.

The transition was troubled, as one might expect of such a major event. The texts refer to epidemics, vagabondage, and rebellion. In this situation, two kami were worshiped together in the palace, Amaterasu and Yamato no Ōkunidama, the male spirit of the land of Yamato. This made the emperor uneasy, and apparently he considered that their joint presence in his precincts had something to do with the troubles his reign faced. Thus he entrusted Amaterasu to the worship of a princess-priestess called Toyo-suki-iri-hime no mikoto and had her removed to a village some distance away. In the next reign, the shining goddess was taken on the long journey to Ise by Yamato-hime.

³ The expression for Jinmu is *Hatsukuni shirasu sumera mikoto*, "The imperial majesty who first ruled the land."

The male deity stayed, and at first was put in the care of another princess-priestess, Nunaki-iri-hime. But this woman was reportedly bald and lean, and thus unfit for the god's service. Therefore the emperor, continuing to seek alleviation of his country's distress, assembled all the deities on a plain and made inquiries of them through a shamaness, Yamato-totohi-momoso-hime. A god spoke through the lips of the priestess in the expected manner, saying, "Why is the emperor anxious about the ungoverned state of the country? If he properly worshipped me, without fail it would become pacified."

Mimaki wished to know what deity had spoken to him, and was told, "I am the kami who dwells within the boundaries of the land of Yamato, and my name is Ōmononushi no kami." Though they are sometimes treated in this narrative as separate deities, Ōmononushi is undoubtedly a variant of the Yamato Ōkunidama who had been committed to the unsuitably bald and lean priestess, both names really being titles for the male land-spirit of Yamato. These divine patrons, though they may ascend and descend between heaven and earth, are strongly associated with a place and its resident male ruler. They—or he—may thus be contrasted with the wide-ranging Amaterasu, who then, before her enshrinement at Ise, enjoyed a series of highly mobile associations with imperial *miko* or shamanesses. The goddess went wherever the elect priestess went, or herself led her mortal handmaiden on extensive travels, such as Jingō's conquest of Korea or Yamato-hime's lengthy pilgrimage to her place of repose at Ise.

The emperor's worship of Ōmononushi must have brought him keen disappointment. Nothing to the good resulted. His realm remained in turmoil. In increasing desperation, the Sujin sovereign prepared himself more and more assiduously to receive divine favor. He bathed, practiced abstinences, and purified not only himself but also the palace. Then he prayed the prayer of a suppliant *in extremis*, saying, "Is anything now undone in our worship of the kami? Being unanswered is a terrible thing. I pray that I may be further taught in a dream, so as to be granted the blessing of the god." This petition was answered, and the answer—if our hypothesis is correct—marked a new beginning in imperial religion. The ruler had a dream that very night in which the god Ōmononushi appeared to him, and said that the disorder of the kingdom would cease at once if the emperor would have the boy Ōtataneko conduct his

worship. Not long after, three members of the court, two men and a woman, reported identical dreams in which they were told by a deity that Ōtataneko was to be appointed *kannushi* of the worship of Ōmononushi, and also that a certain Ichishi no Nagaochi was to conduct the rites of Ōkunidama. Then assuredly the land would find peace.

The emperor searched for the chosen Ōtataneko, finally locating him in a village in Izumo. Producing the youthful new priest before the assembled court, he asked him about his parentage. The boy replied that his father was the god Ōmononushi himself, and his mother Ikudamayori no hime, "Caller of living spirits," clearly a shamanistic name. The correct worship was then done. The two land deities were first propitiated with offerings from the sovereign. Divination ascertained that worship of any of the other many gods was presently ill-advised. Afterwards, however, a fresh divination brought word that such worship would now be favored. So the emperor

took the opportunity of separately worshipping the assemblage of eighty myriads of Deities. He also settled which were to be Heavenly shrines and which Earthly shrines, and allotted land and houses for the service of the Gods. Thereupon the pestilence first ceased; the country at length had peace, the five kinds of grain were produced, and the peasantry enjoyed abundance (ASTON 1956, p. 154; *SHINTEN*, pp. 290-93).

So, with these large-scale sacred labors, the new reign was rightly established. The Sujin emperor's basic problem was resolved through the proper worship of male land deities by their proper male priests, advice pointedly received from a god in a dream of the male sovereign, after the old-line shamaness oracles were found inadequate.

Three further incidents in the Sujin chronicle are of interest in connection with our narrative. Shortly after the successful worship of Ōmononushi, a brewer named Ikuhi presented the emperor with sacred saké and a song declaring it was brewed by the god Ōmononushi. The latter is here said to be the kami of the venerable Miwa shrine. (This shrine, still sacred to him, is well maintained by the saké industry to this day.) We are now told also that Ōtataneko, the young priest, was the first ancestor of the lord (*kimi*) of Miwa.

The second incident presents a prince out travelling, when he heard a youthful woman singing by the side of the road. Listening, he ascertained that the words seemed to be trying to warn the

emperor of a threat against his life. The maiden, however, declined to elucidate the admonition in conversation, insisting she was "only singing." But she repeated the ominous song, and the prince hurried off to report the incident to his sovereign. At court, Yamato-totohi-momoso-hime, the shamaness who had earlier given the emperor fruitless instructions for the worship of Ōmononushi, but here is identified as the ruler's aunt and "a shrewd and intelligent person," explained—on what grounds we are not told—that the event was a sign a prince called Take-hani-yasu was plotting treason. Thus forewarned, the emperor was able to defeat the rebellion when it arose.

Yamato-totohi-momoso-hime's shrewdness, however, failed her in the third incident. She became the wife of the deity she served, Ōmononushi no kami. But, in a tale which reflects a common folkloric theme, we are told that this divine husband came to her only at night, so she had no knowledge of her lover's appearance. Waxing curious about it, she begged him to stay a short while into the morning. He consented, saying that he would remain in her cosmetics case. But when she looked therein, the eager bride saw only a small but beautiful snake. Startled, she screamed. The kami then suddenly changed into his human form, but that was small consolation to the shamaness. Declaring that she had caused him shame by crying out, he departed by treading through the void and ascending up to heaven by way of Mount Mimoro. Overtaken by remorse, the princess fell, stabbed herself in the genitals with a chopstick, and died (ASTON 1956, pp. 158–59; *SHINTEN*, pp. 299–300).

This narrative further suggests the disqualification of shamanesses and specifically Yamato-totohi-momoso. It also reiterates a basic motif pertaining to the land-gods, their "vertical cosmology" universe in which they seem chiefly to travel between earth and heaven via mountains. The same theme emerges a little later when the Sujin emperor summoned his two sons. He told them he loved them equally, and did not know which to make his successor. He asked them each to dream—another instance of male dream rather than shamanistic divination as authoritative in the Sujin era—and let the dreams be an augury. The elder brother recounted next morning a dream in which he had ascended Mount Mimoro and, facing east, had flourished a sword and spear eight times in that direction. The younger brother said he had also gone up Mount Mimoro, but had there stretched a cord to the four quarters. The emperor judged that this meant the latter should have the sovereignty, since he had

dealt with all four directions, while the elder son, who had faced only the east, should rule that quarter of the realm. The younger son subsequently rose to the imperial dignity as the Suinin emperor, second and probably last of the Sujin dynasty (ASTON 1956, p. 161; *SHINTEN* p. 299–300).

The *Nihonshoki* Suinin narrative offers further insights into the nature of what may be called Sujin-Suinin culture. It is full of comings and goings with Korea, sacred jewels, praise of the greatness of the late Sujin emperor, Mimaki, and evidence of further rebellion and instability in the realm. Yamato-hime succeeded to the priesthood of Amaterasu and finally enshrined the great goddess at Ise. One interesting passage appears to be a misplaced variant of the disqualification of the priestess first appointed to the worship of Ōkunidama. After the departure of Yamato-hime, the ruler divined to see who should be appointed to conduct the rites of the great god. The choice fell upon Nunaki-waka-hime, who sounds much like the bald and lean Nunaki-iri-hime of the Sujin account. But her body was emaciated, so she was unable to execute her functions, and, as in the earlier account she was replaced by the man Nagauchi no sukune.

Let us now summarize the basic themes of Sujin spirituality, thereby providing referents to assess the extent of radical change from what preceded it.

1. Female shamanism is repeatedly discredited in the Sujin accounts. Even in serving a male deity, Yamato-totohi-momoso-hime was unable to give correct instructions on worship, and later perished as a consequence of shaming her divine husband. In these narratives, women assigned to the worship of the great land kami inevitably fail.
2. Intimacy with goddesses, or with a god and goddess together in the palace apparently in a sort of *hieros gamos*, is also not desired. The two tandem deities made the emperor uneasy, and the goddess was exiled in the care of her priestess. But Sujin's relations with the great god himself involved more fear and trembling than familiarity.
3. The land deities, Ōkunidama or Ōmononushi, or sometimes simply Yamato no Ōkami, became centrally important in the Sujin era. They are associated with vertical cosmology; gods and princes ascend Mount Mimoro and make their way to

heaven. Other mythological themes also obtain, of course, in the Sujin-Suinin narratives—the snake whose form the god took in the bridal chamber, sacred gems, sacred ponds, and a probably extraneous Tokoyo story at the end of Suinin. But the “horizontal” and sea emphasis which, as we shall see, characterizes the mythology of the Jīngō accounts, is impressively replaced by ascensions: mountain and sky.

4. Finally, we note the importance of revelatory dreams. Though such dreams were important to Jinmu, they have little further role in the *Ki-Ki*⁴ until Sujin, for whom the dream-revelations of Ōmononushi were conspicuously more reliable than the trance-mediumship of the shamaness. That this is related to spiritual male supremacy is suggested not only by the fact that the dreams involve a male deity and appear chiefly to male dreamers, instructing them to employ a male priest for the god; but it also seems to connect the narrative to a more general patriarchal pattern. Throughout the *Nihonshoki* and *Kojiki*, the kami speak through women in shamanistic trance, but rarely so to males, while it is usually men who are granted revelatory dreams. Unlike the vague and allusive trance-communications of the shamaness, so characteristic of sibyls through the ages, Ōmononushi's dream-words to the emperor are succinct and clear.

These characteristics of Sujin-Suinin religion, together with the obviously traumatic circumstances in which they appeared, unmistakably indicate something new in strong reaction against what went before. If what is new is male deities speaking in dreams to a male sovereign, and demanding worship by a male priest, what went before could well have been the opposite of all that: female deities communicating through shamanesses by trance mediumship to (or as) empresses. These might be goddesses who deprecated worship by or to males. If masculine deities now ascend and descend mountains between heaven and earth, the opposite might be a goddess who travelled freely on the horizontal plane over land and sea.

These Sujin opposites sound very much like the mythico-religious world of the Jīngō kōgo narratives, and of Pimiko in the *Wei chih*. Both these undoubtedly reflect the archaic agricultural world of

⁴ The *Kojiki* and *Nihonshoki*.

Yayoi culture, soon to be rather abruptly displaced, at least in the elite world, by the Kofun revolution. Let us look at some of the former world's basic characteristics.

Religious Characteristics of the Jingō Era

We are told in the *Kojiki* that the Jingō empress frequently became divinely possessed, and these descriptions of occultism afford an excellent entry into her life. When he was alive, her husband, the Chūai emperor, would play the koto while the empress went into trance. After his death a court minister played it for the imperial shamaness. In both instances another minister called the *saniwa* 沙庭 would interpret the oracles. The high point of the Chūai account is the manner of his death—at the hands of a spirit during one of those seances. The sittings were apparently conducted in the dark. On this occasion, according to the *Kojiki*, a deity—Amaterasu, one gathers from a later reference—spoke through the lips of the empress to say there was a rich land to the west, which would be given into the imperial hands. But the emperor doubted, saying the message was from a deceiving deity, that when one looked west from Japan one saw only water. The deity, enraged, then said in the voice of the sceptic's wife, "You are not to rule this kingdom. Go straight in one direction." Realizing all too well what this meant, the panicked *saniwa* told Chūai to continue playing the instrument. But after a time the music stopped. When the lamp was turned up, the emperor was found dead (PHILIPPI 1968, pp. 257–58; *SHINTEN*, p. 107).

This terrible event, which so forcefully expresses the power of female shamanism on the imperial level, was followed by an *ōharae* 大祓, a great purification of the land, with expiatory offerings. A corresponding search was made for semiritual offenses: the backward skinning of animals, filling in ditches, incest, and bestiality. (These acts, earlier presented in the *Ki-Ki* as enormities done by Susanoo in his rage, clearly bespeak contrary-to-nature taboos whose violation can only bring calamity.) Undeterred, the now-widowed empress continued her mediumship as she prepared the expedition to Korea. She set apart a sacred rice field and tilled it, like Amaterasu in heaven. Going into battle she was accompanied by the *aramitama* 荒魂, "rough spirit," of Amaterasu, and on her return by the goddess's *nigimitama* 和魂, "smooth spirit." Amaterasu, incidentally

but perhaps importantly, is never alluded to in the Jingō chronicle as a solar deity. In one *Nihonshoki* passage, Jingō receives a kami, presumably Amaterasu, who presents herself both as the deity who dwells at Ise and the princess (*hime*) of Mukatsu, the opposite land, Korea (ASTON 1956, p. 225; *SHINTEN*, p. 359). In a sake song ascribed to the reign, there is reference to Tokoyo, the paradisaical land off in the distance, usually over the sea (ASTON 1956, p. 244; *SHINTEN*, p. 373). Most of the Jingō deities, like Amaterasu and the Sumiyoshi kami, have sea associations.

In short, religion in this era of a shamanistic empress centered on a terrestrial cosmology, with the sea important. But there is no reference to the sun and little to heaven or to the masculine land deities. Amaterasu, though born of the sea and ascended to the high plain of heaven, nonetheless has the earth-goddess characteristics we might expect from her cohabitation with the earth god in the palace shrine at the beginning of Sujin. In the mythology, she essentially does earthly things though in heaven—produce children with her ascending-descending male consort, her brother Susanoo; celebrate the harvest festival with her maidens after tilling the broad and narrow fields of heaven; hide in a rock cave—all as though she were really a heavenly model of the earthly instead of a true *ama no kami*.

Even more significantly, in the Jingō (and Sujin) material she is above all a shamaness-goddess, a “mysterious visitor” who speaks in the uncanny atmosphere of the seance, who comes from or goes to distant places on the horizontal cosmology map. She is faithful not so much to a place or house, though she sometimes called Ise home, as to her priestess, Jingō or Yamato-hime, and will lead her favored daughter on campaigns or wanderings to faraway lands as a rough or smooth spirit. Furthermore, after Amaterasu is removed from the palace during Sujin—assuming he comes after Jingō—little more is heard of Amaterasu until some four centuries later, in the “Shinto revival” of the late seventh century that also saw the compilation of the *Ki-Ki* texts begun. The great goddess then enjoyed a curious rediscovery just in time to find undying prominence in those texts and so in the imperial ideology. Perhaps it is no accident, as we shall see, that those years also featured the reigns of three sovereign empresses.

In the Jingō era, there is emphasis on a very archaic concept of ritual pollution and purification. The sacred rice field harvested by

the sovereign priestess also has the ring of Neolithic spirituality about it. Rocks have sacred importance: one was marvelously split to allow irrigation of the fields; a Korean king swore allegiance on a rock because of its permanence; a disgraced minister went to die in a rock-cave reminiscent of the heavenly one from which the great goddess emerged alive. But the great unifying theme of the era is the all-powerful shamanism of the ruling woman, unmarried since the untimely death of her spouse.

Dating of Sujin Reign

This brings us back to the problem of dating, and the question of whether Sujin preceded Jingō as the *Ki-Ki* chronology has it, or whether we should reverse this order. While the obvious suppression of the spiritual feminine in Sujin does not in itself depend on any revision of the traditional sequence, the larger historical significance of it as a major turning point does. The conventional dating was arrived at by taking the *Nihonshoki* reign lengths at face value and working backwards to Jinmu tennō, the first emperor supposedly enthroned in 660 B.C.E. It has him followed by a series of briefly described and clearly contrived figures until we come to Sujin, dated 97–30 B.C.E. The inauguration of the Sujin epoch—dynasty, in all likelihood—clearly marks some sort of new start, suggested by the ruler's titles, *Iri-hiko* and *Hatsukuni shirashi*. His is a narrative of a much fuller, more anecdotal, and more concretely historical character than those between him and Jinmu. It begins, as we have noted, in a time of insurrection and other troubles such as might well have marked a major political and social upheaval. After the Sujin group comes another shadowy transition followed by the cluster of rulers centering around the redoubtable Jingō (traditionally dated 201–269 C.E.), her consort Chūai, and her major successors Ōjin and Nintoku. This brings us to the end of the fourth century.

But these early *Nihonshoki* dates are obviously fanciful. Like accounts of ancient kings around the world, the narratives push them impossibly far back and allow for improbable life spans; Sujin, for example, lived one hundred twenty years by these accounts. The first sixteen sovereigns—that is, through Nintoku, who died around 400 C.E.—average lives of over a century. Then, suddenly, more realistic dates appear, and the narratives, while still embellished, sound more genuinely historical. The Shinpuku-ji manuscript of the

Kojiki, however, gives us a clue to an alternative dating (PHILIPPI 1968, p. 18). It presents glosses that give the death dates of certain emperors, beginning with Sujin, in accordance with the Chinese sixty-year calendric cycle. These do not fit with the traditional chronology, and so represent another possibility. Some scholars, such as Kanda Hideo, speculate the glosses in the continental style may derive from records kept by literate immigrants, and so are reasonably accurate (KANDA 1959, pp. 222–23; Donald PHILIPPI, premier translator of the *Kojiki*, calls their dates “surprisingly probable” [1968, p. 18]). The problem is just how many cycles to go back in any given case. Sujin is said to have died in the twelfth month of the fifth year of the tiger; Kanda figures this could have been C.E. 18, 78, 138, 198, 258, or 318. Kanda selected the date 258 as most likely. However I prefer 318, which incidentally would make Sujin an unknowing contemporary of another troubled imperial soul who wrought immense changes in the religious world, the emperor Constantine.

The problem with 258 is that it puts Sujin in the middle of the traditional reign of Jingō kōgo. Here I would agree with Gari LEDYARD that the *Nihonshoki* is probably correct in placing the reign of Jingō in mid-third century (1975, p. 238).⁵ This is one dating the Japanese chroniclers could not fudge. As we have seen, the *Wei Chih*, the Chinese history known to the literate in Japan at the time of the *Nihonshoki*'s compilation, tells of diplomatic exchanges between Japan and China beginning in 238.⁶ It relates that the island nation (or a part of it) was ruled by a shamaness-queen they called Pimiko or Pimiha (probably from *hime*, “princess,” though some have suggested *hi-miko*, “sun-shamaness”) who resided in a well-guarded stockade, enchanted the people with magic, was unmarried, and lived with a thousand women but only one man. He brought her food and drink and served as her medium of communication with the outside world (TSUNODA, DE BARY, and KEENE 1958, pp. 4–7).

It seems highly probable that this mysterious ruler, despite certain inconsistencies, was none other than the Jingō empress of the *Ki-Ki*.

⁵ I am indebted to this seminal article for inspiring much of the thinking that has gone into this paper. Ledyard does not, however, question the placing of the Chūai/Jingō era after Sujin, perhaps because religious characteristics do not figure in his historical reconstruction.

⁶ Passages from the *Wei chih* or Wei dynasty history are explicitly quoted in the Jingō chronicles of the *Nihonshoki* to document her diplomatic exchanges with China. See ASTON 1956, pp. 245–46, and *SHINTEN*, pp. 373–74. These passages provide dates which begin 238 C. E.

Indeed, the writers of the latter were no doubt influenced by knowledge of the continental account. Perhaps the anomalous inclusion of a ruling empress was forced on the Japanese chroniclers by the presence of that report. The "one man" could have been the *saniwa*, or possibly her unfortunate husband, Chūai, whose marital status might have been misunderstood on one hand or the other. His death-date by the *Kojiki* glosses could have been C.E. 362, 302, or 242; the last would fit in well with the narrative as we envision it.

It is of course not impossible for a Jingō in power in 238 to have lost her husband in 242, then to have died herself in time to have been followed by "troubles" and a Sujin emperor who himself died as early as 258. (Despite the generous official chronology, a variant *Nihonshoki* text in Suinin tells us that Sujin was short-lived. ASTON 1956, p. 177; *SHINTEN*, p. 314.) Nonetheless, it seems to me that putting his death at 258 rather than 318 is crowding events of such momentous consequence. If the *Wei chih* is at all reliable, we need also to put between Jingō, and any successful male successor to the mystic empress, an unsuccessful bid for power by a "king." We need to allow for his attempt then being followed by a spate of assassination and murder in which over a thousand were slain. After that, we must permit the accession of a relative of Pimiko named Iyo, a girl of thirteen. She, the Chinese text avers, established a regime, no doubt on the model of Pimiko's, which seems to have been the latest word from Japan to have reached the compilers of the *Wei chih* before its issuance in about 297, or at least by the end of the Wei era in 265. We are left with the impression Iyo's reign was then firmly in place. The *Wei chih* says:

When Pimiko passed away, a great mound was raised, more than a hundred paces in diameter. Over a hundred male and female attendants followed her to the grave. Then a king was placed on the throne, but the people would not obey him. Assassination and murder followed; more than one thousand were thus slain. A relative of Pimiko named Iyo, a girl of thirteen, was [then] made queen and order was restored. Cheng [the Chinese ambassador] issued a proclamation to the effect that Iyo was the ruler. Then Iyo sent a delegation of twenty under the grandee Yazaku, General of the Imperial Guard, to accompany Cheng home [to China] (TSUNODA, DE BARY, and KEENE 1958, p. 6).

But if Sujin had disrupted this matriarchal paradise around 300, died in 318, was succeeded by his son the Suinin emperor, and the

latter reigned a reasonable twenty years, things would work out about right for Seimu, the next sovereign for whom a death-date is given in the *Kojiki* glosses, to die in 355, the date generally assigned to his second year of the hare. There is, in other words, “room” in the first half of the fourth century to slip in a Sujin-Suinin sequence of reigns.

Of more substantial importance than the date, however, is the sequence and the religious significance of that sequence. Placing Sujin approximately 300–318 (or even, say, 250–258) but after Jingō—or at least what she represented—illustrates the heuristic value of the feminist “patriarchal revolution” concept. That model brings powerfully into focus the female spirituality characteristic of the Jingō/Pimiko religious era, suggests it is continuous with the pattern at the onset of Sujin’s reign, and indicates the monumental significance of the changes that followed under Sujin. Paradigm shifts so far-reaching could not be switched on and off as easily as one would have to believe to accept uncritically the official sequence that puts Jingō after Sujin.

The argument does not, however, depend solely on theoretical considerations. As we have noted, the empress Jingō’s two great successors, Ōjin and Nintoku, are the last to have questionable dates or improbably long reigns, 269–310 and 310–399 respectively by the *Nihonshoki* convention. But while there is excellent reason for putting Jingō around her conventional dates, 201–269, other evidence exists for pushing her putative son, Ōjin, and his heir Nintoku, toward the end of the fourth century and beyond. Many events of these reigns involved Korea, and the Korean history, the *Tongkam* 通鑑, consistently gives dates one hundred twenty years later than the *Nihonshoki* for what appear to be the same occurrences, making the Japanese narrative off by exactly two calendric cycles (ASTON 1956, p. 256 and *passim*). Thus the date of a Korean king during the reign of Ōjin is given as 272 by the *Nihonshoki* and 392 in the more probable Korean source. The same glosses in the *Kojiki* by which we dated Sujin 258 or 318 can give 394 for Ōjin’s death and 427 for Nintoku’s. These dates fit the Korean chronicle and flow smoothly into the subsequent, more historical lists, with the glosses and the conventional *Nihonshoki* death dates virtually matching by the middle of the fifth century. The point is that if Ōjin and Nintoku are given more realistic reign lengths and put where they surely ought to be at two sixty-year cycles after the *Nihonshoki* dating, there

is, again, “room” early in the fourth century to slip in Sujin and Suinin between Jingō and Seimu.

The colorless Seimu emperor, Waka-tarashi-hiko—if he is not just a cipher for a period of confusion or of no records—could have succeeded Suinin in the 330s or 340s, his death-date by the *Kojiki* glosses appearing to be 355. But the “tarashi” element in his name, shared by Chūai and Jingō (Tarashi-nakatsu-hiko and Okinaga-tarashi-hime respectively), boldly suggests ties to their house as forcefully as “iri-hiko” marks the Sujin-Suinin dynasty (Suinin was Ikume-iri-hiko-isachi), and no doubt proclaims some sort of “restoration,” probably continued by Ōjin and Nintoku. Of course these sovereigns could instead—or also—mark the ascendancy of the “Wa Thalassocracy” of King Homuda (Ōjin) and King Ō-Sazaki (Nintoku) proposed by Gari Ledyard.

Certain other events point toward the reconstruction we have proposed. If Sujin and Suinin were actually prior to Jingō and Chūai, it is a wonder that Chūai was apparently totally ignorant of the existence of Korea, and Jingō knew of it only by occult means, for Suinin’s story reports considerable commerce with that peninsula. Sujin is said to have ennobled several families prominent in fifth- to seventh-century affairs, but inconspicuous in the Jingō era. At the end of Suinin we are told that *haniwa* were substituted for human sacrifice at the imperial funeral, but the *Wei chih*, as we have seen, tells us that Pimiko was followed in death by over a hundred male and female attendants. All these items urgently suggest greater continuity if Sujin/Suinin followed Jingō, with Mimaki conceivably an incomer from Korea, which would explain both his name and the upsurge of Korean relationships after the arrival of his house.

Is there positive evidence for our reconstruction? Again, only tantalizing hints exist. Though the chroniclers have Jingō succeeded by her son Homuda, the Ōjin emperor, the effort seems strained. They are forced to evoke a miraculous gestation, and make no attempt to conceal that nonetheless his accession was, at best, deeply troubled. The prince’s birth was delayed by a magical stone the empress wore under her clothes until the conquest of Korea was completed. Despite this remarkable beginning the child was known to have enemies at home. To deceive them, the returning ship was draped in mourning as though the heir had died. Only after sharp fighting did he supposedly come to the throne. It is likely, however, that this succession was in fact aborted, the wondrously born but

tragic prince none other than the deposed or murdered king of which the *Wei chih* speaks, and Ōjin—as we have proposed—a ruler of 120 years later, after Sujin, Suinin, and Seimu, though possibly in some sense a restoration of Jingō's "house."

Religion in the era of Ōjin, Nintoku, and their direct successors appears to be, as one might expect, an amalgamation of the two previous extremes. Themes are the *hitsugi* 日嗣, "sun-succession," concept of the imperial house, which has Korean parallels, and the imperial celebration of the *niiname* 新嘗 or harvest festival, suggesting both vertical cosmology and agrarian "Amaterasu" themes respectively. But there is no hint of restoration of the strongest Jingō-era motif, female spiritual/political potency on the levels of goddesses, shamanesses, priestesses, and empresses. Women in both heaven and earth remained, as they have in Japan ever since Sujin finished his work, decorous figureheads in a patriarchal order, or subordinates.

What then of Iyo, the princess related to Pimiko who the *Wei chih* indicates was brought to power after those bloody events, but who does not appear in the *Ki-Ki* lineup of sovereigns? Was she actually an unknown ruler of Japan in the late third century? Was an empress whose name and memory have been suppressed the immediate predecessor of an invading Sujin? Are there any hints of such a person as Iyo in the *Ki-Ki*?

Two curious possibilities present themselves. Given the garbled nature of these memoirs, both—or neither—may contain some particles of the truth. An Iyo who was thirteen at the time of the dramatic events marking the succession to Jingō, say around 270, would have been an aristocratic middle-aged lady by Sujin's heyday. There was a woman important in Sujin's court called Tohotsu Ayume Makuwashi-hime, though whether she was the emperor's wife or concubine depends on whether one gives credence to the *Kojiki* or *Nihonshoki*. The Chinese could easily have rendered the peculiar element Ayu (trout) in her name as Iyo. Moreover it is said she was the daughter of a certain Arakawa, identified as female chieftain (*tobe* 戸畔 or *kuninomiya-suko-tobe*) of Kii (for a discussion of this title, see PHILIPPI 1968, p. 463). Thus she comes out as at least a powerfully-connected representative of a matriarchal world now passing away.

Further, Ayume was mother of the Toyo-suki-iri-hime to whom the worship of Amaterasu was entrusted by Sujin, and who was made to take the goddess and her cult away from the palace to an

outlying village. Ayume was mother also of the prince who was unsuccessful in the contest of dreams for the succession and sent out to rule the East (whence his mother had come) only. Was this imperial woman, whose children underwent such delicately-contrived fates, a person who had once held high authority but had finally been co-opted by marriage into the regimen of a conqueror? A woman whose progeny, for obvious political reasons, had to be treated with respect, yet at the same time kept away from the levers of supreme power in both religion and the state?

The other curious narrative could actually refer to the Chinese expedition on which the *Wei chih* account of Iyo is based, although a later segment of the story makes the visitor appear to come from Korea. (But we should note that the Chinese envoys undoubtedly sailed from a Korean port.) It is found in Suinin but is explicitly said to have begun in the much-praised reign of Mimaki, or Sujin. It relates that an envoy came from Kara, Korea, or China, and met a certain Itsutsu-hiko who gave out that he was the king of the land, and there were not two kings. But after the visitor had observed him closely, he realized that this individual did not have the character of a true king. Later, when the foreigner found his way to the palace of Mimaki, he recognized in that place the qualities of genuine royalty. This was despite the fact that he arrived just after the Sujin ruler's death. But he served his Suinin successor for three years before returning to his own country, which the Japanese ruler instructed him to name Mimana after the late sovereign of Japan! (ASTON 1956, p. 167; *SHINTEN*, p. 304)

Given a sex change and the Chinese tendency in these accounts brutally to contract and roughly transliterate the difficult Japanese names (in the later *Sung shu* 宋書 history, the Japanese Anko and Yūryaku emperors come out as Ko and Wu or Bu), Itsutsu himself (herself?) could easily be Iyo, while the opening of the story could just possibly contain a confused memory of the Chinese envoy Cheng, who had gone so far as to proclaim Iyo the ruler of Japan. If so, that portion of the narrative, with its correction of the outsider's initial impression, can be seen as a transparent attempt on the Japanese side to deal with what, in light of subsequent events, was clearly a misunderstanding.⁷

⁷ The *Ki-Ki* texts contain a farrago of puzzling, and sometimes bizarre, songs and incidents whose reason for inclusion or even meaning is difficult for the modern reader to fathom. But

Here then is a very speculative reconstruction of the reigns in the period under discussion:

Chūai and Jingō: ca 230–242 C.E.⁸

Jingō alone: 242–269

A time of troubles

Iyo: 271–299

The “Iri-hiko” invasion or usurpation:

Sujin: 300–318

Suinin: 318–ca 335

A quasi-“restoration” of the Chūai-Jingō-Iyo dynasty:

Seimu: 335–355⁹

Ōjin: 355–394

Nintoku: 394–427

it is no doubt safe to assume that they frequently contain veiled allusions, now obscure or lost, to current events. One sometimes gets a sense some of these provocative passages may even contain hints to alternative, though unorthodox, histories. Two such items present themselves in relation to the Ayume and Itsutsu narratives above. They perhaps deserve no more than a footnote, but should not be overlooked entirely, since a possible reading of them as veiled history could support our speculation that the Jingō empress was in fact succeeded by an Empress Iyo, identical with Ayume and Itsutsu, and not by the male heir advanced by the official register of rulers.

First, the Jingō chronicles—both the *Kojiki* and *Nihonshoki* consider this seemingly minor episode important enough to recount—tell of the empress once stopping by the banks of a river to angle for trout (*ayu*) and catching one, which was taken as an augury of good fortune in her ventures. The *Nihonshoki* adds that men never catch fish at this place. In the *Kojiki* the *ayu* incident comes immediately after the birth of Jingō’s heir-presumptive. We are reminded of the unusual *ayu* element in Ayume’s name; the river where Jingō fished was called Ogawa, “little river”; Ayume’s chieftainess mother was Arakawa, “rough river.” (PHILIPPI 1968, p. 264; ASTON 1956, p. 227; *SHINTEN*, pp. 109, 360. Philippi also cites *Man’yōshū* songs based on this incident.)

The other episode is also found in both *Ki-Ki* texts. In it we are told that the same crown prince had a dream in which a god appeared and offered to exchange names with him, which was done before the prince acceded to the throne, supposedly as the Ōjin emperor. The name of the god, however, was Isasa-wake, which linguistically seems very similar to Itsutsu; could the story veil an outcome in which the prince did not, in fact, accede but was replaced by someone of the other name? (PHILIPPI 1968, pp. 268–69; ASTON 1956, pp. 254–55, *SHINTEN*, pp. 111, 382.)

⁸ Of the reigns prior to theirs we know nothing, but if we accept that the Jingō period represents literally the last flourishing of Yayoi-style sovereignty intertwined with shamanism, a style which gave female spirituality full force, perhaps we can envision several centuries of now-nameless “Jingōs” and “Chūais” before them.

⁹ If the Keiko emperor, Ō-tarashi-hiko-oshiro-wake, conventionally put with Seimu between Suinin and Chūai/Jingō, represents a real rather than wholly contrived figure, he would presumably share this “slot” with Seimu. However, unlike Seimu he has no *Kojiki* death-date,

Conclusion

Finally, in conclusion, we may ask why the rearrangement of the Sujin and Jingō reigns was perpetrated by the *Ki-Ki* chroniclers. Only speculation is possible, of course. But let me point out that the *Ki-Ki* was commissioned and produced in the wake of the Tenmu-Jitō Shinto renaissance with its “rediscovery” of Ise and Amaterasu, and probably of much of the interconnected Shinto and imperial past. It was furthermore compiled and issued over the reigns of three empresses, Jitō, Genmei, and Genshō.¹⁰ All three were strong patrons of Ise, shrine of the great goddess Amaterasu, and all three, as the Jingō kōgo story emerged, must have looked back fondly to the days of that confidante of Amaterasu and greatest sovereign empress of all. Further, all three, like most monarchs, probably wanted nothing so much as assurance of a smooth succession to a child or grandchild as legitimate heir. This was by no means to be taken for granted, as the conspiracies with which Jitō had to deal demonstrate. Given the patronage of these imperial women, and the doubtless problematic nature of the material with which they had to work, it would not be surprising if the court scholars writing the history found a way to depict Jingō as followed, despite difficulties, by a son and heir. But to do so they had to displace to an earlier time the incomer of another lineage who had banished the shining goddess Amaterasu from the palace.

and his reign appears in the *Ki-Ki* mostly as a backdrop for the exploits of the hero Yamato-takeru.

¹⁰ Jitō (r. 686–697) was widow and successor of the Tenmu emperor who had commissioned the historical project eventuating in the *Ki-Ki*. Jitō appears as a ruler of exceptional ability who was a staunch devotee of Ise and its deities and who, like Jingō, acted on oracles from Amaterasu in matters of state. The *Kojiki* was issued in the reign of Genmei (707–715), a strong conservative who “did not alter the previously established patterns, but followed them unswervingly” (*Shoku Nihongi*, Tempyō 8:11); perhaps for this reason she was eager to buttress traditional imperial legitimacy by means of the new document. The *Nihonshoki* was issued in the reign of her successor, the Genshō empress (r. 715–724).

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