

MYTH OF CONCEALMENT OF AMATERASUÔMIKAMI

〔天石屋戸神話〕*

Archetypes of Imperial Festivals～

A Study in Philosophy and Symbology of the Kojiki's myths

〔皇室祭祀の原型～古事記神話の象徴哲学的考察〕

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日本語要約〔Resume in Japanese〕

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4. *SYMBOLISM AND MYTHICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF AMATERASUŌMIKAMI'S CONCEALMENT*

The afore-presented symbological analysis of leitmotifs, constituting the scenario of Amaterasu's concealment, manifests their mythical polyvalence and multi-dimensional significance. The variations of tenor, undefinable origins and intricate structure of the myth have given rise to numerous tentative interpretations of its symbolic, philosophical and religious significance. Even so, within this jungle of hypotheses, three main currents of scientific approach may be singled out.

4. 1. *Mythical reflexion of ancient Japanese history.*

Interpreters who emphasize the predominant role of the political factor within the framework of human cultural activity, regard the narrative of AmaterasuŌmikami's temporary disappearance as a mythical reflexion of a historical struggle for power in ancient Japan⁶⁰. To the most remarkable aspects of this religious and political rivalry belong the following events:

- (A) Many years of conflict between tribes and clans worshipping the celestial deities and those who revered the terrestrial divinities.
- (B) Very long and bloody wars for hegemony between the Yamato Imperial House and various local royalties of the Kii, Hayato, Ise and Izumo kingdoms.
- (C) Strife for the Yamato throne between Temmu, Jitō and Gemmei who worshipped Amaterasu, and the emperors Tenji and Kōbun who were devoted worshippers of Susanoo,
- (D) Relatively frequent attempts at regicide by successors or competitors to the Japanese throne.

4. 2. *Mythicization of eternal struggle between antagonistic powers of universal cosmicization.*

Another group of scholars views the entire story of Susanoonomikoto's celestial transgres-

sions and Amaterasu \hat{o} mikami's forced concealment behind the gates of mysterious celestial Palace as the mythicization of eternal struggle between the principal and universal forces of cosmic integration and disintegration, contraction and expansion, individualization and dissolution, materialization and spiritualization⁶¹. This perennial and incessant drive takes place continually on all levels of the Universe. Our human perception grasps only a few minute aspects of this extremely complex reality in the form of a continuous battle between light and darkness, heat and cold, day and night, life and death, growth and decline, sprit and matter, joy and suffering, love and hate, centrifugal and centripetal forces, progress and regress.

It may be said, therefore, that the Amenoiwaya myth bears a visible and indisputable imprint of such cosmic phenomena like sun-eclipses, volcanic eruptions and typhoons which, according to the primeval Japanese mentality, played a crucial and significant role in the life. In this context, the mythical deification of the beneficent and prolific nature of the solar light on one hand, and the destructive character of thunder and lightning on the other, are held to be normal and spontaneous reactions of Japanese primevals to these two representations of the dominant cosmic powers.

4. 3. *The 'Amenoiwaya' myth as amalgam and archetype of the Japanese primitive festivals.*

The overwhelming majority of mythologists uphold a theory which regards the narrative of the Solar deity's disappearance, its re-appearance, their causes and side-effects, as an amalgam or the archetype of the Japanese ancient festivals held on the Imperial Court and other local courts, and dedicated to the worship of all-generating luminous Power, deopersonified as Amaterasu \hat{o} mikami⁶².

Some of them suggest a hypothesis which makes of the Amenoiwaya scenario, a celestial proto-rite presided over and executed by the goddess Amaterasu and aimed at the revitalization of all cosmic agents with a new and powerful injection of biogonic energy stemming from the abysmal womb of Numinous-fathomless-Chaos ('Marokaretarumono'). According to this approach, Amaterasu \hat{o} mikami appears and acts here in the guise of the supreme theophany of Marokaretarumono, the unique Source of poly-dimensional cosmicization; and as the sole celestial Priestess who has direct access to the heavenly Palace of eternity where dwells the unfathomable trimorphic Luminosity ('Mimusubinokami'). Thus, we see here Amaterasu preparing the cosmic Revitalization Festival and the Great Festival of the First Fruits within the sacred precincts of Takamanohara. These worship-festivals mean here a free expression of gratitude and active participation of all beings in the universal process of harmonious emanation, materialization and polymorphic manifestation of the inexhaustible potentialities of Marokaretarumono - the primordial and homogeneous Numinosum. But some categories of comic powers,

represented by Susanoomikoto, the highest Ruler of the raging lightning, were working against the universal harmony. They had to be subdued to make possible the further orderly progress of poly-dimensional cosmicization. This was accomplished by triumphant re-appearance of Amaterasu, purification of Susanoo and expelling him from the community of celestial deities.

But the majority of scholars holds the opinion that the narrative of Amaterasuōmikami's temporary concealment is the Japanese version of mythical rites, known all over the world, and which focus on the worship of solar divinity regarded as the fountain-head of cosmic harmony and universal fecundity⁶³. This hypothesis emphasizes the very complex structure and polyvalent symbolism of the Amenoiwaya myth - which evidently bears the reticulated trails of various ancient Japanese rites. Among the most notable ancient festivals which show a noticeable analogy to the story of the Amenoiwaya-komori are the following ones:

- (a) Festival of "Welcome of the Solar deity" ('Hioki', 'Mioki').
- (b) "Revitalization Festival" ('Chinkonsai').
- (c) "Great Festival of the New Food" ('Niinamesai').
- (d) "Grand Festival of Enthronement" ('Sensodaijōsai').

4. 3. 1. *The 'Hioki' festival.*

The primeval agricultural societies associated fertility of the earth and the processes of grain and plant growth with the increase of the solar power which is observable after the winter solstice and spring equinox. Therefore in some regions of the Japanese Archipelago, before the season of rice-planting, there was held a rite called "Welcome of the Solar deity". The whole village community presided over by the chieftain or shaman carrying a mirror, spears and jewels, gathered at the foot of a holy mountain. Then, a sakaki or pine tree, cut from the peak of the mountain, was brought down to the plain and adorned with jewels. Surrounded by men who carried spears, halberds and mirror, it was then led in procession with songs and dances to the sacred grove of the village. Here, after recitations of holy psalms, songs and dances presided over by the shaman of the village, the sacred tree was led to the rice-fields⁶⁴.

4. 3. 2. *The 'Chinkon' festival.*

Japanese festival called "Chinkon" [鎮魂祭] is a congruous amalgam of several, originally distinct, yet analogous ancient celebrations. All of them were aimed at the revitalization or reanimation of various beings and their species ; in order to ensure and strengthen the harmony of cosmicization by injecting or facilitating inflow of fresh biogenetic energy into various dimensions, levels, offshoots and spheres of the World.

Among the rice producing primitive societies can be singled out a few models of fertility rites which were celebrated in the early spring. K. Yanai, illustrating the main mythical motifs of performance called "Hatakeasobi" ('Rite of rice-fields'), outlines all essential elements of fertility rites focused on regeneration of the vital power of the Earth-mother⁶⁵.

During a fine day in early spring, when fields were still covered by snow, the shaman of the village detached a small plot of ground or made a ridge within the precincts of the local shrine. Then, in the center of the holy precincts and in the presence of the whole community an ornate pine tree was erected and first planting of rice was done. Until dusk, all birds and animals were kept off the sacred plot. Then the entire village population was assembled, and by moonlight or torchlights to the rhythm of drum-beats, the songs were sung and ecstatic dances were preformed. The whole celebration culminated in imitatory intimate intercourse performed by the oldest couple or between the shrine's vestal and the tribal chieftain. The whole rite, concludes K. Yanai, was aimed at 'awakening' of the Earth-mother, and meant the conscious participation of human society in the universal rhythm of cosmic revitalization witnessed each year in the spring.

The Japanese primevals cherished the belief that human physical ailments, indisposition, psychic abnormalities, illness and death are caused by the seasonal weakening or fatigue of the soul, or by her temporary or even permanent departure from the body. So, in case of serious sickness, pestilence or death, the very ancient and simple rite of "Soul calling" was resorted to. The local shaman, the head of family or the chieftain, standing by the bedside, at times, on the roof of house, on the top of the nearest mountain, or within the precincts of a shrine, called out the name of the sick or names of the persons in need, shook their garments, exorcized them and sang sacred hymns. This 'calling out', which was aimed at awakening, fortifying or turnig back of the departing or mitigated soul, may be regarded as an expression of pristine faith in resuscitation founded upon the substantial and common source of all manifestations of the numinous Vitality.

Other symbolically entwined but distinctive dimensions of the ancient reanimation rites are given prominence in the three following ceremonies - which constitute the inherent religious and philosophical aspects of the Chinkon festival⁶⁶.

The first archaic ceremony aimed at human revitalization was called "Tama-furi" [魂振り] and consisted of shaking personal garments. These were considered as a material representation of the spiritual power which shaped individual forms of life, warmed human bodies during cold winters and cooled them during hot summers. Accordingly, the shaking of the sick person's clothes was regarded as a symbolic action of awakening, mobilizing and strengthening of the natural, yet at the moment weakened vitality of the individual.

The second mode of reanimation and intensification of human vital energies was the rite

called “Tama-fuyu” [魂殖ゆ] or “Tama-furi” [魂触り] which concentrated on exposure of soul to the influence or beaming of an external source of vitality. This resulted in increase and enrichment of her physical and spiritual powers. All this was done through various purifications, temporal withdrawal into total seclusion, the practice of exorcisms, songs, dances and shaking of the sacred and symbolic items, which were believed to incorporate great quantities of biogenetic energies. The rite of ‘Tama-fuyu’ (i.e. ‘enhancement of soul’s vitality’) was performed not only in cases of individual need, but also as a seasonal festival associated with the winter solstice. In the eyes of primeval humanity, the winter solstice manifested very well the critical moment of universal struggle between two vectors of cosmic vital power represented by the so called beneficial and fecundating light, warmth and daytime on the one hand, and the impoverishing darkness, cold and night-time on the other. Consequently, an early and warm spring was always a good presage manifesting the enormous vitality of the mysterious Cosmic Soul.

The third way of universal revitalization and particularly of the reanimation and preservation of human spiritual forces occurred in the rite of “Tama-shizume” [魂鎮め]. This very ancient ceremony of ‘soul appeasement’ included a sealing of personal garments in a stone casket or metal box, supplicatory prayers, exorcisms, songs, ecstatic dances and, most probably, some sort of intimate union. All these symbolic actions were aimed at the pacifying of enraged or vacillating soul, maintaining of her vitality and preventing disappearance of her spiritual functions. This resulted finally in securing the inner harmony and constant functioning of the concerned beings.

The “Sendaikujihongi” (‘Mythical chronicles of past generations’) recount the sequence of revitalization rite celebrated by religious representatives of powerful Monobe family on behalf of the emperor Jimmu and his wife. The same rite, five centuries later, was enacted for the emperor Sujin. The full program of the ritual scenario included⁶⁷:

- (a) Deprecatory prayers to myriads of the celestial deities for a long and happy life of the Emperor and his family.
- (b) Dances performed by several vestals and culminated with a special enrapturing dance executed by the Imperial Sibyl-vestal upon a stony platform. She danced to the rhythm of ‘kagura’, the sacred Shintoistic music, and struck the platform ten times with a sakaki branch.
- (c) Shaking up of the Imperial vestments sealed in a special box.
- (d) Binding together of the comma-shaped jewels by other Imperial priestesses.
- (e) Shaking up of sacred casket containing the ten august Treasures of the heavenly powers (‘Amatsushirushi no mizutakara’). These sacred items were given to Nigihahinomikoto, the divine ancestor of the Monobe family, by the celestial deities with

oracle proclaiming that if they are shaken ten times, even a dead person will be resuscitated⁶⁸.

The Monobe's version of Chinkon displays clearly the therapeutic character of reanimation rites performed at the Yamato court only occasionally and in periods when the clan had considerable influence upon the religious and political life of the Imperial Family.

The official ceremonials, preserved down to our times, which record the most important religious festivals celebrated at the Imperial court between 859–923 A.D., make possible to reconstruct the essential and most significant motifs of revitalization festivals rooted in the pristine tradition of the Yamato dynasty⁶⁹. The following are the substantial components of the Imperial version of the cosmic revitalization rite celebrated at Yamato court in the second half of the ninth century :

- (A) The whole ceremony was associated with the annual festival of the New Food held during the period the winter solstice.
- (B) At the very center of a sacred tent, erected specially for the ceremonies of the Imperial Chinkon, was placed the "Priestly Ark of Eight Sacrosanct Divinities" ('Kannagi Hasshinden'). There were enshrined and worshipped the following divinities :
- *Takamimusubi*⁷⁰ – as the "Sacrosanct Cosmic Soul" of universal biogony.
 - *Kamimusubi* – as the "Numinous Soul" of polymorphic cosmicization.
 - *Ikumusubi* – as the "Biogenetic Soul" of the Japanese Archipelago.
 - *Tarumusubi* – as the "Soul of eternal life".
 - *Tamatsumemusubi* – as the "Anthropogenetic Soul" which shapes and preserves the human personality.
 - *Miketsutama* – as the "Spirit of all foods".
 - *Ônaobi* – as the "Beneficent luminous Spirit" which heals all sorts of wounds and damages.
 - *Kotoshironushi* – as the divine embodiment of wisdom and sovereignty.
 - *Ômiyanome* – as the deification of sibylhood and vestalship.
- (C) A small band of musicians played sacred kagura music, using the Japanese harp, flute and drum.
- (D) A group of young priestesses, crooning holy songs⁷¹ and clapping hands, performed a special dance called "Yamato".
- (E) The highest sibyl-vestal, named Sarume (Amenouzume was considered the celestial ancestress and professional prototype of all shintoistic priestesses), dancing upon a reversed drum-like platform, struck it ten times with a tree-like spear.
- (F) Another group of priestesses bound together the comma-shaped pearls and placed them in a special casket containing the Imperial vestments.

- (G) A group of priests shook this casket repeatedly.
- (H) The celebration was concluded with the banquet which symbolized the communitarian aspect of all beings, the homogeneous character of the life they shared, and the cosmic interdependence among various sources of vitality. The food eaten together indicated the sacredness of individual life, and emphasized the social responsibility for human, floral and other forms of life, which sprang and are maintained by the same vital Power.

The symbolological analysis of various types of Chinkon, their settings and functions, considered with a special reference to the mythical action performed in front of Amenoawayato, leads to a few very significant and suggestive conclusions⁷².

- (1) The Japanese primitive agricultural societies had developed two fundamental types of the revitalization rites. One was celebrated occasionally and was aimed at the therapeutic preservation, strengthening and stabilizing individual charges of vitality. The other was associated with the seasonal outburst of cosmic procreative energies observed after the winter solstice.
- (2) The focal momentum of these rites was the worship of pangenetic Musubi-Power. This Power, as the Highest Sovereign and Supreme Architect of universal cosmicization, is represented through the deities enshrined in the Priestly Ark as well as through the sacred symbols of the sabre, mirrors, jewels and sashes enclosed in the casket called "Ten august Treasures of the heavenly powers" ('Amatsushirushi no mizutakara').
- (3) Particular importance was attributed to the ecstatic dances, the kagura music, and the crooning songs exalting Amaterasuōmikami as the apogean principle of universal biogony.
- (4) All Japanese scholars emphasize an inner bond between the cosmic processes of revitalization and the seasonal rites of reanimation. Therefore, they advance a view which holds that the seasonal revitalization ceremonies were celebrated at all royal and princely courts of the Japanese Archipelago, long before the unification of tiny kingdoms under the authority of the Yamato Imperial House. They agree also that the original form of the Imperial Chinkon has been modified by the influence of reanimation rites celebrated at the courts of Monobe, Ise, Imbe, Nakatomi and Izumo.
- (5) A good number of Japanese scholars, relying upon the mythical accounts of the Jōgangishiki, Engishiki and Kogoshūi⁷³, upholds a view that the rite which took place in front of the celestial gates leading to the Palace of eternity, is the celestial archetype of reanimation festivals celebrated during the winter solstice at the Imperial court. A symbolological analysis of the afore-mentioned mythical records in-

licated that the oldest forms of the Imperial reanimation festivals have been focused on the vital relationship between the polymorphic theophanies of Mimusubinokami, most often that of Takamimusubinokami, and emperor as the head of human world. The developed form of the Imperial Chinkonsai brings into relief the all-generating character of Amaterasuōmikami, and emphasizes the unique relationship between this deity and the Japanese emperors within the framework of universal biogenesis, with particular accent on its human aspect.

4. 3. 3. *The 'Niiname' festival.*

From time immemorial the "Great Festival of the New Food" [新嘗祭]⁷⁴ has been regarded by the Japanese agrarian societies as the most important celebration of the communitarian worship. It was celebrated with utmost pomp and reverence after the termination of the yearly harvests. The essential ceremonies of Niinamesai were officiated by the ruling king or emperor and took place during the time of the winter solstice, in the darkness of a crisp December night. But multiple preparations and various rites connected with the festival had been extended over the whole year, marking the momentous phases of the social and religious activity based upon the agricultural calendar.

For this reason in spring a divination rite was held and two special plots of 'sacred fields' were determined. The one, called "yuki", was chosen from the best rice-fields of Japan's eastern regions ; while the other, named "suki", was selected from the fertile lands of her western provinces. Then, before the season of rice planting, all fields but especially the detached ones and the people who were to work there, had to undergo special procedure of individual and communitarian purifications. In the midst of the summer solstice, the national festival of the "Great Purifications" [Ōmisogi-barai', 大禊祓] was celebrated. It was conducted by the ruling emperor in the presence of his court officials and governors of all provinces. This Ōmisogi-barai' was aimed at purging and erasing of all defilements, irregularities and crimes committed throughout the Empire, and known as the "celestial and terrestrial sins". This purification was to enable the cosmic powers of fecundity to operate creatively and carry out harmoniously all processes of terrestrial biogony. The national rites of the Great Purifications were regarded as a preparation for the festival of the "Sun Adoration" ('Fuhiki saiiji'), the celebration which extended throughout July and August. The ceremonies included prayers, exorcisms and dances, which adored the beneficial qualities of the Sunlight's procreative powers, and were aimed at assurance of good weather and abundant harvests⁷⁵. Then again, as the time of harvest approached, another rite of purification was held for the ripe rice, and the ablution ceremonies for those who were to work in the fields. The new rice ('mimono') was carried in two pompous processions ; the one from the East and another from the West. This

holy rice was deposited in the capital's store-rooms prepared especially for this purpose.

In the meantime, on the vast park-like grounds of the Imperial palace, there was constructed a wooden palisade which separated a part of the meadow as a "sacred square". This square was destined exclusively for the rites of the yearly Niinamesai. Within this detached square were erected many buildings of archaic construction, joined together by rough timber and thatch without using any artificial nails. All these edifices were built just before the solemn rites were enacted by the ruling emperor, and they were taken down the day after the harvest festival.

On the grounds of the sacred square were thus constructed three main rectangular edifices. The first one, called "Karyûden" ('Hall of transition'), was divided into the two rooms. One room contained the stands for Imperial vestments and a boat-like bath-tube. The other was furnished with a large mat, lights, seats, various articles for purification and a stand with the "divine garment" ('amenohagoromo') made of silk and woven especially for the occasion by the imperial sibyl-vestals. Two other rectangular and identical cottages were erected and named respectively : the "Yukiden" [悠紀殿], and "Sukiden" [主基殿]. Each of them was divided into two halls. the s.c. 'Outer hall' was for preparations and contained a store-room for the new rice, mill-room, bakery, kitchen, chambers for making white and black sake, and a room for various other utensils. The s.c. 'Inner hall' was for the rites and contained :

- (a) Throne for the "Tabernacle of Eight Biogenetic Divinities" ('Mikashihade Hasshinden').
- (b) Throne for the "Heavenly Descendent".
- (c) The eight-legged stand with a sakaki tree adorned with mulberry sashes or a hemp fiber.
- (d) The Imperial couch (throne) made of several mats with a wooden pillow, silk-made coverlet, a fan, and a pair of special slippers.
- (e) By the Imperial coach and near the throne for the Tabernacle there was another small stand with a special box containing the three Imperial regalia.
- (f) Beside the head of the Imperial coach there were two lamps : one white and the other black.
- (g) Close to the coach there was a special mat-seat for an Imperial priestess who served the holy food and attended to the emperor.
- (h) At the foot of the coach were placed two eight-legged stands with baskets : each one containing an Imperial garment of a special and different quality, and which were used only during the night of Niinamesai.
- (i) The remaining space of the Inner hall, which was partially isolated from the Imperial part, there were six or seven mat-seats for other priestesses who carried in the new holy food on special trays and played an old Kagura music.

All prominent and influential personalities of the Imperial court and the highest representatives of provincial rulers participated in these numerous preparations. The most influential ancient royal families were Monobe, Nakatami, Imbe, Sôga, Wani, Hayato, Miwa, Ise, Ôtomo, Kume, Sabaku, and Takahashi. Some of them, like Monobe, Wani, Imbe, Nakatomi, Hayato, and Ise reached the zenith of their power in various periods of ancient Japanese history, through marriages to members of the Imperial family. The other smaller provincial tribes and clans were obliged to provide various goods and services for the Imperial household. The most significant duty of all the provincial rulers was the preparation and participation in the Great Festival of the New Food, at which the emperor himself officiated. Therefore, the local royal and ducal courts sent priestesses and shamans to the Imperial palace. It was their duty to prepare the 'new holy food' which included entrees of the cooked rice, white and black sake, seafood and salt. They were formed into various groups which made different preparations, executed dances and played ancient music⁷⁷. Only one or two noble and especially chosen vestals, called 'Uneme' [采女], were present during the secret rites performed by emperor in the inner halls of the Yuki and Suki cottages⁷⁸.

The proper national preparations for the annual celebration of Niinamesai were usually inaugurated by the emperor himself. The emperor accompanied by his ministers, in the middle of November, went down to take a bath ('misogi') in a river or sea-bay. This initiated the similar baths taken by provincial rulers and it started the month of the "Great Lent" ('Araimi') which was divided into two phases. The first phase, called "General Abstinence" ('Monomi'), lasted about 25 days and included various external purifications of rice-fields, roads and human households. The second period, named "Strick Fasting" ('Maimi'), lasted for 2 or 3 days and meant the total seclusion and retirement of the emperor from all private and public activity. The details of Imperial retreat are unknown, At the end of it the rites of Great Purification ('Ôharaisai') and Revitalization ('Chinkon') were performed.

In the evening preceding the winter solstice, the emperor himself arrived on the holy grounds of the festival. As he was waiting in one of outer lodges, the colorful processions were moving from the cooking huts into the ante-chambers of the Yuki and Suki cottages. Servants bore numerous food offerings on peculiar high-stemmed trays, including the cooked rice, white and black sake, sea-food and salt. At about nine o'clock in the evening the sovereign entered a building called Karyûden. There he took a bath and put on a very simple single white robe, called 'hagoromo' which was made by a consecrated priestess. From here he was led processionally to the Yuki cottage. The emperor walked bare-footed with a palanquin over his head and stepped on a white mat which was unrolled before him and rolled up behind him. The whole Imperial suite moved slowly with solemnity of the moment, so characteristic of the ancient rites. The procession passed through the cordons of flaring torches carried by colourfully dress-

ed sibyls, vestals, priests and the royal guards of honour.

The sovereign, accompanied by the chosen vestal ('Uneme'), entered with serenity and reverence the Inner hall of Yukiden. The other priestesses took their seats in the other part of the hall and played a sacred shintoistic music. The assisting vestal poured a final ablution over emperor's hands and brought in ten dishes of the new holy food arranged upon antique stand-plates. The emperor chose nine dishes, poured sake on them, offered them up to the 'Eight Biogenetic Divinities' and arranged these trays in front of the sacred Tabernacle ('Mikashihade Hasshinden'). For a moment he waited in reverential silence and did not move. Then, after approaching the throne of celestial Descendent, he took plate with the crude rice, raised it up to his lips three times, but did not taste it. Next, he took the cup filled with the white sake, lifted it up three times and then sipped it. The same action was repeated with the plate of cooked rice and another cup filled with the black sake. After this sharing of the new food with the life giving Divinities, the sovereign retired to his coach and rested there under the silk-made coverlet. All these actions were performed in silent solemnity and awesome reverence before the Tabernacle of Eight Biogenetic Divinities. This super was called the "Holy Communion of the Evening" ['Yûmike', 夕御饌].

The next day, early morning, about two o'clock, the same ceremonies were repeated in the Inner hall of Sukiden. The breakfast partaken before the same divinities was called the 'Holy Communion of the Dawn' ['Asamike', 朝御饌]. These both meals were named the "Holy Partaking" ['Senkyô', 薦享]⁷⁹.

In the late morning after the Holy Communion of the Dawn, the emperor dressed in the official Imperial vestments, sitting on the throne in a spacial hall, surrounded by the empress and court attendents, received from the head of Nakatomi family a solemn blessing with the oath of total obeisance in behalf of all provincial kings, princes and governors, who were assembled on the ground at his feet⁸⁰.

From the afternoon, while all the edifices construed for rites of Niinamesai were being dismantled, the "Banquet of gradeur" ['Toyoaki-kyôen', 豊明饗宴] was held on the meadows of the Imperial palace. These entertainments usually lasted for two or three days and were filled with numerous sacred dances, songs, recitals of myths, poems and various competitions involving all provinces of the Empire. Outside the palace a similar banquet was held for the commoners.

The following are the most significant dimensions of religious symbolism of the Great Festival of the New Food :

- (a) The Niinamesai is an impressive sign of recognition on the part of ancient Japanese society that all forms of terrestrial life are rooted in the sacrosanct Musubi-power and are continually re-vitalized by this power.

- (b) The mythical actions of this festival point towards the unique relationship between the all-holy biogenetic deities, especially those enshrined in the Tabernacle, and the person of emperor. In fact, he appears here as an anthropomorphized "Celestial Descendant".
- (c) The mythical scenario of Niinamesai emphasizes the supreme position of emperor and the unique mediatory function of his kingship for the normal and harmonious development of human society.
- (d) Niinamesai is a communitarian and participative worship of the pangenetic and sacrosanct Power, which continually rejuvenates some forms of beings and creates new ones. It is also a worship of thanksgiving and joyous welcome of new amounts of polymorphic fecundity.
- (e) At the center of the festival's worship are Musubi's polymorphic and biogenetic powers, enshrined in the Tabernacle. "Luminosity" is their essential feature.

The mythical setting of Niinamesai represents the cyclic undulation of cosmic vitality which is being evinced in : the increase and decrease of solar energy ; the summer and winter solstices ; the annual seasons of germination and decay ; the periods of elevated and lowered sexual drive ; the ups and downs of human activity⁸¹. The primeval humanity not only had witnessed to these processes but detected their inner law which unfolds itself through a certain regularity, sequence of events, phasic pattern of succession and mutual interdependence of various phenomena of cosmobiogony. The observation of the world, positive and negative life experiences are continually imprinting deep traits upon human psyche. These sigma have been shaping the practical wisdom of all generations ; have been forming their knowledge of the universe ; and have led humanity to the irresistible, though churlish and intuitive conviction in the existence of the numinous Power - the inexhaustible 'Springs' of polymorphic life and being. Therefore, the primitive humanity has not only been interested in preservation of the manifold cosmic life and its harmonious development, by avoiding its deliberate derangement, but set out to its assurance, promotion and enhancement by active and creative participation in the universal cosmicization. Agricultural life offers many opportunities to increase and speed up the terrestrial biogenesis. Numerous rites of fertility, to which the Great Festival of the New Food belongs, are manifestations of deep human concern, sincere attitude and existential sentiment of gratitude towards enigmatic Life, in all of its multiplications. Thus, for the ancient Japanese nobility, Niinamesai was a cosmic event and the most holy time during which humanity, in the person of its emperor, was admitted to partake the 'holy food of life' with the numinous Source its existence.

Scholars of Japanese mythology, who detect the existence of some inherent bonds between the myth of Amenoiwaya and the festival of Niiname, point out the analogy of the subsequent

religious motifs⁸²:

- (A) Susanoonamikoto destroyed the Takamanohara's rice-plots, which had been selected in the spring for the celestial Niinamesai.
- (B) Susanoo desacralized a hall where the first fruits were tasted (or stored) and caused the death of the sibyl-vestal who weaved 'hagoromo', the divine robe used during the secret rites performed by emperor in the Inner halls of the Yuki and Suki cottages.
- (C) Amaterasuōmikami's concealment in the mysterious heavenly Abode may be viewed as a period of the "Strict Fasting" (Maimi). It may also be regarded as the archetypal celebration of the "Holy Partaking" (Komouke) by Amaterasu, the apogean celestial Being, and Mimusbino-kami, the pangenetic Springs of all beings.
- (D) The arrangements accomplished by representatives of all celestial divinities (Yaoyorozunokami), in the sacred grove of the august celestial highlands, correspond to the preparations made for the celebration of Niiname festival within the detached precincts of the Imperial palace.
- (E) The ecstatic dance of Amenouzume, the highest celestial priestess, may be considered as the fulcral element of the heavenly "Revitalization Festival" (Tama-furi?, Tama-fuyu?, Tama-shizume?) or as the archetype of mimic dance performed during the Banquet of grandeur (Toyoakari kyōen).
- (F) The solemn liturgy intoned by Amenokoyane, the divine ancestor of Nakatomi; various offerings and gifts presented to Amaterasuōmikami by Futotamanomikoto, the heavenly progenitor of Imbe clan; and the presence of Amenotachikaranokami, the divine shōgun of celestial armies, are the components of obeisance paid to the Ruler of the World, just before the Toyoakari banquet.

Therefore, in the context of all these symbolic and religious analogies between the Great Festival of the New Food held on the Imperial court and the scenario of Amaterasu's concealment, the latter may be considered as the heavenly archetype of all terrestrial Niiname festivals. In other words, the entire action of Amenoikwayakomori is a mythical picture of the archetypal cosmic Niinamesai celebrated within the holy precincts of Takamanohara and conducted by Amaterasuōmikami. The Solar Goddess acts here in the quality of the apogee of Marokaretarumono's polyphany, and as the most sublime theophany of trimorphic Musubi-Power. Hence, Amaterasuōmikami, as the most prominent Cosmic Sovereign, partakes of the divine and new food (Yumike and Asamike) with the sacrosanct Musubi Triad, the fulcral power of universal cosmicization.

4. 3. 4. *The 'Sensodaijô' festival.*

From the very dawn of Japanese history, the ceremonies of accession to the throne belonged to the greatest and most prominent events of the social, religious and political life. Scholars of the ancient Japanese tradition, basing their studies on various historical and mythical accounts, indicate two main and prototypal models of the coronation festival. One type was spread among the agricultural societies and was called the "Festival of Acquisition of the throne" ['Wasukunisai', 食国祭]⁸³. The other was associated with the maritime tribes and was named the "Divine festival of eighty islands" ['Yasojima no kamimatsuri', 八十島神祭]⁸⁴. In the fifth and sixth centuries A.D., the most significant and essential mythical motifs of these and other convergent coronation rites were blended together with Niinamesai into one imposing festival called the "Grand Festival of Enthronement" ['Sensodaijôsai', 踐祚大嘗祭]⁸⁵.

The origins of the Festival of Acquisition of the throne remain immersed in Japan's pre-history. Nevertheless, various mythical and historical records shed some light on the structure, genesis and symbolic significance of this ancient festival. The festival was composed of three rites. The first rite included the announcement of the new succession before the ancestral or tribal deity, the transferring of regalia and presentation of the new ruler to his subjects. The next ceremony involved the "viewing of the land" ['Kunimi' - 国見] from the top of a sacred hill or mountain of the territory subordinated to the ruler's authority. This act of viewing is a very old ceremony which was performed by tribal chieftains or kings each year at the beginning of spring time. It contained the prayers for good weather, psalms addressed to the biogenic deities and, at the same time, it was the official welcome of new forces of fertility and fecundity. The third and most essential part of this festival was the "Partaking of sacred food" ['Shinsen shinkyô', 神饌親供]⁸⁶. At the beginning of this rite vestals, representing all subdued territories, as a sign of loyalty, presented to the ruler food made of the best fruits of their lands. The ruler offered these products of earth and the work of human hands to his ancestral deity and all biogenetic sacred beings. Then, in the presence of a chosen vestal, he consumed a portion of the offered holy food mixed with crude soil. Subsequently, followed a night of intimate union with the chosen vestal who represented all subjects of the sovereign territory⁸⁷.

The ruler appears here in the quality of intermediary between the heavenly biogenic powers and the human society. Thus, during Wasukunisai, a ruler, ascending the throne through the partaking of sacred food, was endowed with celestial fecundity and invested in divine authority. At the same time, the consuming of soil which incorporates fertile powers, the eating of food which contains the life-sustaining energies, and intimate union with vestal, enriched the vitality of the sovereign and endowed him with authority over the terrestrial beings. The festival of Wasukuni was celebrated :

- (a) occasionally as the homage of allegiance paid by the conquered tribes ;
- (b) annually as the renewal of loyalty to the throne and as a rite of fertility performed by ruler on behalf of all his subjects, as a part of his religious and political functions ;
- (c) as the coronation of new sovereign, during which all subjects of his Imperium declared their fealty⁸⁸.

The full bloom and popularity of the 'Divine festival of eighty islands' (Yasojima no kamimatsuri), whose rites were focused on the worship of nezogenetic and biogenetic divinities, falls short of the times between the reigns of Jingû Kôgô and Ingyô (201-453 A.D.). Its commencement, however, reaches as far as the reigns of the emperors Sujin and Suinin (97 B.C.-70 A.D.), or even the period of emperor Jimmu (c. 660 B.C.). Despite the very antique mythical setting of the Divine festival of eighty islands, the first historical reference which links this festival with the coronation ceremonies held in Yamato Imperial court, is found in the chronicles of the emperor Montoku (850-858 A.D.). The last record of this festival is registered in the chronicles of the emperor Shijô (1232-1242 A.D.).

Japanese scholars, basing their inquiries upon various Imperial accounts and other ceremonies, single out the following leitmotifs in the scenario of Yasojimasai⁸⁹.

- (A) The most important rites of the festival were always performed by an Imperial princess, appointed each time by the ruling emperor as the presiding highest priestess.
- (B) The empress and crown prince often participated in the ceremonies held at the Naniwa shore.
- (C) In the early spring a sacred procession started from the Imperial castle to the shore of Naniwa situated in Ôsaka bay. The caravan of carriages surrounded by court retainers transported the nine priestesses, a special casket containing the emperor's vestments, two other baskets with garments of the empress and crown prince, offerings of 82 mirrors, 100 comma-shaped jewels, 80 gold-plated dolls, 40 silver-plated female figurines, offerings for divine triad worshipped by Sumiyoshi tribe⁹⁰, and some gifts for shrines in the Naniwa territory. Before the start of the procession the emperor was presented with a sakaki branch adorned with mulberry sashes and hemp fiber. Taking this 'ônusa' into his hands he breathed upon it. Then, after striking the casket containing his vestments with the ônusa, he returned it to one of the assisting priests to be carried to Naniwa.
- (D) At the shore of Naniwa a large altar was constructed and all the offerings and gifts brought from the Imperial palace were placed upon it. Then, here, while all participants were facing the western horizon of the sea and eight priestesses were

dancing to the rhythm of Kagura music, the Imperial princess, as the presiding Highest Sibyl-vestal, dancing around the altar, shook the vestments of the emperor, empress and crown prince.

(E) The climactic moment of the celebration was a solemn presentation of all Imperial gifts. Part of them was thrown into the sea as a “sacrifice of homage” paid to the nezogonic and biogonic divinities named :

- Yasojimanokami [八十島神],
- Ikushimanokami [生島神],
- Yasobashiratsuhinokami [八十柱津日神]⁹¹.

(F) The closing act of the ceremonies performed on the shore of Naniwa was delivery of some gifts to the local shrines and return of the procession with the Imperial vestments to the capital. The new ruler who ascended the throne, after being invested with these robes, was recognized as the emperor of the whole Archipelago.

This festival may be regarded as a prototype of the Imperial revitalization and coronation rites. The Yasojima no kamimatsuri was aimed at endowing and investing a chieftain, king, and finally an emperor with the authority and powers of divinities which created the Japanese Archipelago and continually sustain its polymorphic vitality. Yasojimanokami, Ikushimanokami or Yasobashiranokami, worshipped and invoked during this festival, were considered as the trimorphic epiphany of the most holy Source of the Archipelago’s fertility. In fact, they are only different denominations of the first Organizer of the national order. In the oldest times, this festival had been a local rite of the Yamato, Settsu and Kawachi kingships but, more or less, from the times of the emperor Keitai (507–531 A.D.) it became an important part of the Imperial coronation festival. From the reign of emperor Reizei (967–969 A.D.) the Yasojimasai was performed a year after the Grand Festival of Enthronement⁹².

The emperor Mommu issued an edict, known as the ‘Ritsuryō’ (701 A.D.), which for the first time defined the sequence of rites and most significant procedures during the Grand Festival of Enthronement. The ‘Yōrō’ edict, published in 717 A.D., during the reign of empress-regnant Genshō, declares that the Imperial coronation festival (called here ‘daijō-niinaesai’) is to be celebrated only once, at the beginning of a new reign ; while the first fruits festival (called here ‘niiname-daijōsai’) is to be held every year during the winter solstice. The Kōnin law, promulgated in 810 A.D. by the emperor Saga, for the first time introduced the clear verbal distinction between the ‘Great Festival of the New Food’ (‘Maitoshidaijōsai’) and the ‘Grand Festival of Coronation’ (‘Sensodaijōsai’). Finally, the rescript of this law (812 A.D.) changed the designation of ‘Maitoshidaijōsai’ [毎年大嘗祭] into the ‘Niinaesai’⁹³. The Jōgan-gishiki (‘Ritual of the Jōgan era’), published between 859–877 A.D., and the Engishiki, edited in 927 A.D., gave the final touch to the formal and hermeneutical designation of the corona-

tion festival. Thus, by the third decade of the tenth century, the Sensodaijōsai was quite precisely defined and contained the following rites.

- (1) Sensoshiki [踐祚式], i.e. the ceremonies of accession to the throne, which consisted of three announcements of the Imperial succession.
 - The first announcement was made before ‘Kashidokoro’ which contained the replica of Yatanokagami, the most prominent symbol of Amaterasuōmikami.
 - The second announcement was made before ‘Mikashihade Hasshinden’ (‘Tabernacle of Eight Biogenetic Divinities’).
 - The third announcement was the solemn proclamation of the new emperor to the nation and the whole world.
- (2) Niinamesai [新嘗祭], i.e. the rites of the Great Festival of the New Food which was officiated and performed by the new emperor for the first time. Here, after the Holy Communion of the Dawn (‘Asamike’) followed the first Imperial audience. During this elaborate ceremony, the new sovereign, making his first appearance, was presented with the Imperial regalia, offerings and various gifts by the head of Monobe family on behalf of all provincial governors. The leader of Nakatomi family recited the solemn blessings and paid homage of allegiance to the new emperor. Then, the sovereign spoke, exposing his future policy. The morning festivities were concluded with the performance of traditional ‘Yamato dance’ executed by a group of young priestesses to the rhythm of kagura music.
- (3) Gattan sekkie [元旦節会]⁹⁴, i.e. the “Banquet of the New Era”, called also ‘Toyokari kyōden’, terminated the solemn pageantry of coronation rites. This banquet was held for the nobles of the Imperial court and all provincial rulers on the grounds of the palace for 2 or 3 consecutive days. Outside the palace a similar banquet was held for the people of the capital.

Symbological analysis of the afore-presented settings of the Japanese coronation rites enables us to single out a few very important motifs which contain enormous amount of the social, religious and political significance.

All ancient versions of enthronement festivities, known to us, were somehow focused around the two major celebrations ; the rites of accession to the throne (‘Sensoshiki’), and festival of the new food (‘Niinamesai’)⁹⁵. The core of royal and later Imperial enthronements had been one or the other archetype of the ‘Great Festival of the New Food’ with the bi-vectorial ‘Holy Partaking’ (‘Senkyō’). During this partaking, in complete isolation, the successor to the Imperial throne faced his divine Progenitor, and at the same time, the absolute Sovereign of the Universe. The new emperor offered to the Progenitor the best of creation and was admitted to partake of the new blessed food. Here, through the symbolic sharing of the sacred

food with Amaterasuōmikami, the successor to the throne, as a 'heavenly Solar descendant', was endowed with all the celestial powers and terrestrial authority, and was made the unique representative of this supreme Cosmic Sovereign. An intimate union with a chosen vestal, who symbolized all human fertile energies, was an enactment and re-actualization of the primordial, yet incessantly operative, biogenetic union between Heaven and Earth, Izanaginokami and Izanaminokami, Takamimusubinokami and Kaminusubunokami. The princess-vestal (uneme) and the new food prepared by representatives of all Japanese provinces were the manifestation of total human allegiance to the most sacred and all-generating Musubi-Power ; to Amaterasu, as its most sublime and perfect theophany ; and to the emperor, as a special descendant of the Solar Goddess.

Scholars of the ancient Japanese mythical tradition, who describe the existence of intrinsic ligaments between the Sensodaijō festival and Amenoiwaya myth, bring into the light and emphasize convergences of the following symbolic leitmotifs⁹⁶.

- (i) The mythical scenario of the transfer and division of cosmic sovereignty between Amaterasu, Tsukiyomi and Susanoō may be viewed as the celestial archetype of all terrestrial rites of accession to the throne ('Sensoshiki'). The celebrated proclamation of Amaterasuōmikami's unique majesty, unlimited jurisdiction over the immense realm of Takamanohara and thus practically declaration of her supreme authority over all processes of universal cosmicization, was, in fact, the solemn announcement of the new and unparalleled cosmic succession made by Izanaginokami in the presence of all celestial divinities (Yaoyorozunokami). The declaration of this unique celestial succession was accompanied by a very significant gesture. Izanaginokami, as the supreme ruler of the heavens, removed from his neck the thread of comma-shaped jewels and handed it over to Amaterasu as the regalia of cosmic power and authority.
- (ii) The theogenetic test of sincerity (Ukei) may be regarded as a serious challenge to Amaterasuōmikami's cosmobiogenic powers and the supreme cosmic authority.
- (iii) The sacrilegious transgressions, committed by Susanoōmikoto in the sacred precincts of the august celestial kingdom, bear the palpable character of actions aimed at thwarting the heavenly Niinamesai which was to be conducted by Amaterasuōmikami for the first time.
- (iv) The mysterious concealment of Amaterasu behind the gates of the celestial Palace may be considered as a visit of homage paid by the new Sovereign of the Universe to the numinous Roots of all beings. It may also be viewed as the holy Communion of the Evening and Dawn (Yūmike, Asamike) during which Amaterasuōmikami offers the sacred food of Takamanohara to the all-generating Musubi-Power and

shares this meal with her Progenitor and, at the same time, the most holy Ruler of universal cosmicization.

- (v) The ecstatic dance executed by the celestial Uzume priestess, in front of the gates of the heavenly Palace, may be viewed as the archetype of the 'Yamato dance' and other sacred dances performed in the presence of new emperors at the end of coronation rites.
- (vi) The solemn liturgy intoned by Amanokoyane, regalia and various offerings presented by Amenofutodama, and the presence of the celestial shōgun Tachikaranokami may be considered as the heavenly prototype of the 'Homage of obeisance' (Yogoto) and 'Banquet of grandeur' (Toyoakari kyōen) held as the closing ceremonies of the Imperial coronation festivals.

Epilogue ~

AMATERASUÔMIKAMI AS THE "SUPREME COSMIC SOVEREIGN"

A symbological analysis of Amenoiwaya-komori's scenario and its extremely rich mythical (proto-philosophical and religious) significance, which have been presented in this treatise, bring into light some prominent aspects and dimensions of Amaterasu's divine nature. In order to acquire a fairly thorough image of the Solar Deity, as pictured here by the Kojiki, it is not only necessary to take heed of the Amenoiwaya-komori's comprehensive symbolism but it seems to be indispensable to contemplate this deity within the whole stream of preceding mythical episodes. The foremost significance and fulcral symbolism of the main current of all hitherto analyzed mythical events may be synthesized along the following lines.

- (a) The appearance of the Noble Luminous Trinity and particularly the enigmatic emergence of Amaterasuômikami are portrayed as the *zenith* of poly-hierophanic cosmicization of the pre-emanative Numinous Homogeneity ['Marokaretarumono', 'Marokare naru Ametsuchi', 混元, 混れ成る天地] in the form of the most prominent Solar Deity. At the same time, Amaterasu is the *apogee* of the trimorphic Musubi-Power's cosmic theophany. This Mimusubinokami is the very *First Inceptor, Architect and Primordial Ruler* of the universal and polymorphic cosmicization.
- (b) The division of the Cosmic Kingdom; the transfer of Izanaginokami's regalia and investing Amaterasu with special powers and authority correspond to the solemn announcement and establishment of the new cosmic succession.
- (c) The procreative theomachy ['Ukei', 宇気比] is viewed as the cosmic trial of the new Solar Ruler's biogenetic potencies and a serious challenge to its supreme au-

thority. Amaterasuōmikami is pictured here as the ‘Cosmic Sovereign’, who represents the beneficent, constructive powers of Pangenetic Luminous Numinosum [‘Mimsubinokami’, 皇産靈, 御産巢日神, 美武須毗, 魂神] and who pursues orderly process of universally immanent and transcendent development of the immense Universe.

In this context, the concealment of Amaterasuōmikami behind the gates of the heavenly Palace is nothing else then the first celestial Coronation Festival, and thus the archetype of all terrestrial festivals of enthronement. The whole festival is presented as one unit composed of two phases ; the preparations for Amaterasu’s enthronement, and the rites of ascending the Cosmic throne. The sacrilegious transgressions of Susanoo challenge the biogonic powers, religious majesty and political authority of Amaterasuōmikam’s universal sovereignty. All efforts of Susanoonōmikoto seem to be aimed at thwarting the Holy Partaking (‘Komouke’) of the Solar Goddess with the Cosmobiogenetic Luminus Divinity (Mimsubi-Power), which was to take place in the celestial Palace of eternity (‘Amenoiwaya’). The self-concealment and glorious re-appearance of Amaterasuōmikami is viewed as a manifestation of the apparent and indisputable superiority of her cosmic powers. The mythical scenery of all these intricate ordeals and procreative challenges brings into relief the mystery of Amaterasu’s polyphanic nature which embraces the universal fertility, inexhaustible pancreative powers and the supreme splendour of eternal sovereignty.

The mythical actions which are focused on the celestial sins of Susanoo emphasize the *fertile* aspect of Amaterasu’s nature and portray it as the *cosmobiogenic luminous Goddess* who encompasses the symbolism of Great Mother, Goddess of Flora, Lady of Time, Great Mother of Eternal Life, Goddess of Destiny, Solar Mother of Civilization, Luminous Mother of Agriculture, Solar Goddess of Cosmos, and Highest Solar Sibyl-vestal⁹⁷.

The mythical scenario, which portrays the mysterious concealment and re-appearance of Amaterasuōmikami, brings into prominence the cosmic sovereignty of this deity. Amaterasuōmikami, as the “*Supreme Cosmic Sovereign*” [‘Uchū no Sumeramikoto’, 宇宙皇命]⁹⁸ is the uppermost solar theophany of trimorphic Musubinokami. Therefore, Amaterasuōmikami has been often imagined as the highest celestial “Sun-king-priest” or “Sun-queen-priestess” who governs, keeps in order and unites harmoniously all spheres, dimensions and beings of the Macrocosmos and Microcosmos.

Within the symbolic image of Amaterasu, as the Sun-queen-priestess, can be detected four distinctive levels of mythical (proto-philosophical and religious) meaning⁹⁹.

- The first one portrays Amaterasu as the Cosmic-Priestess-Goddess who presides over preparations to the archetypal Niinamesai or Sensodaijōsai which are to be conducted by Takamimusubinokami, Izanaginokami or God Amateru.
- The second one points towards Amaterasu as the Solar-Queen-Goddess who ascends the

cosmic throne of Takamanohara and presides over the prototypal festivals of coronation or the new food.

- The third level of mythical meaning of Amaterasu emphasizes the Imperial character of the Solar Goddess and portrays her as the archetype of historical empress-regnants, or the terrestrial Progenitor of Yamato Imperial dynasty.
- The fourth level of Amaterasu's mythical image may be viewed as a mythical projection of the ancient terrestrial priestesses (Uneme, Sarume) who played the essential role during the primitive Niinamesai, Kunioshisai, Wasukunisai and Daijōsai. They were not only priestesses of worship of a Solar deity but they were regarded as the representations of human biogonic, social and spiritual energies.

Summing up this examination of Amaterasuōmikami's image, presented in the myth of Amenoiwayato, we can affirm that the universal sovereignty of the Solar Goddess is rooted in the substantial identity of her nature with the omnipresent character of Mimusubinokami - the eternal "Numinosum" of the pre-emanative and post-emanative existence (Marokaretarumono and the developing Universe).

References

60. Cfr. K. Yabuta, *Awagahara shinwa-kō*, in: K. Yokota/ed/, *Nihonshoki kenkyū*, vol. 6, T. 1977, pp. 426-429; T. Matsumae, *Chinkonsai no genzō to keisei*, in: K. Yokota/ed/, op. cit., vol. 7, T. 1973, pp. 198-204; T. Ōbayashi, *Niiname ni shu-tsugen suru ōja - korosareru ōja*, in: Bungaku, vol. 48, No. 5/1980/, pp. 160-164; K. Yanai, op. cit., pp. 52-53; D. Harada, *Raiun no shinwa*, T. 1978, pp. 297-299; S. Mishina, *Nihon shinwaron*, T. 1974, pp. 139-150; M. Anesaki, *Japanese Mythology*, in: C. J. A. McCulloch/ed/, *The Mythology of All Races*, vol. 8, N.Y. 1964, pp. 226-227.
61. Cfr. H. Inoue, op. cit., pp. 57-62; S. Mishina, *Kenkoku shinwa no shomondai*, vol. 2, T. 1977, pp. 177-181; T. Ōbayashi/ed/, *Takamanohara shinwa*, T. 1973, pp. 94-95; T. Matsumae, *Nihon no Kamigami*, T. 1976, pp. 107-115; N. Matsumoto, *Nihon shinwa no kenkyū*, T. 1976, pp. 91-95; T. Takagi and T. Ōbayashi, *Nihon shinwa densetsu no kenkyū*, T. 1973, pp. 333-342; D. C. Holtom, *The Japanese Enthronement Ceremonies; An Account of the Imperial Regalia*, T. 1972, pp. 14-16; N. Saigō, *Kojiki no sekai*, T. 1974, pp. 82-87.
62. Cfr. H. Inoue, op. cit., pp. 59-62; T. Ōbayashi/ed/, *Takamanohara shinwa*, T. 1973, pp. 149-150; S. Mishina, *Kenkoku shinwa no shomondai*, vol. 2, T. 1972, pp. 176-181; S. Mishina, *Nihon shinwaron*, T. 1974, pp. 139-150; S. Mishina, *Nihon no rekishi: Shinwa no sekai*, T. pp. 99-105, 157-158, 245-246; K. Yanai, op. cit., pp. 71-77, 152-154, 254-298, 308-312; J. Tanaka, op. cit., pp. 127-135; A. Ogihara,

- op. cit., pp. 98-99: K. Higo, *Shinwa jidai*, T. 1964, pp. 133-148; N. Tsukushi, *Amaterasu no tanjō*, T. 1973, pp. 142-145; K. Yabuta, art. cit., pp. 430-432; T. Matsumae, *Chinkonsai no genzō to keisei*, in: K. Yokota/ed/, *Nihonshoki kenkyū*, vol. 7, T. 1973, pp. 179-218; T. Matsumae, *Nihon no kamigami*, T. 1976, pp. 107-124; M. Ueda, *Nihon shinwa*, T. 1977, pp. 61-72; N. Saigo, *Kojiki no sekai*, T. 1974, pp. 72-90; Y. Kobayashi/ed/, *Kami to kami o matsuru mono*, T. 1967, pp. 254-262, 270-300.
63. Almost all of the above-mentioned scholars describe the analogous rites known in Mongolia, Indochina, Korea, Egypt, and among some American Indian tribes.
64. Cfr. J. Tanaka, op. cit., pp. 124-135.
65. Cfr. K. Yanai, op. cit., pp. 296-298, 308-312, He also mentions some analogous celebrations like: the "Hatake chinkon" (Rite of rice-fields fertilization) or the "Hodokorotoki" (Fertilizing of fields by bonfire). S. Itō and T. Ōbayashi mention a rite called "Hadaka matsuri" (Dance of the naked) which was performed in the middle of January. It included imitatory sowing of millet enacted by the oldest couple of a village, who undressed sowed the first seeds of grain, danced around a bonfire and performed imitatory intimate union within the sacred grove. For details confer: S. Itō and T. Ōbayashi/ed/, *Nihon shinwa kenkyū*, vol. 2, T. 1977, pp. 71-72.
66. Cfr. S. Mishina, *Nihon no rekishi: Shinwa no sekai*, T. 1974, pp. 244-247; K. Yanai, op. cit., pp. 254-266; T. Matsumae, *Chinkonsai no genzō to keisei*, in: K. Yokota/ed/, *Nihonshoki kenkyū*, vol. 7, T. 1973, pp. 179-184; S. Saigō, *Kojiki no sekai*, T. 1974, pp. 78-87.
67. The "Mythical Chronicles of Past Generations" record the myths and rites celebrated by Monobe family. The final edition of these chronicles was completed in the Early Heian (794-850 A.D.). The afore-mentioned rite is called "Isonokami tama-furi" and its designation derives from the site of the main shrine dedicated to Nigihayahinomikoto, the mythical progenitor of the Monobe clan. Cfr. K. Yanai, op. cit., pp. 254-259; T. Matsumae, *Chinkonsai no genzō to keisei*, in: L. Yokota/ed/, *Nihonshoki kenkyū*, vol. 7, T. 1973, pp. 186-187; S. Mishina *Kenkoku shiwa no shomondai*, vol. 2, T. 1977, pp. 106, 341-344.
68. The 'Amatsushirushi no mizutakara' [天璽瑞宝十種] are the sacred items, most probably the regalia of Monobe's kingship, which were regarded as symbols embodying the biogenetic energies and powerful cosmic forces. To these sacred items belong:
- a /two mirrors: the 'Mirror of celestial abyss' [Okitsukagami];
the 'Mirror of heavenly vault' [Hetsukagami];
 - b /one sabre called 'Eight span sword' [Yatsukanotsurugi];
 - c /four categories of jewels: the 'Pearl of life' [Ikutama], 'Pearl of eternity' [Tarutama], 'Pearl of resuscitation' [Shinigaeshitama], and the 'Pearl of safe return' [Chigaeshitama];

d / three types of sashes : the 'Sash of rejuvenation' [Hebinohire], 'Sash of happiness' [Hachinohire], and the 'Sash of abundance and creativity' [Kusagusanohire]. Cfr. footnote 67.

J. Herbert (op. cit., pp. 334-335) analyzing the mythical significance of these sacred treasures, gives the following interpretation of the respective items :

- Okitsukagami - incorporates a spiritual insight into the sublime celestial matters ;
- Hetsukagami - represents a spiritual insight into terrestrial affairs ;
- Yatsukanotsurugi - embodies a spirit penetrating its own nature ;
- Ikutama - is an incorporation of the soul's vital energies ;
- Tarutama - is an image of the soul's eternity ;
- Chigaeshitama - represents the correcting abilities of a being ;
- Shinigaeshitama - incorporates the energies of resuscitation ;
- Orochinohire - is a fin against serpents ;
[hebinohire]
- Hachinohire - a fin against wasps ;
- Kusagusanohire - is a fin against spectres.

(Cfr. also G. Katô, *A Study of Shintô*, London-Dublin 1971, pp. 21-23.).

69. The mythical contents of the "Ritual of the Jôgan Era" [Jôgangishiki] and that of the "Ceremonial of the Engi Era" [Engishiki] in relation to the Kojiki and Nihonshoki have been analysed by many Japanese scholars. The afore-depicted scenario of the Imperial Chinkonsai is based on studies of the following scholars: N. Saigô, *Kojiki kenkyû*, T. 1956, pp. 152-155 ; K. Yanai, op. cit., pp. 256-264 ; N. Matsumoto, *Chinkonsai no genzô to keisei*, in : K. Yokoto / ed /, *Nihonshoki kenkyû*, vol. 7, T. 1973, pp. 187-218 ; M. Ueda, *Nihon shinwa*, T. 1977, pp. 61-72.
70. It is very significant that all of the afore-mentioned "Musubi" (Cfr. Chapter 1, Schema 1 of my treatise published in 'Bulletin of Kagoshima Women's Junior College', 1989, p. 26) are written by using the ideogram 魂, read : musubi, tama, or tamashi, which symbolized 'breath of life', 'appearance of Spirit', 'Self-organizing Spirit', 'luminous Soul', and 'numinous vitality'. This mysterious "Vital power" (Spirit which manifests itself) was viewed by the primeval Japanese as a force which shaped various beings and, at one and the same time, constituted the sacred "roots" of their individual existence. The Engishiki mentions another 'Hasshinden'. called the "Tabernacle of Eight Biogenetic Divinities" ['Mikashiha-de hasshinden'] including a slightly different setting of the celestial deities, which were worshipped by emperors during the Niinamesai and Chinkonsai.
71. The songs crooned by young sibyls and vestals along with recitations extolled :
- Amaterasu as the source of cosmic vitality ;
 - numinous powers of biogenesis, which, as it was believed, were incorporated in the sacred pearls and sabres.

Cfr. T. Matsumae, *Chinkonsai no genzô to keisei*, in : K. Yokata / ed /, *Nihon-*

shoki kekyû, vol. 7, T. 1973, pp. 188-190.

72. Cfr. T. Matsumae, *Chinkonsai no genzô to keisei*, in: K. Yokata/ed/, *Nihonshoki kenkyû*, vol. 7, T. 1973, pp. 189-192; K. Yanai, op. cit., pp. 260-264; N. Matsumoto, *Nihon shinwa no kenkyû*, T. ¹1976, pp. 94-97, 148, 160-162; T. Ôbayashi/ed/, *Takamonohara shinwa*, T. 1973, pp. 101-121; K. Higo, *Shinwa jidai*, T. 1964, pp. 133-148; N. Tsukushi, *Amaterasu no tanjô*, T. ³1973, pp. 142-145; H. Inoue, op. cit., pp. 59-62; S. Mishima, *Nihon shinwaron*, T. ²1974, pp. 139-148.
73. Cfr. K. Yanai, op. cit., p. 71; N. Matsumoto, *Nihon shinwa no kenkyû*, T. 1976, p. 148; T. Matsumae, *Chinkonsai no genzô to keisei*, in: K. Yokata/ed/, *Nihonshoki kenkyû*, vol. 7, T. 1973, pp. 198-199; K. Yabuta, art. cit., pp. 430-431; M. Ueda, *Nihon shinwa*, T. ¹⁰1977, pp. 71-72; T. Matsumae, *Nihon no kamigami*, T. ²1976, pp. 120-124.
74. The ideograms of 'Niinamesai' indicate a festival during which for the first time a food prepared from the new crops is tasted. Unfortunately, there are no records describing this "Great Festival of the First Fruits" celebrated in small communities of villages or even provinces. The above description is based upon the oldest Imperial chronicles and ceremonials to which Japanese scholars refer. Cfr. Footnote No. 62 of this chapter.
75. The 'Ômisogi-barai' and 'Fuhiki saiji' were celebrated as one festival throughout the fifth, sixth and seventh century A.D. In Kamakura period they were abbreviated and each one was limited to one day celebration. Cfr. S. Okada, *Kodai ôken no saishi to shinwa*, T. 1979, pp. 105-108. For the details and meaning of Shintoistic purification rites and other festivals consult; M. Nishikadoi, *Saishi gairon*, T. ¹²1988.
76. Engishiki gives an account of eight deities who were enshrined in the s.c. "Sacred Tabernacle" and worshipped during the Great Festival of the New Food and the ancient Coronation Festival. This 'Mikashihade hasshinden' (in full: "Tabernacle of Eight Biogenetic Divinities") included:
- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| Takamimusubinokami | -as the biogenetic sacrosanct Power; |
| Mitoshinokami | -as the divine Power of eternal wealth; |
| Ômiketsunokami | -as the holy Energy producing all kinds of food; |
| Niwatakatsuhinokami | -as the sacrosanct Luminosity producing the Imperial wealth; |
| Kotoshironushinokami | -as the most holy Wisdom of kingship; |
| Ômiyanomenokami | -as the sacred Source of sibthood and vestalship; |
| Asuhanokami | -as the divine Sovereign of fate; |
| Hahikinokami | -as the holy Power ruling over the weather and climate; |
| Ônaobinokami | -as the numinous Solar luminosity which heals all sorts of damages. |

Cfr. T. Matsumae, *Daijôsai to ki-ki shinwa*, in: S. Mishima/ed/, *Nihonshoki kenkyû*, vol. 4, T. ²1975, pp. 60-69.

77. Cfr. M. Yamazaki/ed/, *Nihon shinwa to minzoku*, T. 1977, pp. 1-158; N. Saigō, *Kojiki kenkyū*, T. 1976, pp. 124-138, 156-158.
78. T. Karatsuka advances the opinion that in the earliest times of Japanese statehood the s.c. 'uneme' were the virgins sent to the Yamato Imperial court, on the occasion of the Great Festival of the New Food, by all provincial rulers as the symbols of their total obeisance to the emperor. These girls were preparing the new holy food for the Niiname festival. They served also as ladies in waiting, and one of them, chosen by emperor, played the role of Imperial spouse (for the night of Niiname festival). But with institutionalization of the sibylhood and vestalship, as well as the growing tendency to emphasize the purity of the Imperial lineage, the function of uneme were dropped during the reign of the emperor Temmu. Cfr. M. Yamazaki/ed/, *Nihon shinwa to minzoku*, T. 1977, pp. 145-158.
79. The ideogramological analysis of 'Senkyō' compound brings into relief precious celestial grants which are received and partaken humbly by man. The best part of these priceless gifts it being returned to their divine Owner in the form of sacrifice during the rite. Cfr. A. N. Nelson, op. cit., pp. 114, 789; N. Saigō, *Kojiki kenkyū*, T. 1976, pp. 145-147.
80. The "Solemn blessing" (Yogoto) addressed to the ruling Emperor by the leader of Nakatomi family was composed of three parts. The first verses reckoned the myth of Niniginomikoto's descent from the Heavens. The second part recounted the preparations for the Niinamesai (and Daijiōsai) as well as the most significant moments of the ceremonies. The conclusive part was a prayer to myriads of the Heavenly deities and Amaterasuōmikami, for the long and glorious reign of the emperor. Cfr. R. S. Ellwood, *The Feast of Kingship: Accession Ceremonies in Ancient Japan*, T. 1973, pp. 51-53; N. Saigō, *Kojiki kenkyū*, T. 1976, pp. 164-167.
81. R. S. Ellwood holds the opinion that the setting of Niinamesai is that of a "marriage feast". With regard to this festival he states: "A newly married couple needs a new house, new food, new wedding garments and a nuptial couch. These are provided during the preparations to the Niinamesai". In the same matrilineal context he views the myth of Amenoiwaya, where Amaterasu is the celestial mythicization of every bride, while Susanoō represents all bridegrooms. R. S. Ellwood, op. cit., pp. 73-74.
82. Cfr. Y. Umeda, *Ise jingū no shiteki kenkyū*, T. 1973, pp. 282-286; S. Mishina, *Nihon no rekishi: Shinwa no sekai*, T. 1974, pp. 99, 121-122, 156; S. Mishina, *Kenkoku shinwa no shomondai*, vol. 2. T. 1977, pp. 177-181; N. Saigō, *Kojiki no sekai*, T. 1974, pp. 86-87, 134-148; N. Saigō, *Kojiki kenkyū*, T. 1976, pp. 121-148, 156-170; Y. Kobayashi/ed/, *Kami to kami o matsuru mono*, T. 1967, pp. 270-300; R. S. Ellwood, op. cit., pp. 1-2, 73-74, 103-148.
83. The compound of 'wasukuni' appears in Kojiki, for the first time, when Izanaginokami entrusts Tsukuyominomikoto with authority to rule over the terrestrial realm during the night. Then, it appears in the Kojiki and Nihonshoki's chronicles

- of the emperor Yûraku (456-479 A.D.). This expression refers undoubtedly to the "ruling over a country" and therefore it has been translated in this treatise as the "Acquisition of the throne". In the very analogical circumstances of ascending the throne by the emperors Kōan, Seinei, Ankan, Senka and Kimmei, Kojiki and Nihonshoki use the expression 'kuniوشي [国押] which means the "imposing of Imperial authority" or "subding of a country". In this context the Kunioshisai was the festival of allegiance and homage paid to the ruler by the heads of conquered territories. This festival was most probably linked to conquests of new territories by Yamato Imperial dynasty as well as to the annual renewal of loyalty to its throne. Cfr. S. Okada, *Kodai ôken no saishi to shinwa*, T. 1979, pp. 46-54.
84. The 'Yasojima' is the oldest designation of Japanese statehood and indicates the part of the Archipelago united into one Kingdom before the third century A.D. The ideogramology of the 'Yasojima no kamimatsuri' points towards the worship of a Deity, which was regarded as the protector of the united kingdom.
85. The 'Sensodaijôsai' designates the "Grand Festival of Enthronement" (or simply the "Coronation Festival") and brings into prominence its two fundamental phases: the rites of "Ascending the throne" (Senso), and the Niinamesai which was celebrated for the first time by the new emperor. The entire celebration of the Coronation Festival is known under its abbreviated form as the 'Daijôsai'.
86. The 'Shinsen shinkyô' was also called "Shokumotsu kyôken girei" (Rite of Food Sacrifice) and was analogous to the 'Komouke' (Holy Partaking) which was the fulcrum of the Great Festival of the New Food. There is, however, here a significant difference. The essence of the "Holy Partaking" is the sharing of the first new food with the cosmobiogenetic Divinity, while during the 'Shinsen shinkyô' there is emphasized a communion of all subjects with their sovereign.
87. S. Osada (in: *Kodai ôken no saishi to shinwa*, T. 1979, pp. 31-54) upholds the opinion that from the times of the emperor Jimmu to Keikô (660 B.C.-130 A.D.) the offering of the best fruits of all lands to the ruler was an expression of the allegiance and loyalty. From the times of the emperor Nintoku (313 A.D.) this custom was transformed into the active participation of local rulers in the annually held Imperial Niinamesai. The Imperial Kunioshisai was quite common during the reigns of Keikô, Chûai, Jingû Kôgô, Ôjin and some other emperors who crushed several uprisings in Kyûshû.
88. Cfr. S. Okada, *Tennôke shinsô shinwa no kenkyû*, in: S. Mishina /ed/. *Nihonshoki kenkyû*, vol. 2, T. 1966, pp. 356-362; S. Okada, *Kodai ôken no saishi to shinwa*, T. 1979, pp. 15-54.
89. Cfr. R. A. B. Ponsonby-Fane, op. cit., pp. 153-170; Y. Umeda, op. cit., pp. 313-343; S. Okada, *Kodai ôken no saishi to shinwa*, T. 1979, pp. 61-84, 241-245; S. Okada, art. cit., pp. 362-364. The 'Yasojimasai' ("Festival of the Japanese Archipelago") is an abbreviation of the 'Yasojima no Kamimatsuri' ("Divine Festival of eighty islands").

90. It is a reference to a divine triad, one of many which appeared during Izanagi's purification, and which includes :

Sokotsutsunoonokami -as divine ruler of distant and long sea-roads :

Nakatsutsunoonokami -as holy sovereign and protector of the short sea-roads ;

Uwatsutsunoonokami -as divinity protecting the roads of gulfs and bays.

91. 'Yasojimanokami' ('Deity of the Japanese Nation" or "Divinity of the Japanese Archipelago") is regarded by scholars as the deity which created the Japanese Archipelago, its polymorphic life and organized the oldest Japanese society. Therefore, some scholars identify this numious Being with Izanaginokami or the theanthropoidal pair of Izanagi and Izanami.

'Ikushmanokami' ("Deity of living islands" or "Deity of nezogenesis") was not only considered by the Japanese primevals as a mysterious Creator of their Archipelago but, first of all, was worshipped as the anthropogenetic Deity and inexhaustible source of human vitality. (Comp. Ikutamanokami and Ikumusubino-kami of the "Priestly Ark of Eight Sacrosanct Divinities"- 'Kannagi Hasshinden', and the "Ten august treasures of the Heavenly Powers"- "Amatsushirushi no mizutakara').

'Yasobashiratsunokami' ("Solar deity of the Universe") was regarded as the pangenetic luminous divinity coordinating the polymorphic process of universal cosmicization and the harmonious order of all worlds.

The interpretation of the symbolism of this triad is based upon the ideogram-ology of the names and the religious significance of the Yasojima Festival.

92. Cfr. S. Okada. op. cit., pp. 71-76, 273-297 ; S. Okada, art cit., pp. 361-365 ; R. A. B. Ponsonby-Fane, op. cit., pp. 170-175.
93. Cfr. Y. Umeda, op. cit., pp. 282-286 ; N. Saigô *Kojiki kenkyû*. T. ⁵1976, pp. 118-120 ; Y. Kobayashi/ed/, *Kami to kami o matsuru mono*, T. 1967, pp. 199-230 ; H. Yoshino, *Nihon kadai jujutsu : In-Yô go Gyô to nihon genshi shinkô*. T. ²1975, pp. 183-211.
94. The designation of the cornation banquet as 'toyoakari' points toward its links with Niinamesai, where the enhacement of the multifarious vitality is emphasized. The 'Gattan sekkie', on the other hand. indicates the commencement of new reign. The first day of the new Imperial era. Therefore, it may be translated as the "Banguet of the Foundation Day" or "Banquet of the New Era".
95. Cfr. H. Yoshino, op. cit., pp. 183-211 ; T. Ôbayashi, *Niiname ni shutsugen suru ôja - korosareru ôja*, in : Bungaku, vol. 48, No. 5/1980/, pp. 160-162 ; S. Mishina, *Nihon no rekishi : Shinwa no sekai*, T. 1974, pp. 155-157 ; D. C. Holtom, *The Japanese Enthronement Ceremonies : An Account of the Imperial Regalia*, T. ²1972, pp. 40-117.
96. Cfr Y. Kobayashi/ed/, *Kami to kami o matsuru mono*, T. 1967, pp. 199-230 ; N. Saigô , *Kojiki kenkyû*, T. ⁵1976, pp. 115-120 ; T. Ôbayashi/ed/, *Himuka shinwa*,

- T. 1974, pp. 21-90; N. Saigō, *Kojiki no sekai*, T. 1974, pp. 137-139; S. Mishina, *Nihon no rekishi: Shinwa no sekai*, T. 1974, pp. 104-158; Y. Umeda, op. cit., pp. 282-339; S. Okada, op. cit., pp. 31-54, 60-84, 245-248; R. A. B. Ponsoby-Fane, op. cit., pp. 153-176; H. Yoshino, op. cit., pp. 183-211; D. C. Holtom, *The Japanese Enthronement Ceremonies: An Account of the Imperial Regalia*. T. 1972, pp. 40-117.
97. Cfr. S. Mishina, *Kenkoku shinwa no shomondai*, vol. 2, T. 1977, pp. 203-207; A. Yoshida, *Amaterasu no genzō*, T. 1980, pp. 70-77; T. Takagi and T. Ōbayashi, op. cit., pp. 332-342; Y. Kobayashi/ed/, *Kami to kami o matsuru mono*, T. 1967, pp. 297-300; N. Tsukushi, *Amaterasu no tanjō*, T. 1973, pp. 7-9; E. Neumann, op. cit., pp. 94-179, 226-325; M. Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, Cleveland 1963, pp. 216-316.
98. The title 'sumeramikato' [皇命] expresses the primordial Shintoistic conception of sovereignty far better than any other term can do it. J. W. T. Mason and J. Tanaka hold the opinion that the 'mikoto' signifies the innate structure or setting, dynamic Law or order of beings and mutually harmonious relationship between various individuals and categories of existences. Therefore, each individual possesses its own 'mikoto'; every unit of beings has its 'sumeramikoto', and the whole immense Universe is governed by its proper 'Sumeramikoto' ('Uchū no sumeramikoto'). All these individual mikoto and categorial sumeramikoto point towards substantial homogeneity of the Cosmos. The trimorphic Musubinokami is the primordial, extra-personal or trans-personal, pangenetic "Supreme Cosmic Sovereign". Amaterasuōmikami is its most perfect solar theophany, While the emperor is the categorial incorporation of Amaterasu, i.e., the terrestrial Sumeramikoto. Cfr. J. W. T. Mason, *The Meaning of Shinō: The Primeval Foundation of Creative Spirit in Modern Japan*, Washington-N.Y. 1967, pp. 153-176; J. Tanaka, op. cit., pp. 239-280.
99. Cfr. N. Matsumoto, *Nihon shinwa no kenkyū*, T. 1976, pp. 208-220; K. Yanai, op. cit., pp. 50-56; Y. Izumiya, *Ki-ki shinwa no ichikōsatsu*, in: S. Mishina/ed/, *Nihonshoki kenkyū*, vol. 1, T. 1966, pp. 34-36; Y. Kobayashi/ed/, *Kami to kami o matsuru mono*, T. 1967, pp. 224-248; N. Tsukushi, *Amaterasu no tanjō*, T. 1973, pp. 6-9; M. Yamazaki/ed/, *Nihon shinwa to saishi*, T. 1977, pp. 32-42; N. Saigō, *Kojiki no sekai*, T. 1974, pp. 86-90; S. Mishina, *Nihon no rekishi: Shinwa no sekai*, T. 1974, pp. 154-156; R. S. Ellwood, op. cit., pp. 66-67.