

## CHAPTER 2

# THE DEATH OF GODS AND THE ANCIENT WORLDVIEW

### 1. Acropolis and Necropolis

It is said that the god Sukunabikona no Kami 少名毘古那神 crossed the waves from distant Tokoyo 常世 no kuni and arrived at Izumo 出雲. Together with Ōnamuchi no Kami 大穴牟遲神, he created the Central Land of Reed Plains (Ashihara no nakatsu kuni 葦原の中つ国), but when the work was done, returned once more to Tokoyo. It appears likely that Sukunabikona created the Central Land of Reed Plains in the image of Tokoyo. In the eyes of this engineer-god, the newly created land probably seemed a double superimposed on Tokoyo.

A similar experience awaited the fisherman Urashima 浦島. This lad, guided by a tortoise he had rescued, visited the Dragon's Palace. After a sojourn of three years, he returned to the shores of Tango 丹後 province, but there three hundred years had elapsed. Opening a jewel box he had received in the Dragon's Palace, Urashima was engulfed by white smoke. Turning at once into a white-haired old man, he died on the spot. In the violent reconciliation of three years and three centuries, his body disintegrated instantly. For this hapless fisherman, did not the Central Land of Reed Plains appear through his window in Tango as but a thin, unreal semblance of the pleasant and bountiful Tokoyo called the Dragon's Palace? Unlike Sukunabikona, who was able to return to Tokoyo, Urashima could not, and encountered his death in the Central Land of Reed Plains. Nevertheless, for both figures, the Central Land of

Reed Plains probably possessed the character of a remote copy of its original, Tokoyo. It is also notable that in relation to far off Tokoyo, the god and the fisherman both took the Japanese seashore as the stage of departure and arrival.

Through considering Sukunabikona and Urashima, I have tried to bring into relief the perspective of seeing the Central Land of Reed Plains from the stance of Tokoyo. I wonder if this outlook did not fulfill the role of a compass for the early Japanese, providing orientation deep in their hearts. Gradually, however, the perceptions and feelings of the ancients who lived by this perspective were forgotten, for a new point of view came to be established, one in which Sukunabikona was viewed as a visiting god who came crossing the waves of the sea, and in which Urashima was regarded as a wandering and unlucky returnee. This stance of seeing Tokoyo from the Central Land of Reed Plains gradually gained dominance. It was probably in this way that the dualistic concept of looking toward the other world from this world was first born and developed among those living in the Central Land of Reed Plains.

Here, we find a radical inversion of perspectives. Moreover, this inversion brought about a fundamental reorganization with regard to culture, one that gave birth to a way of grasping this world and the other world through the temporal phenomenon of the alternation of life and death. In place of the view in which the Central Land of Reed Plains and Tokoyo were regarded as of equal nature within the space of the cosmos, there appeared a consciousness of them as separate and qualitatively distinct.

The cultural reorganization arising from this inversion in perspective became an irresistible wave. Of course, the point of view of the original model, visible in Sukunabikona and Urashima, was not completely lost. It is not easy to discern its slender flow, hidden like underground water in the depths of history; nevertheless, we know, for example, that a sensibility harboring such a perspective has been transmitted continuously in the traditions of the Ainu and of Okinawa. In the universe of the Ainu there exist the worlds of the gods and of the afterlife, possessing a structure and scope similar to our own visible

world. The world of the gods does not manifest itself to our sight, but is concealed in the background of the universe, equivalent in nature to our visible world.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, in the Ryukyu Islands the cult of the other world known as Niraikanai has long existed. The perspective of looking to “the sacred other world” from this present world is not absent, but in the figure of the god who visits from Niraikanai, the memory of the experiences of Sukunabikona and Urashima clearly lingers. Moreover, in the images of both Niraikanai and Tokoyo, the grim notion of death has not proliferated. This special characteristic gives rise to a common prospect that unites the two.<sup>2</sup>

When the outlook of Sukunabikona and Urashima had receded, and in its place the stance of people dwelling in the Central Land of Reed Plains had been firmly established, the world that opened forth from the margins of the Central Land suddenly began to be colored by images of defilement and the fear of death. The shift in perspective drove a wedge between this world and the other world, and acted to weld to the world in which Sukunabikona and Urashima had resided a sphere of a horrible past. In other words, the Land of Yomi 黄泉 (Land of the Dead) was born as a concept. It was by this process that the ever green and sunlit Tokoyo came to be encroached upon by Yomi, which was shrouded in darkness and pollution. The triple-layered world that informs the recorded mythology of Japan—with the Plain of High Heaven (Takama no hara 高天原), the Central Land of Reed Plains, and Land of Yomi as upper, middle, and lower strata—came to be established.

The formation of this vertical three-layered mythological world picture has been discussed by Saigō Nobutsuna 西郷信綱.<sup>3</sup> According to Saigō, the Plain of High Heaven was the heavenly other world that sustained and legitimized the system of royal power in Japan. By contrast, the Central Land of Reed Plains was the field of daily life on earth, including Yamato 大和 and Izumo 出雲. Finally, about the margins of the terrestrial world spread Yomi, which was polluted by unsightliness and defilement. The Central Land of Reed Plains was, therefore, not simply the objective world of nature, but also the environment of the

daily lives of the ancient people. The mythological stratification of this space of daily life resulted in the tripartite, vertically-layered world picture. When this three-layered world is grasped horizontally instead, a terrestrial cosmic axis is formed consisting of the regions of Ise 伊勢 (heaven), Yamato (earth), and Izumo. The Central Land of Reed Plains underwent a polarization into the terrestrial and the subterranean, and the sacred ground of Ise, as an antipode formed by a utopia in the east, came to be visualized as similar to the Plain of High Heaven. In Saigō's eyes, the world of *Kojiki* 古事記 (Record of Ancient Matters) was informed by the intersection of these vertical and horizontal axes, with Yamato as its center. Izumo and Yomi, then, were deeply defiled by death, and as symbols of pollution and unsightliness functioned as decisive coordinates.

An objection to this view has been raised by Masuda Katsumi 益田勝実, who has pointed out that Saigō's thinking reflects only the perspective of the Yamato court, and not necessarily the conception of all ancient people.<sup>4</sup> In the conception of a horizontal cosmic axis, the notion of Izumo as a locale adjoining the land of the dead arose only when it was assumed that Yamato was the focal point of authority, but when the perspective of Izumo was taken as central, the world surely appeared differently. Masuda sought for evidence of this in the idea of "Yomotsu kuni 黄泉国" (another pronunciation of the name Yomi). He asks whether there were not, in ancient Izumo, a number of lands called Yomotsu distributed in various directions radiating out from the center. For example, the political center of ancient Izumo was the area where the state bureaus (*kokuga* 国衙) were located in the Ou-gun 意宇郡 district. Underground to the east and southeast was a Yomotsu that had Mt. Hiba 比婆 and the slope of Ifuya 伊賦夜 as its entrance. Similarly, to the northwest, beneath the Hokkaigan coast of the Shimane peninsula, lay a Yomotsu with Yomi no ana as entrance.

We see that while Saigō's discussion of cosmic space is based on a purely mythological model, Masuda's differs in that it is conceived on the foundation of the actual climate and topography, based on such documents as *Izumo no kuni fudoki* 出雲国風土記. In addition, Masuda

conjectures that in ancient Izumo, the underground regions of peripheral areas to the east, southeast, northeast, and northwest of the center were regarded as forming lands known as Yomotsu or Yomi. The terrestrial world of living people was taken as the center, and beneath surrounding areas, known as the “lands in the four directions (*yomo* 四方),” there existed conceptually the world inhabited by the spirits of the dead. In other words, Yomotsu as Yomi corresponded with Yomotsu as the “lands in the four directions.”

The difference between Saigō, who adopts an upper-lower vertical axis for the Central Land of Reed Plains and Yomi, and Masuda, who adopts a horizontal (four directional) axis for the same structure, turns on whether the point of origin of the world picture is placed at Yamato or at Izumo. It must be noted, of course, that in the case of Masuda, the conception of an “underground” world is not entirely lacking, for he states, regarding the Level Pass of Yomotsu (Yomotsu hirasaka) as the boundary between the present world and the other world, that in the thinking of the period, Yomotsu was of higher elevation in relation to the world of human beings; hence, there was an image of the underground within mountains moving down to the terrestrial surface. “Moving down from the underground within mountains to the terrestrial surface” holds a conceptual twist, but it conforms with the natural landscape and thus directly expresses the nature of Yomotsu as the lands in the four directions. The character of Yomotsu is grasped through a superimposition on the natural landscape of a basin area. Further, there is fundamentally no difference with the topographical situations of the later capitals of Heijō-kyō 平城京 and Heian-kyō 平安京, or with the sacred site of Mt. Kōya 高野, centered in repose within a landscape of eight lotus petals. It may be said that villages dotting the entire Japanese archipelago are topographically similar, and that in some cases, crater lakes and other natural geographical features also manifest the same landscape.<sup>5</sup> It is not impossible to assert that “Akitsushima Yamato 秋津洲やまと” as a whole is surrounded by such a “basin area” landscape. This may be the reason for the formation of the paradoxical image of “moving down from the underground of peripheral areas to the

surface.”

Saigō’s perspective unfolds “macrocosmically” with the Central Land of Reed Plains (equated with Yamato) as center, while by contrast Masuda places both Izumo and Yamato equally in the field of vision, bringing them to converge by viewing each as a microcosm. The macrocosmic view focuses on an analysis of the structure of the myth itself, while the microcosmic view includes attention to the natural landscape. The latter perspective is often applied to cave or tunnel-style (*yokoanashiki* 横穴式) burial mounds, which have been regarded as providing material evidence of the view of an underground Yomi among the ancient people. It has been proposed, for example, that the tale of the flight of Izanagi, who visited his wife Izanami in Yomi, reflects the structure of the tunnel-style interior of the burial mound.<sup>6</sup>

While it is reasonable to consider the structure of the tunnel-style burial mound in relation to the rites of death widely seen in the myths, we must ask whether the mounds of the ancient period formed a “domain of the dead” according to a single determined pattern. Was a “domain of the dead” or a world as necropolis born according to different rules from the “domain of the living”? If that is the case, what sort of depiction was the necropolis given?

As mentioned before, as long as that perspective remained vital in which the Central Land of Reed Plains was viewed from Tokoyo, there was parity between the two. Although the Central Land was newly created, for Sukunabikona it was also a copy or mirror image of his own homeland. When this new land of Reed Plains was born, however, it began to assert its own identity by displacing the image of Tokoyo into the marginal distance. What made this possible was the structure of the myth of the Plain of High Heaven and of the tale of the descent of the offspring of the gods. Still at this time, however, Tokoyo shone with the afterimage of a utopia. Even as the immediacy of its existence faded in the inversion of perspective, it was still a world of delight that drew the hearts of living people. That world of bliss, however, gradually began to be shadowed by pollution and misfortune, for by limiting the “world” to the present, people came to be acutely conscious of death. In place of the

vision of Tokoyo's abundance, the gloomy image of Yomi gradually emerged. Though the concept of death became fixed, the land of death was kept distant in marginal regions or the underground. An irreversible dualism of life and death was established. It was at this time that Yomi became an object to be shunned as an imperfect copy of the Central Land. In this way the necropolis of Japan was born. Here we find reflected the process by which the utopian Tokoyo underwent a metamorphosis into the necropolis of Yomi.

Concretely, what kind of realm was Yomi as a necropolis, and what sort of structure did it have? Or rather, we should first ask whether it was receptive to being given the character of a necropolis. Needless to say, these issues are highly significant in the formation of the worldview of the ancient people. The establishment of the concept of death became a turning point at which a clear outline was impressed on the interrelated images of the state and the universe. "Death" may be said to be the alpha and omega for deciphering the character of the picture of the world in the ancient period.

In the ancient cities of Greece, the acropolis and necropolis were formed according to a geometric plan in which they were strictly divided. "Acropolis" signified the hill or citadel that marked the center of the city or polis. There, a hall was erected in which the protector-gods of the city were enshrined; the Parthenon of Athens is an example. In military terms, it was the primary base, and gradually became the religious and spiritual center. By contrast, the necropolis originally referred to the burial ground or communal grave site of the ancient city, and literally meant the "district of the dead" or the "city of death." In the ancient cities of Greece and Rome and in the areas influenced by them, it was placed outside the city and extended along the roads leading from the gates of the city walls. In contrast to the acropolis, which was a symbol of the realm of life that marked the heart of the ancient city, the necropolis was the symbol of the realm of death that was located in the external margins. These two symbols expressed qualitatively distinct spaces that lay in confrontation and rivalry on the two sides of the city walls.

Let us also consider the case of Egypt. Thebes, which developed as a major city along the upper reaches of the Nile in the period of the ancient Egyptian pharaohs, is conspicuous for its orderly division of the sphere of the city on one side of the Nile and the burial ground or sphere of the dead on the other. The eastern bank of the Nile was the core of the city, formed of the palace, hall of the gods, offices of the state, and residences of the citizens. The opposite western bank was the city of the dead, made up of the royal tombs, the hall for royal funerals, and the graves of the aristocracy. Regarding the ancient Egyptian court, the ancient period of the kings is represented by the pyramids or royal tombs, and by contrast, in the later period of kings, cave tombs (for example, the valley of royal residences) like those of Thebes were built, and the pyramid-type tombs were abandoned. It is impossible to summarize simply the changes and vicissitudes in the form of the "land of the dead" in the ancient Egyptian court period. We should reflect once more, however, that Thebes in the latter royal period constructed the necropolis and acropolis separately on opposite banks of the Nile River. The Nile River, as a kind of divide functioning as a cosmic axis, provided symbolic meaning in the creation of the ancient world picture. The view of the Nile River as a boundary line between the sphere of life and the sphere of death harbors a conception of the "world" as divided into the eastern and western banks of a great river. This conception of east and west in terms of a kind of sacred axis is probably based on faith in the sun god Ra. The god Ra, who rises from the eastern bank and sets on the western bank, was a symbol of eternal life that journeys without a moment's rest around the world of life and death.

As we have seen, in the city-states of ancient Greece, that which divides the land of the dead from the land of the living is the city's wall, which surrounds and protects it, but in the ancient Egyptian kingdom, it was the great Nile River that ran from south to north through the vast desert. "Wall" and "river" functioned in the consciousness as cosmic codes that, through the medium of death, highlighted the deep structure of the world. What form did this symbolic code of partition take in ancient Japanese society?

The tumulus period in Japan is generally considered to extend from the end of the third century to the seventh century. Geographically, its center was the Kinki region, and it reached from northern Kyushu to the Kantō area. There are many stages of development, from small, weak mounds to large ones, and differences may also be seen in their shape and character. In general, the changes in the mounds reflect changes in the conception of the necropolis in the ancient period of Japan. Further, the spread and vicissitudes of mound architecture are important indications of the prosperity and decline of ancient royal authority. This is because the formation of the necropolis served as a substantial negative image that disclosed the existence of the acropolis. Just as Egypt and China were states that constructed magnificent necropolises, ancient Japan also built huge structures such as the square-front round-back keyhole mounds that promised interchange with the world of death. In that the cosmology originating here drove an irreversible wedge between life and death, there is no difference from the cases of China and Egypt.

If we take a bird's-eye view of the mounds that dot the plain of Yamato and the basin of Nara, we notice that they spread out in the hills that surround the Nara basin. Of course, there are some hills within the basin also. Most of the mounds, however, tend to be in the mountains, at the bases of mountains, or in the hills surrounding the level plain in all directions.<sup>7</sup> From the northern area of the Nara basin, they range first from the Saki 佐紀 hills to the base of mountains along the eastern side, then from the area of Mt. Torimi 鳥見 in the southeast they surround the hills of Asuka 飛鳥 and Ochi 越智 and extend to the eastern base of Mt. Kazuraki 葛城. Then passing the Umami 馬見 hills, they extend to Mt. Ikoma 生駒. This landscape presents the necropolis as an encircling net around the Yamato plain and Nara basin. The ridge of foothills and hills forming this encircling net is the boundary separating the realm of the dead from the realm of the living. If the boundary in the polis of ancient Greece was the city wall, and in the cities of ancient Egypt, the great river, then in Japan it was another natural feature, the prominence of the surrounding ridge line of mountains. Earlier, I referred to the theory of Masuda that in ancient Izumo, Yomi was conceived as "the lands in the

four directions.” This arrangement may be applied directly to the Yamato region also. Moreover, in that the “lands in the four directions” are at a higher elevation than the central plain area, it must be noted that the establishment of the image that Masuda speaks of as “descending from the underground in the mountains to the terrestrial surface” was a natural development.

Of course, even though it is undeniable that the presently extant mounds are scattered close to the ridge line of mountains and about the foothills and bases, it is not necessarily possible to assert that this distribution represents a single, clearly formed rule. Later, as the mounds moved outside the Nara basin, their landscape no longer described a line of mountains and foothills. For example, the mounds of Ōjin 応神 and Nintoku 仁徳, which were built in Kawachi 河内, no longer participate in a cosmology that takes mountains and hills as a sacred axis of death in contrast to the center. Further, when we take into consideration the diversity in the directional orientations of the individual mounds themselves and the diversity in their sizes, it is difficult to discern any conformity to set rules. Rather, the mounds (domains of death) have bequeathed to later ages their ruins covered over by an opaque membrane.

Do these ruins, in their interiors, yet harbor secrets? In order to investigate this, we must first leave behind the world of material remains and turn to the world of mythological records. By shifting our line of vision from the code of things to the code of concepts, and, if we may use the expression, from the code of history to the code of mythology, let us try to interpret what the myths have to say to us. When we do so, how does the human landscape of acropolis and necropolis divided by mountains appear?

## 2. From Gods Who Conceal Themselves to Gods Who are Mourned

The process by which the gods gradually changed into human beings is narrated in various forms in the myths recorded in *Kojiki* 古事記 and *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀. This process of transformation implies a basic

change in the worldview itself. In particular, the point at which the gods come to recognize and submit to “death” is epochal in significance. It corresponds to the disappearance, discussed earlier, of the perspective of Sukunabikona, who views the Central Land of Reed Plains from distant Tokoyo. That is, the transformation from god to human being was dramatically enacted through that inversion in perspective. Below, I will clarify the traces of this transformation of the gods by closely examining the deities’ movements as described in the world of myths.

*Kojiki* opens by recording the creation of five special heavenly gods (*kotoamatsu kami* 別天つ神), beginning with Amenominakanushi, and of the following seven generations of the Age of the Gods. The emergence and departure of the first seven gods—the five special heavenly gods and the following two deities, Kunitokotachi and Toyokumo—are described using a common expression. They each “become [present as] a single divinity and then conceal themselves.”<sup>8</sup> “Single god” (*hitori-gami* 独神) means that they do not depend on the aid of a spouse, and “concealing oneself” (*kakureru* 隠れる) means to remove one’s form, that is, to vanish. This expression is not used with regard to the gods who appear on the stage of the mythological world and then depart after these first seven. In fact, there is no other example in which a god’s coming into existence and vanishing are expressed together in the same phrase. With regard to *Kojiki*, it is solely concerning the first seven gods who appear at the beginning of the Age of the Gods that their emergence in the world and departure is recorded in this way.

Does this expression mean that the first seven gods appeared and after a time died? Apparently not. Setting aside questions regarding their emergence, we see that the gods’ “concealing themselves” meant literally that they vanished from sight and did not imply that their existence ended in death. Even if these gods concealed themselves in an invisible realm, their existence was not such that they underwent death.

It should be noted here that in *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, “concealing oneself” is also used with the sense of the gods’ confinement or withdrawal. When Susanoo committed disruptive acts on the Plain of High Heaven (Takama no hara 高天原), Amaterasu entered the Heavenly

Rock Cave Door (*ame no iwayato* 天の岩屋戸) and stated: “Having shut myself in (*komori* 隠り), I thought the Plain of Heaven would be dark, and that the Central Land of the Reed Plains would be completely dark.”<sup>9</sup> Because Amaterasu, the sun goddess, has literally confined herself in a cave of heaven, the world is wrapped in darkness. It is clear, however, that hiding herself temporarily does not mean she has died, and afterward, the goddess once again displays her form in the Plain of Heaven. The first seven gods mentioned before also, like Amaterasu, conceal themselves in a hidden place only temporarily and may reappear whenever necessary.

We encounter a similar expression in the story of Ōkuninushi’s surrender of the Central Land of the Reed Plains to the descendants of Amaterasu. When Amaterasu sent an envoy to Ōkuninushi (Master of the Great Land) and his sons urging them to relinquish dominion of the Central Land, one son, Kotoshironushi, turning to his father, stated that he would accord with the command, and disappeared. *Kojiki* records:

He spoke to his father the great god, saying: “With fearful reverence let us present this land to the offspring of the heavenly deities.” Then he stamped his feet and overturned the boat; and by clapping his hands with a heavenly reverse clapping, he transformed it into a green twig fence, and concealed himself.<sup>10</sup>

Kotoshironushi, vowing submission to the heavenly gods, “conceals” himself within a fence of green bamboo branches. This means, of course, that he withdraws behind the fence, not that he dies.

Another of the sons of Ōkuninushi, Takeminakata, at length like Kotoshironushi agrees to relinquish the land. Finally, in a gesture of acquiescence, Ōkuninushi pronounces his final decision to the envoy:

Only, if you will worship me, making my dwelling-place like the plentiful heavenly dwelling where rules the heavenly sun-lineage of the offspring of the heavenly deities, firmly rooting

the posts of the palace in the bedrock below, and raising high the crossbeams unto the High Plain of Heaven itself, then I will conceal myself and wait [upon you] in the less-than-one-hundred eighty road-bendings.<sup>11</sup>

“Less-than-one-hundred” (*momotarazu* 百足らず) is an epithet for “eighty,” which signifies a large number. “Road-bendings” (*kumade* 堀手) here indicates a place with many bends. Hence, the god will conceal himself in a place beyond many windings.

Both the “green twig fence” behind which Kotoshironushi withdrew and the “eighty bends” beyond which Ōkuninushi concealed himself suggest a funerary ground or afterworld. In fact, the “eighty bends” are often interpreted as indicating a subterranean “root-land” or “bottom-land” (*ne no kuni, soko tsu kuni* 根の国, 底つ国). Nevertheless, “to conceal oneself” here, just as in the case of the seven gods in the opening passages of *Kojiki* or of Amaterasu hiding in a cave of heaven, does not signify the death of the god.

It is clear from the above that when the first seven gods, and other gods such as Amaterasu and Ōkuninushi and his sons, withdrew from the stage of action narrated in the myths, this departure took the form of self-concealment (*onjin* 隠身) free of any notion of death. Not only was there absence of all hint of death, but even of resurrection after death. The concept that the gods never died but merely hid themselves appears secure.

In fact, the theme of the gods’ self-concealment pervades the entire opening volume of *Kojiki*, but paradoxically, the world of the heavenly gods did not remain characterized by this principle to the end. A motif inconsistent with the theme of self-concealment is also present, appearing, for example, in the scene describing the end of the goddess Izanami. Izanami gave birth to the god of fire, Hinokagutsuchi, and then “divinely departed from” (*kamu sariowashiki* 神避り坐しき) this world. *Kojiki* states: “Then [Izanagi] buried the departed Izanami no Kami on Mt. Hiba, the border between the land of Izumo and the land of Hahaki [Hōki 伯伎].”<sup>12</sup> This sentence indicates that Izanami was buried at a

boundary in the San'in district. Clearly in the background of this "burial" lies the actual practice of the burial of remains, for the account continues with mention of Yomi and of Izanagi's visit to the realm of the dead. This story is a narrative development that turns on the actual decomposition of remains after burial. In this sense, Izanami's departure does not take the form of the gods' concealment, but represents the returning to earth of the human corpse.

If the underlying motif of the gods' emergence and withdrawal in *Kojiki* lies in "coming into existence" and "concealing oneself," the narrative of Izanami's burial and her spouse's visit to Yomi may appear to be an interpolation or insertion of anomalous material. We seem to find imprinted in the orderly existence of the gods the rude tracks of human life.

Afterwards, however, Izanagi, who barely returns from Yomi alive, eventually withdraws in the former manner of gods. Upon emerging from Yomi, he performs purification (*misogi* 禊) on a riverbank, in the process of which gods are born one after another, and after expelling one of his children, Susano, he leaves the stage. In *Kojiki*, he vanishes from before us in accord with the manner of the ancestral gods:

Then Izanagi no Ōmikami, greatly enraged, said: "In that case, you may not live in this land!" Thus [saying], he expelled him with a divine expulsion. This Izanagi no Ōkami is at Taga 多賀 in Ōmi 淡海.<sup>13</sup>

The close of this passage, in narrating the end of Izanagi, speaks of the god as being at the Taga shrine in Ōmi province. Here, the phrase "conceal oneself" is not used, but since hereafter Izanagi vanishes from the visible world, his withdrawal follows the pattern of gods' self-concealment. Izanagi, unlike his spouse Izanami, departed with the status of a god. The word "is" (*masu* 坐す) in the expression, "He is at Taga in Ōmi," indicates this.

This contrast becomes all the clearer when we compare the above passage with the corresponding passage in *Nihon shoki*, which states that

Izanami is buried not at the border of Izumo and Hōki, but at Arima 有馬 village at Kumano 熊野 in Kii 紀伊 province. Further, it records that, in order to enshrine the spirit of the god, flowers were offered and a banner raised, and people sang and danced to the accompaniment of drums and flutes. As in *Kojiki*, we find a description reflecting the funeral rituals for human beings. Despite this, her husband Izanagi later departs from the world in circumstances described as follows:

After this, Izanagi no Mikoto, his divine work already finished, grew ill in spirit. With this, he constructed a “hidden” shrine (*kakure miya* 幽宮) in Awaji province and quietly and long concealed himself.<sup>14</sup>

Izanagi, after completing the work of giving birth to the land and to a number of gods, becomes sick with fever and departs from the world. At that time, he builds a hidden shrine in the province of Awaji and quietly hides, acts that signify self-concealment according to the manner of the gods. The contrast here with the disposition of the body of his spouse Izanami is the same as the account in *Kojiki*. We see from this that Izanagi in *Nihon shoki* drew breath in the same world as the gods described at the opening of *Kojiki*.

In the creation myth that adorns the opening of *Nihon shoki*, the appearance of such gods as Amenominakanushi, Takamimusubi, and Kunitokotachi is recorded in expressions somewhat different from *Kojiki*. Words such as “appear” (*aremasu*) “become a god” (*kami to naru*), “be alone” (*hitori naru*), and “emerge” (*nari-izuru*) are used. In addition, the words “conceal oneself” (*mi o kakusu*) do not follow as a set phrase, as in the case of *Kojiki*. Even when the emergence of a god is described, the circumstances of departure are omitted. This is a significant point of divergence between *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, but it does not imply a difference in the general tone underlying the emergence and withdrawal of the gods in the two works, for *Nihon shoki* likewise makes no mention of “death” regarding the first heavenly gods, and just as in *Kojiki*, apart from the example of Izanami, no “funeral” of a god is discussed. We see,

then, that regarding the manner of emergence and departure of the gods, there is no inconsistency between *Nihon shoki* and *Kojiki*.

In *Nihon shoki*, Amaterasu, who hides in a rock cave of heaven, is described as “confining” herself (*komorimashinu* 幽り居しぬ) in the cave (*iwato* 磐戸). “Confining” (*komori* 幽り) here is similar to “*komori* 隠り” in *Kojiki*. In the same way, Ōkuninushi (or Ōnamuchi), upon handing over the Central Land to descendants of the heavenly gods, is said to withdraw (*kakurenamu* 隠去れなむ) to Yasokumade 八十隄手 and to depart (*makarimashinu* 隠りましぬ). Regarding the divine lineage of Izanagi, Amaterasu, and Ōnamuchi, the narrative in *Nihon shoki* handles the disappearance of the gods in exactly the same way as *Kojiki*, based on their “self-concealment” (*kakureru* 隠れる).

Thus, the manner of birth and departure of the gods is the same in *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*. It was an important thread in weaving the world of Japanese mythology. It is impossible to doubt the presence of this underlying motif in the picture of the world. The question, then, is whether this thread continued without impairment to the end of the mythology recorded in the two works. In fact, this was not the case. There appeared an anomalous symptom discordant with this underlying tone. An additional theme cuts across the single thread, and toward the close of the mythological narrative, there gradually arises a mesh of crossthreads. This is a changed tone that bespeaks a change in the picture of the world itself.

After the advent of the descendants of the heavenly gods, the god Hononinigi has children with Konohanasakuyahime; this leads to the stories of Umihiko 海彦 and Yamahiko 山彦. Here, the myths turn toward a grand conclusion. When we look closely once more at the final scenes of the gods, we find that they no longer follow the manner of the gods’ concealment. Rather, in descriptions based on human practices, we find that the gods are buried in graves. According to *Nihon shoki*, Hononinigi, a descendant of the heavenly gods, after giving birth to Honosusori, Hikohohodemi, and Honoakari, departs from the world in the following way: “After a long while, Amatsuhikohikohononinigi no Mikoto 天津彦彦火瓊瓊杵尊 passed away and was buried in the mountain

mound of E at Himuka in Tsukushi 筑紫日向可愛.”<sup>15</sup>

In the same way Hononinigi's child Hikohohodemi, after giving birth to Ugayafukiaezu, was buried in the “mountain mound” (*sanryō* 山陵) of “Takao at Himuka 日向の高尾,” and later Ugayafukiaezu, after dying at “Nishinokuni 西洲 palace,” was buried in a “mound on a mountain” (*sanjōryō* 山上陵) at Ahira of Himuka 日向の吾平. These three generations of descendants of the first heavenly gods, in the end, were buried in mounds. We see from this that their deaths were not part of the drama of heaven, but were marked by earthly rituals for the dead.

Regarding the ends of these three generations of the offspring of the heavenly gods, the narrative in *Kojiki* differs somewhat in nuance, for the death scenes of Hononinigi and Ugayafukiaezu are omitted, leaving us without materials for comparison in their cases. Concerning the death of Hikohohodemi, however, *Kojiki* gives the following passage: “Hikohohodemi no Mikoto 日子穗穗手見命 dwelt in the palace at Takachiho 高千穗 for five hundred eighty years. His mound is located west of Mt. Takachiho.”<sup>16</sup> It is stated here that Hikohohodemi, after living for five hundred eighty years, was buried in a mound at Takachiho. *Nihon shoki* gives Mt. Takao in Himuka as the mound site, but regarding burial in a mound grave after dying, the two records coincide.

The practice of mound burial after death in fact is patterned on the rituals surrounding the ends of historical emperors from Jinmu 神武 on. Here, let us note the relevant passages concerning Emperor Jinmu.

The years of Emperor Kamu-Yamato-Iwarebiko 神倭伊波礼毘古 were one hundred and thirty-seven. His tomb is to the north of Mt. Unebi 畝火, atop the oak ridge.<sup>17</sup>

In the year 76, in spring, the eleventh day of the third month, the emperor passed away at the Kashihara 橿原 palace. He was one hundred twenty-seven years of age. In the following year, in the autumn, the twelfth day of the ninth month, he was buried in a mound at the northeast of Mt. Unebi 畝傍.<sup>18</sup>

We see here that the records of the deaths of the three generations of descendants of the heavenly gods are largely identical with those for emperors. This is precisely what we would expect when we recall that Kamu-Yamato-Iwarebiko (Jinmu) was the child of Ugayafukiaezu and Tamayorihime. The three generations of offspring of the heavenly gods, through the act of descending from heaven, effectively actualized the change from god to human being.

When we survey the world of “the Age of the Gods” within the framework of *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, we are able to distinguish three types in the departure of the gods who appear there: self-concealment, as seen in the three creator gods; burial, as in the case of Izanami; and burial in a mound after death, as with the three generations of descendants of the heavenly gods. The need to distinguish the case of Izanami as a second type might be disputed, for with regard to her burial itself on a hill or mountain, whether at Mt. Hiba according to *Kojiki* or Arima village in Kumano according to *Nihon shoki*, there is no discrepancy with the burial of the descendants of the heavenly gods.

At the same time, however, burial of remains in specially constructed mounds in the hills stands in contrast to the imprecise reference to Mt. Hiba and Arima village in the case of Izanami and signifies a clear difference in the conception of the funeral. Mound construction in the hills implies the determination of a specific burial site and presupposes perpetual rites centered at that place. In addition, as mentioned before, while Izanami’s death is treated with burial, her own spouse Izanagi departs from the world following the manner of the gods’ self-concealment. The life and death of Izanami may therefore be said to include aspects that resonate with the life and departure of Izanagi. Considering this, I have taken the burial of Izanami as a mid-step between the pattern of concealment and that of mound burial.

The process of transformation from god to human being in Japanese mythology is highlighted by the issue of concealment versus burial. The gods, in concealing themselves, preserved the potential for activity, but in passing through the stage of burial in a grave mound, they came decisively to encounter their death.

### 3. Transformation in the World Picture: From Mountains to Fields and Plains

Above, I have delineated a threefold typology of emergence and withdrawal seen among the gods in *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*. The first of these types, where withdrawal signifies self-concealment, corresponds to the perspective of Sukunabikona, who views the Central Land of the Reed Plains from the perspective of Tokoyo. The pattern of the acts of Sukunabikona, who comes and goes between the two lands, conforms to such divine appearance and departure. Similarly, the third manner of death corresponds to the cosmology in which the Central Land of the Reed Plains is the center of the world and Yomi is the "land in the four directions" surrounding it. The establishment of this third type of departure was galvanized by the inversion in perspective discussed in the first part of this chapter, and was born from the polarization of the acropolis and necropolis. The second type of departure, which has Izanagi and Izanami as the principal actors, may be viewed as representing a middle stage mediating the inversion in perspective. Thus, we may here affirm the importance of the issue of the emergence and departure of the gods as an element in the formation of the picture of the world. The problem of the gods' death and burial functioned as a catalyst in the birth of the image of the world.

In the process of the gods' transformation into human beings, death among the three generations of descendants of the heavenly gods was treated not with the motif of concealment but in terms of human funeral procedures. We must note here that burial sites were always sought in the hills. Hononinigi was buried in "the mountain mound of E" at Himuka in Tsukushi (*Nihon shoki*), his child Hikohohodemi in a mound on Mt. Takao in Himuga (*Nihon shoki*), and his child Ugayafukiaezu in a mound on the mountain at Ahira in Himuga (*Nihon shoki*). The remains of the three generations of descendants were all buried in Himuga, but Kamu-Yamato-Iwarebiko (Emperor Jinmu), the child of the third-generation deity, Ugayafukiaezu, after completing a campaign in the east, was buried at a mound in the northeast of Mt.

Unebi. The scene had shifted to Yamato, and the reigns of the emperors had begun.

It is notable that just as the necropolis of the three generations of descendants of the heavenly gods was in each case a mountain grave mound in Himuga, so in the case of the emperors beginning with Jinmu it was for the most part a mountain mound in Yamato (particularly Mt. Unebi). Jinmu was buried “to the north of Mt. Unebi, atop the oak ridge,” Annei 安寧 on the southern part of the mountain, at Mihoto 美富登, and Itoku 懿德 at (literally, “on”) the valley of Manago 真名子, also in the southern part of the mountain. The mound of the second emperor Suizei 綏靖 was on the hill Tsukida no oka 衝田岡, located slightly apart from the northern area of Mt. Unebi.

The fifth emperor Kōshō 孝昭 was buried on Mt. Hakata 博多 in Wakigami 掖上, and successively, Kōan 孝安 on the hill Tamade no oka 玉手の岡, Kōrei 孝靈 at Umasaka 馬坂 at Kataoka 片岡, Kōgen 孝元 on the middle hill at Tsurugiike 劍池 pond, and Kaika 開化 on the hill Izagawa 伊邪河. As a common characteristic, the burial place of each emperor was located at the top of a hill or the top of a slope.<sup>19</sup> When we come to the tenth emperor Sujin 崇神, whose grave mound was constructed “at the top of a hill at Magari 勾 on the Yamanobe 山辺 road,” we sense the same tendency. In the case of the mound of the twelfth emperor Keikō 景行 also, which was “above the Yamanobe road,” we see a continuity. “Yamanobe road” indicates a trail along the border of mountains. Literally, it might indicate a path at the base of mountains or in the hills, but when combined with the expression “at the top of a hill,” we see that there is a clear conception with regard to the precincts of a mountain mound.

At this point, however, the world of these records suddenly shows a significant change in the structure of the necropolis. In a word, the precincts in which the remains of the emperor are buried shifts from “mountains,” “hills,” and the “tops of slopes” to “fields” and “plains.” Signs of this change emerge in the case of the eleventh emperor Suinin 垂仁, for when he died, he was buried on “the plain at Sugawara 菅原.” A second sign of change is found in the final scene of Yamato Takeru 日本

武尊, who appears in the passage on Emperor Keikō. Takeru, returning from campaigns in the east, died in Ise 伊勢 province on the plain of Nobo 能褒 and was buried there. Before long, however, he turned into a white bird and left the mound, flying toward Yamato province. He reached the fields of Kotodamahara 琴彈原 and there another mound was built. Once more, however, the white bird departed, flying to Kawachi, where it landed at the village of Furuichi 旧市邑. Here, a third mound, Shiratori-ryō 白鳥陵 (white bird mound), was made.

First, the mound for Suinin was built in the fields of Sugahara (Suga plain), then the white bird mounds of Yamato Takeru were built in plains (*no* 野) and fields (*hara* 原), and finally at a village (*mura* 邑) in Kawachi. The image of the necropolis moved beyond the Yamato plain, which was surrounded by mountains and hills, and extended into the region of Kawachi. In the self-contained basin world, a sharp fissure had opened, indicating a break in the circular structure of life and death. Drawing on its final powers, the white bird into which the spirit of Yamato Takeru was transformed flew across Ise province to Yamato, then on to Kawachi province, thus driving a symbolic stake into the structure of the myth. After the death of the “white bird,” Chūai 仲哀, Ōjin 応神, and Nintoku 仁徳, who succeeded to imperial authority, came to construct their necropolises in the fields and plains of Kawachi.

Chūai, in the first month of the eighth year of his reign, led an army into Tsukushi to pursue a campaign in Kumaso 熊襲, but the following year he took sick and abruptly died at Kashihi 檜日 palace in Tsukushi. Empress Jingū 神功 concealed his death and moved his remains by sea to Anato 穴門 (Toyura-gun 豊浦郡, Yamaguchi prefecture). There, a secret period of mourning was observed without burial, for a campaign against Silla 新羅 was still in progress. Later, in the eleventh month of the second year of Empress Jingū's assumption of power, the emperor's remains were buried in a mound at Nagano 長野 (Naga fields) in Kawachi province. Ōjin also was buried in Kawachi, in the hills of Ega no Mofushi 恵賀の裳伏, and Nintoku at Mozu no Mimiuehara 毛受の耳上原 in Izumi 和泉. Richū 履中 and Hanzei 反正 were buried in this mound at Mozuno; Ingyō 允恭, like Chūai, was

buried in Kawachi at Ega no Nagae 長枝, Yūryaku 雄略 in Kawachi at Tajihino Takawashi 多治比の高鷲, and Seinei 清寧 at Sakatohararyō 坂門原陵 in Kawachi.

From the above examples, we note that from Chūai on, most of the mounds of the emperors were built in Kawachi and Izumi, and at the same time that the locations were fields and plains. Of course, there are also exceptions, such as the mound of Ōjin, which was located on a hill, Ega no Mofushi. Another is Ankō 安康, who was buried in the hills of Sugahara no Fushimi 菅原の伏見. These two examples, however, appear insignificant when compared with the concentration of the majority of mound locations in the fields of Kawachi province.

Further, after Yūryaku (Takawashi plain) and Seinei (Sakato plain), the mounds of the emperors Kenzō 顕宗 and Buretsu 武烈 returned to hill sites, located at the hill of Kataoka no Iwatsuki 片岡の石坏 in Yamato; the burial places of Keitai and Ankan, however, were once again moved to the plain area reaching from Kawachi to Settsu 摂津. On reaching the reigns of Bitatsu 敏達, Yōmei 用明, and Suiko 推古, Kawachi no Shinaga 川内の科長 became the central area for grave mounds. The remains of Prince Shōtoku 聖徳 were buried in this area of Shinaga, and after the Taika 大化 Reform, Kōtoku 孝徳 was also buried there.

Above, we have seen that the precincts of death of the emperors and empresses in the myths of *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* underwent a graphic change, moving from Yamato to Kawachi (then to Izumi). This indicates a shift from a basin-like world surrounded by mountains and hills to a world possessing a flat expanse of fields and plains looking out on the sea. It is possible to place the epochal change in the reigns of Chūai, Ōjin, and Nintoku, and this change or shift, as noted earlier, significantly influenced the formation of the worldview of ancient times. The domain of death broke out from a circular structure and flowed beyond. The relationship of coexistence in which the domains of life and death embraced each other in a world encompassed by groups of mountains shifted, through the introduction of a new image of the other world consisting of fields and plains, into a relationship in which these two domains of life and death were pulled apart. The domain of death

became one of irreversibility and no return, and a firm image of the necropolis came to be established.

In our considerations here, we must not overlook the problem of the cosmological placement of the emperor's palace. This is the problem of the acropolis that forms the basis for imperial authority. The capital (*kyūto* 宮都), as the foundation of imperial authority in the recorded mythology, was in principle to be built in the "inner area" of Yamato.<sup>20</sup> There are a small number of exceptions, but the emperors' palaces were in general constructed within the natural barrier that surrounded the Yamato plain, near the mound graves that were the domain of the emperors' deaths. The imperial palace and the grave mound were situated, both psychologically and geographically, according to an intimate law of perspective, giving birth to a fused domain in which they were united. That which functioned to focus this structure of an encompassing perspective that coiled around both life and death and held them in a single, harmonized cosmos was the burial mound image symbolized by the mountain as the cosmological axis.

What situation is born, then, when the afterlife of imperial authority slips from its moorings to mountains and floats out into the broad plains? To begin, capital and grave mound are spatially sundered, and the unifying perspective encompassing death and life also is drawn apart psychologically.

Through the extraction of the necropolis from within the mountain, the cosmos of preestablished harmony that had existed broke apart to form a dualistic world of life and death. This dualistic world is incisively symbolized by the mythological "Yamato" surrounded by mountains and "Kawachi" of fields and plains that look out on the sea. It was probably at this time that the mythological picture of the world was born with Yamato as the acropolis and Kawachi as the necropolis.

Various explanations have been proposed for the fact that, in contrast to the principle of locating the capital in Yamato, the location of burial mounds was frequently moved to different areas. It has been conjectured, for example, that sites for the construction of mound graves were sought in the districts of the clans from which the empress or the

empress mother came.<sup>21</sup> It has also been conjectured to be the result of the growth of the Yamato-Kawachi route amid new developments in military engagements or in formal relationships with the Korean peninsula. This route has properly attracted attention as a passage for the transmission of culture from the Asian continent.<sup>22</sup> Here, however, the focus of our concerns is the formation and development of the mythological worldview; hence, problems connected with the actualities of political processes or societal relations will not be taken up.

In the opening of *Hitachi no kuni fudoki* 常陸国風土記 (Topography of Hitachi Province), there is a passage stating that Hitachi province is a rich and excellent area:

Hitachi is a spacious province with far-flung boundaries. Its soil is fertile, awaiting farming. . . . The sea is [at hand] on the right; mountains stand on the left (to the west). If people want to plant mulberries or hemp, the terrain is ample to their rear and fore. The whole province is a virtual storehouse of products. It is, indeed, the land of prosperity. What ancient people called “Tokoyo” must have been something like Hitachi.<sup>23</sup>

It is stated here that Hitachi province is surrounded on the left and right by mountains and ocean, and that from the fields and plains spreading forth between, such products as mulberry and flax are gathered. It is suggested that the region called Tokoyo was just such a land. From the recorded prayers for abundant grain (*minoru yutaka* 稔豊) of the rice fields (*suiden* 水田), we see that the area consisted of paddies surrounded by fields and moors.

This area, however, is not of course unequivocally equated with Tokoyo. Tokoyo seen across the sea by Sukunabikona was not reproduced just as it was. The article on “Namekata no kōri 行方の郡” in the same *Hitachi fudoki* records the well-known story of the conflict between human beings and gods involving the development of new paddies. When Matachi 麻多智, of the Yahazu 箭括 clan that lived in the area, cleared the reed fields of the west valley and made new paddies, the

*yatsu no kami* 夜刀の神 (snake gods) appeared and hindered him. Growing angry, Matachi struck and killed some of the snake gods, and placing a branch upright at a boundary, he declared:

“[The land extending] from this place to the hill is your territory. [The land extending] from this landmark to the valley, however, is mine, and it is reserved for my people’s farming.” He continued, “Do not violate this boundary. Be not resentful of this decision, for I shall [construct a shrine for you and] serve as the priest there. My descendants will respectfully provide you with offerings.”<sup>24</sup>

Because the reed plains were being cleared and cultivated, the snake god who lived above that point in the valley engaged in obstruction. That obstruction was overcome, and the “fields of human beings” were made. The area was secured through struggle with gods, and was not a copy of Tokoyo as known to Sukunabikona.

What was the land of the gods that extended above the newly claimed “fields of human beings”? It was not a region of the gods like the High Plain of Heaven, for from that area separated by the branch at the boundary there approached an image of death locked in darkness. We know this from, for example, a passage in *Izumo no kuni fudoki*.

In the article on Uka 宇賀 village, Izumo district, in *Izumo no kuni fudoki*, the following story is introduced. There was a great reef at the shore to the north of the area. West of the reef was a large opening to a rock cave. No one could enter it.

There is a cavern on the west side. Its height and breadth are both six feet. Inside there is [an opening leading to] another cavern. One cannot enter there. No one knows how deep it is. It is said that anyone who dreams that he is approaching the cavern is destined to die immediately. Hence, people of the area from ancient times to the present have called it the Slope of Yomi (Yomi no saka) and the Hollow of Yomi (Yomi no ana).<sup>25</sup>

It was a perilous place and an object of proscription even in a dream. This dangerous site was feared as the entrance to Yomi, but from Uka village, it was located to the northwest. This was seashore, as stated in the passage, but at the same time the rock cave no doubt was connected with mountains that surrounded the village. As Masuda Katsumi states, from the central area of Izumo, the Hollow of Yomi described here was one of the mountain areas on its margins, and the image of coming down from the underground in the mountains to the level surface was none other than that Yomi no saka (Yomi Slope, i.e., the Level Pass of Yomotsu).

Here also, we see that the domain of death and the domain of life are given a common boundary by the surrounding track of mountains. This situation appears relatively clearly in the following example. A passage in the article on Kamo 加毛 village in *Harima no kuni fudoki* 播磨国風土記 states that two princes (the later Emperors Ninken 仁賢 and Kenzō) both sought the hand in marriage of Kuni no Miyatsuko no musume 国造の女, and she acquiesced to both.<sup>26</sup> While the two princes deferred to each other, however, time passed, and the woman grew old and died. Grieving for her, the two princes built a tomb, laid the bones to rest, enshrined jewels, and decorated the grave. The place where the grave was located came to be called “Jewel Hill” (Tama oka 玉岡), and the village where people resided was called “Jewel Field” (Tama no 玉野). Through the medium of a person’s death, “hill” and “field” came to be distinctly bounded. It is probably not possible to say that the hill of “Jewel Hill” in itself manifests the Hollow of Yomi that appears at Uka village in Izumo province. Both in terms of image and in terms of cosmology, however, the hill mound that surrounds Uka village and the hill mounds that spread in the margins of Jewel Field appear related. It may be said that between Jewel Field and Jewel Hill, like the marker raised by Matachi in the passage from *Hitachi no kuni fudoki*, a “branch of boundary” has been driven.

Further, this hill also was a place where graves were located. Regarding Kako 賀古 district in *Harima no kuni fudoki*, it is said that the tomb (*hirehaka* 比礼墓) for the consort of Emperor Keikō was located in

Hioka 日岡, and regarding Matsuura 松浦 district, *Hizen no kuni fudoki* 肥前国風土記 states that a woman (Otohi himeko) 弟日姫子 who made a vow to a snake was transfigured at death. Her corpse was buried “south of the peak (*mine* 峰)” and a tomb built there. This practice is not limited to human graves. In the article on Taka 託賀 district in *Harima no kuni fudoki*, when Emperor Ōjin was out hunting, one of his hounds chased a wild boar up a hill and after a struggle with it, was killed. A grave was made on the west side of the hill where it was buried. It is called “the dog’s tomb.”

The examples given above indicate that the pattern in Yamato may also be found in Hitachi, Izumo, and Harima. The cosmological notion possessed by hills and mountains in contrast to fields and moors existed in these places at the same time. In the world of the various *Fudoki* also, fields and moors, and the Land of Reed Plains that was cleared together with them, no longer in themselves signified Tokoyo. In order to plant mulberry and cultivate flax there, and to produce a rich harvest, it was necessary to fight the gods of the mountains and valleys and drive a stake conceptually at the boundary between them and human beings. In secret places back in the mountains, caves leading to the other world (Yomi) were imagined to exist. These were dim openings that divided the human fields and the place of gods, and at the same time they were strange watersheds that divided the domain of fields and plains from the domain of mountains.

Above, we have traced the development of the picture of the world held by the ancient Japanese, and while reviewing the myths recorded in *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, have focused on the landscape of the *Fudoki*. We have sought out the vestiges of the departure of the gods who appeared on the stages of Yamato and Izumo, and noting the deaths of the descendants of the heavenly gods, cast light on the process by which their necropolis was formed. One matter clarified as a result of this investigation is the problem of the establishment and the transformation of the circular world surrounded by the Land in the Four Directions (Yomi), that is, by mountains. We find here a picture of the world distinct from the necropolis in, for example, Egypt or Greece. An influx

of new culture from the Asian continent followed, however, and signs appeared of a transformation in this worldview. The advent of Buddhism, armed with a thoroughly different view of the cosmos, struck a violent blow to the mythological images inherent in *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*. The chisel of decisive alteration was applied to the significance of death in this world, and the image of the necropolis suddenly came to be pervaded by Indian and Chinese conceptions. This epochal ideological change may provisionally be placed in the eras of Suiko, Prince Shōtoku, and Kōtoku, the very period during which the royal necropolis was being built beyond the mountains at Shinaga 磯長 in Kawachi.

As mentioned before, when the structure of the necropolis in the ancient period began to crumble through the appearance of the opening from Yamato to Kawachi, a great change was born in the picture of the world itself, and this change was accelerated through the introduction of Buddhist ideology. It surely appeared in the conception of death that was confined to the cultural sphere of Isonaga, mentioned above. This trend advanced even more in the period of Tenmu, and sowed a consequential seed in the majestic rites connected with his death and burial. After the observance of a long period of mourning lasting two years and two months, Tenmu's remains were entombed in the great mound of Hikuma 檜隈, which was in the mountains at the southern edge of Yamato. This indicates a return of the king's necropolis to the land of Yamato, but the conception rising from within the rites of his death included elements qualitatively different from the circular worldview that was the earlier, ancestral form.<sup>27</sup> The same may be said of the "world of death" expressed in Buddhist tales such as *Nihon ryōiki* 日本靈異記. Yomi as it appears in such tales differs fundamentally in character from the conception of Tokoyo-Yomi expressed in the myths of *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*. Here, a stratified necropolis, informed by a foreign view of hell transmitted from the Asian continent, is narrated in sharply etched light and dark.<sup>28</sup>

It is impossible, however, to develop this topic here. Our goal in this chapter has been to educe the type of world picture, in its mythic, ancestral form, that existed prior to contact with the newly arrived ideology of Buddhism.