

CHAPTER 3

WANDERING SPIRITS AND TEMPORARY CORPSES: THE REVIVAL TALES OF *NIHON RYŌIKI*

In ancient times someone said, "A man cannot cover a thousand leagues in a day, but a spirit in such a period can easily travel the distance." Yes, this was the answer. I threw myself on my sword, and astride the dark night winds I have come all this way to keep our chrysanthemum tryst. Take pity on my soul.

As he finished speaking, his eyes grew dim with tears. "Now we must part forever," he added. "Be sure to take care of mother." He appeared to rise from his seat, and thereupon he vanished, without a trace.

Ugetsu monogatari, fascicle one¹

1

Madness appears to bear the burdens of both psychological abnormality and heightened energy. Since ancient times, it has been commonplace to explain psycho-physical phenomena in terms of the functioning of spirits. Michel Foucault associated madness with "the sounds of things in the depths of history."² If this is so, surely the spirit is the wave of aether that is most acutely sensitive to, and that transmits, the "sounds of things." Foucault states, however, that modern attitudes have frozen this "sound" of madness within the sphere of the quietude of "knowledge."

In ancient times, in order to explain abnormal behavior, rational prescientific logic and mystical demonology coexisted. In general, the structure of spiritual functioning was inseparably intertwined in the network of both these two modes of thought. Abnormal behavior and conduct that violates the social order have always been expressed and discussed through metaphors that vary in accord with the period and cultural forms. Thus, variations in the phenomena of spiritual functioning also take on the form of specific metaphors.

As psychiatrist G. Zilboorg states, early in human history insane persons were venerated as sacred and as possessing the value of goodness or spiritual inspiration; thus, return to a normal state was understood as a reversal or regression to an unblessed, cursed condition.³ The functioning of the spirit intimates a transplantation of the sacred into the body of a person. This is the phenomenon of possession. Possession, as sudden and acutely abnormal conduct, was the steep and perilous passage that joined this profane, defiled world with the mysterious and profound spirit world. The insane person, as communicator with transcendent powers to pass between the sacred and profane realms, was regarded with both awe and fear by those in the profane world distant from the demonic bliss.

The mad or insane were called *monogurui* 物狂い in Japanese. From ancient times it was thought that only the *monogurui* were able to see the kami, and their dark utterances were regarded as the words of the kami. In other words, the *monogurui* became kami. Yanagita Kunio 柳田国男 has asserted that today, few can accept that the phenomenon of *monogurui* is fully explained by the notion of mental illness. In chapter 11, "The Need to Research Why Wizards (*sennin* 仙人) Appear," in his book, *Yama no jinsei* (Life in the Hills), Yanagita states:

One difference between spiritual derangement in the past and insanity at present lies in the attitude of others. Our ancestors hoped that clever and imaginative children might undergo a change from time to time and visit realms unknown to ordinary people. In other words, they tended to believe in the

inexplicable event of being spirited off by kami.

Foucault has also noted that intellectual categories such as “psychological derangement” and “mental disorder” are cold terms that seek to alienate and isolate madness. It is uncertain how far back historically Yanagita’s expression, “our ancestors,” is meant to indicate, but it is clear that the Japanese in their psychology have paid close attention to the spiritual and physical phenomena of madness.

In the early thinking that grasped *monogurui* as a pathological psychophysical leap, the notion of an external cause—the invasion of a spirit—was assumed. Hence, it was common to explain the return to a normal (profane) condition in terms of an adventitious opportunity presented by the spirit’s exit to another world. Between the spirit and the mad person who acts as receptor, there is no causal relationship whatsoever. The mad person is a heaven-sent existence possessed by a supernatural power. Later, the perspective developed of seeking the cause of madness not in another realm, but within the person, but in general, this is a stance of self-awareness within the process of history in which magical thinking separated from the thinking of pathology, and lies outside of our concerns here. Such considerations involve, with regard to Europe, the issues of madness and witches, and Calvin’s theory of predestination, and with regard to Japan, Buddhist doctrines of karma and the consciousness of the lowly.

It is also possible for the concept of spirits to change in accord with the cultural conditions of the times or contact with modes of thought or religious traditions from abroad. Regarding Japan in the ancient period, there were numerous opportunities for contact with Chinese traditions.

Origuchi Shinobu 折口信夫 states that three kinds of specialized functioning may be distinguished in the notion of *tama* of the ancient Japanese. The benign aspect of *tama* evolved into kami, and the harmful aspect developed into *oni* or demons. The third functioning was referred to as *mono*. While kami and *oni* were accompanied by concrete images, the abstract form of *mono* was hidden from representation. Kami and *oni* were conceived as deities of Tokoyo (as *marebito* 常世神 or rare visitors

from afar), a notion that later gave rise to the gods of the mountains and waters, with the gods of the year and soul spirits as further derivations. By contrast, in the case of *mono*, the *tama* spirit enters an egg, stone, melon, or peach, where it dwells until maturation, and thereupon it is born. In this pattern of a creation myth, *mono* is a word that indicates the role in which the *tama* functions. That is, *mono* is an opaque form that reflects the process itself by which the *tama* is born.

If we accept Origuchi's thinking regarding the early understanding of *tama*, the question arises, in the light of our previous discussion, of what changes the concept later undergoes. Concerning this, Origuchi himself points out some tendencies of change upon entering the Heian period. Nevertheless, he shows no interest whatsoever in considering the influence of the Buddhist and Taoist traditions imported from China. Further, he studiously avoids the issue raised by Yanagita's conjecture regarding the dimension of religious psychology in relation to madness or *monogurui*.

Taking these brief comments on earlier investigations as a starting point, I will seek to explore the topic further.

2

In *Nihon ryōiki* 日本靈異記, the term *kuruu* (託 also pronounced *taku*, "to possess") appears over ten times. *Taku* means for a god to take possession of a human, to enter into a person, or to appear in a dream. It is used in *takusen* ("oracle" or "divine message"), and is also read *kuruu*, the word for going insane or being out of one's mind. In *Nihon ryōiki*, *kuruu* is written with *taku*, not the character *kyō* 狂 ("wild," "frenzied") commonly used today, and a check of the individual occurrences shows that the functioning indicated by *kuruu* (*taku*) corresponds to the ever-changing, protean emergence and subsiding of kami, *oni*, and *mono*. Origuchi himself showed little interest in *Nihon ryōiki*. This is probably because the world of *Nihon ryōiki* manifests a syncretic view of spirits brought about through a redirection of thinking along Buddhist lines.

Nihon ryōiki is said to have been written during the Kōnin 弘仁 era

(810-823) by the monk Keikai (also pronounced Kyōkai) Shamon 景戒沙門 of Yakushiji 薬師寺 temple in Nara. Briefly, it is a collection of tales and records about miraculous and extraordinary occurrences. The formal title is *Nihon koku genpō zen-aku ryōiki* 日本国現報善惡靈異記 (Record of Miraculous Events of the Recompense of Good and Evil in the Country of Nihon). It is clear from the words “recompense of good and evil” in the title that Buddhist notions of karmic recompense and of samsaric rebirth have been incorporated, and the influence of Chinese collections of similar kinds of tales, such as *Ming-paochi* 冥報記 (Jp. *Meihōki*) and P’an-jo yen-chi 般若驗記 (Jp. *Hannya kenki*), is apparent. The contents of the work may be characterized as consisting of edifying tales compiled by a Buddhist monk concerning miraculous events of the Nara and early Heian periods that had been transmitted among the common people. It is an invaluable document in the history of the evolution of the understanding of spirits in Japan, one that achieves and displays a unique amalgam of the view of spirits seen in *Kojiki* 古事記, *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀, and *Man’yōshū* 万葉集 with the Buddhist concept of karmic recompense introduced from the Asian continent.

Spirits are, of course, invisible, and as long as they manifest themselves in the realm of actuality only in a mode in which they appear and disappear in quick alternation, it is difficult to gauge changes in the way they are conceived. Even when the conception of spirits expressed in a particular work shows uniform features throughout, there may be evidence of subtle changes at its foundations, and contrariwise, aspects of spirits that appear distinct in quality may arise from an identical source.

Nihon ryōiki (here after *Ryōiki*) consists of three fascicles. Keikai appends a preface to each fascicle. In the preface to the third, he expounds the immediate results of the causation of good and evil.

One who is possessed of an evil spirit is like one who holds a poisonous snake; the poison is always there ready to appear. The great power of karmic retribution reaches us as quickly as sound echoes in a valley. If we call, the echo never fails to answer, and this is the way karmic retribution works in this life.

How can we fail to be more careful?⁴

Here, the expression “person possessed by a spirit (*mono* 鬼)” refers to possession by an evil spirit, but it is further stated that the spirit (*ki* 気) of the poisonous snake appears and does not vanish because of the recompense of evil. Hence, it is clear that the compiler Keikai seeks to understand the phenomenon of madness (*monogurui*) by means of the Buddhist law of causation imported from the Asian continent. This is also a kind of demonological law of causation, signifying a deterministic, repetitive rhythm that transcends time and place and passes back and forth between the dark and the apparent realms. The demon temporarily enters into the physical body of a person, and as a result, brings about a disorder of body and mind, but that the cause is simply seen to reside in “evil recompense” indicates that it is a mechanical law of causation.

This type of spirit possession (*monogurui*) is also seen in Volume 1, Tale 19 and Volume 2, Tales 3 and 34. The first concerns a *shami* 沙弥 monk who, because he makes light of a person reading the *Lotus Sutra*, receives the evil recompense of that act. In the instruction attached at the close of the tale, it is stated that, even though one may be “possessed by an evil spirit” and let slip false words, one must not slander a practitioner of the sutra. Tale 3 of Volume 2 concerns a son who, out of excessive love for his wife, seeks to kill his own mother, thereby giving rise to evil recompense. The mother says to her son, who has drawn his sword to kill her, “Are you possessed by a spirit?” She then looks to the heavens and says, “My son acts having been possessed by a spirit. He is not in his real mind. Please pardon his crime!” In the final example, Volume 2, Tale 34, a woman who has received money from the wife of a wealthy neighbor goes the next day to express her thanks. She is told that there is no need for thanks, for the gift was made through the compassion of Kannon 観音. The neighbor’s wife says to the woman, “Are you possessed by a spirit? I do not know what you are talking about.”⁵

The psychological aspect of spirit possession (*monogurui*) seen in these three tales clearly reflects notions of the mechanical law of causal recompense mentioned above. Further, the interspersions of Kannon or

the practitioner of the *Lotus Sutra* probably represents the doctrinal interests of Keikai himself. These doctrinal concerns are as yet no more than superficial and simple, and do not involve the interior value of the tale itself. This pattern of spirit possession/madness strongly resembles the phenomenon of temporary derangement or a sudden confusion of memory and expression.⁶

The functioning of possession (*kurui* 託い) expressed in *Ryōiki* of course is not restricted to the dimension of possession by a spirit. Possession is further connected with divine messages, divinatory decisions, and prescience and prediction of the future. In *Ryōiki*, there are three examples of a spirit (*kami*) possessing a *kaminagi* 卜者 (divinator) (Volume 2, Tale 16; Volume 3, Tales 31 and 39), and in all of these there is an association with oracles and foreknowledge. Since a *kaminagi* was originally a priestess (*miko* 巫女) who specialized in beckoning spirits and necromancy, this is hardly unexpected. In the case of spirit possession (*mono no kurui*), the focus is chiefly on the psychological state of the person possessed; by contrast, in the case of the possession of a *kaminagi*, the predictions or the abnormality of the attachments of the *kami* spirit or other spirit who possesses is emphasized. Thus, in the case of spirit possession (*monogurui*), the one possessed (abnormal person) is the center of concern, and the possessing spirit (demon spirit) is secondary, whereas in the case of *kaminagi* possession, this relationship is reversed, and the possessing spirit is central and the one possessed (*kaminagi*) is secondary. The demon in the former case and the *kaminagi* medium in the latter case possess particular ritual identities in the literature of religious studies, but in terms of the phenomenon of possession, the roles that they play are distinct.

In Volume 2, Tale 16 ("On the Immediate Retribution of Good and Evil Because of Giving No Alms and Freeing Living Beings"), a person who has returned oysters that had been caught to the sea happens to climb up a mountain and is killed when he accidentally falls from a tree. Later, this person's spirit possesses a *kaminagi* medium and gives instruction that his body should not be cremated for seven days but should be left as it is. When this is done, he revives on the seventh day

and relates to his wife and children the details of his journey to the other world (hell).⁷

In Volume 3, Tale 31, a woman of a village in Mino 美濃 marries and becomes pregnant, and after three years gives birth to two stones. They were five-*sun* 寸 square in shape; one was blue-white, and the other was blue. Year by year they grew in size, and one year the great god of the region revealed their secret.

In Atsumi district, next to Katakata district, there was a great kami, whose name was Inaba 伊奈婆. The deity took possession of a diviner (*kaminagi*) and spoke through him, saying, "The two stones which were born are my own children." Therefore, they were enshrined at the girl's residence in a sacred place surrounded with a hedge (*igaki* 忌籬).⁸

The god Inaba possessed a medium capable of augury and revealed that the stones were the god's children; thus the title, "On a Woman Who Gave Birth to Stones and Enshrined Them as Kami."

A similar story is found in Volume 3, Tale 39, "On the Rebirth as a Prince of a Monk Who Excelled in Both Wisdom and Discipline." Dhyana master Zenshu 善珠 of Yamato was widely revered by emperor and ministers, monks and laypeople, for his sagacity and discipline, and eventually was appointed to the rank of *sōjō* 僧正 by the emperor. The monk, who had a mole on his chin, died in Enryaku 延暦 17 (798), during the reign of Kanmu 桓武. At that time, a divination by boiling rice (*iiura* 飯占) was performed, during which the condition of the cooked rice was judged for fortune telling.

Then the divine spirit, having possessed the diviner, said, "I will enter the womb of Tajihi no Omina 丹治比の嬢女, a wife of the emperor of Japan, to be reborn as a prince. You shall know his identity owing to the same birthmark as mine on the prince's face."⁹

Here, the god spirit who possessed the medium was of course the spirit of Zenshu, and the prediction that he would be reborn as a prince in the womb of the empress was eventually proven true.

In these three tales, that which possesses the medium (*kaminagi*) is the spirit of the dead, the great god Inaba, and dhyana master Zenshu 善珠 (god spirit). These are all filled with supernatural powers. By comparison, the mediums themselves tend to be professionals without individuality. The functional status of the medium, however, is in general the fundamental magnetic field when the phenomenon of god-possession (*kamigakari* 神がかり) occurs. Thus, when we seek to trace back historically to the original form, we should expect to encounter a number of richly individual, extraordinary types who have been beckoned by the gods. In other words, there the structure of the unforeseen relationship of correspondence between the possessing god and the possessed shaman abruptly arises. I will give several examples.

The first is the god-possession of Amenouzume no Mikoto at the time Amaterasu Ōmikami secluded herself in the rock cave. *Kojiki* speaks of god-possession (*kamigakari* 神懸り), and *Nihon shoki* speaks of "giving forth divinely-inspired utterance."

The second example is found in the section of *Nihon shoki* treating the period preceding the enthronement of Jinmu. There is a scene in which Emperor Jinmu, in the process of subjugating Yamato, is possessed by the spirit of Takamimusubi no Mikoto. The text states: "We are now in person about to celebrate a public festival to Takamimusubi no Mikoto."¹⁰ Concerning the "public festival" (*utsushi iwai* 顕斎), Origuchi Shinobu's painstaking research is helpful, but I cannot discuss it here.¹¹ The literal sense is that, drawing and receiving to himself an obscure god spirit, he will render it clearly visible and celebrate. In other words, possessing the god spirit of Takamimusubi, he will bring about a transformation into personhood as a living incarnate god.

The third example is a religious rite recorded in the record of Sujin 崇神, in the second month, spring, seventh year. At that time, an epidemic was rampant and many people had died. Peasants were forced

into wandering from their lands and here and there rebellions flared. In this year, Sujin journeyed to Kamasajihara 神浅茅原, where he prayed for eighty thousand gods to gather and performed a divination.

At this time the gods inspired Yamatototobimomosohime no Mikoto 倭迹迹日百襲姫命 to say as follows:—"Why is the Emperor grieved at the disordered state of the country? If he duly did us reverent worship it would assuredly become pacified of itself."¹²

Yamatototobimomosohime no Mikoto, who was possessed by the gods, was the consort of Emperor Kōrei 孝霊 and strongly manifested *miko*-like characteristics. She augurs that the subjugation of the land will be successful.

The fourth example is Empress Jingū 神功, who appears in the entry for the ninth month, autumn, of the eighth year of the "Record of Chūai" 仲哀, and in the "Record of Jingū." In the former, it is recorded that when the emperor gathered his troops at Tsukushi in order to attack the Kumaso 熊襲, a god (spirit) possessed the empress and delivered a divine message. "At this time a certain god inspired the empress and instructed her, saying: Why should the emperor be troubled because the Kumaso do not yield submission?" In the latter record, corresponding to the third month, ninth year of Chūai (200), it is recorded that the empress, selecting an auspicious day, entered the palace of worship and herself became priest (*kannushi* 神主). She had Takenouchi no Sukune 武内宿禰 play the koto 琴 and beseeched gods to descend. Further, she had Nakatomi Ikatsu no Omi 中臣烏賊津使主 serve as *saniwa* 審神者 and interpret the utterances of the gods. The koto is a musical instrument used to supplicate the gods, and the term *saniwa*, originally meaning "pure place," indicates the interpreter of divine messages. The scene in which Empress Jingū undergoes possession and receives divine messages appears in *Kojiki* with the expression that the empress "brings about the approach of gods" (*kami o yose* 神を帰せ).

These four examples all describe phenomena of shamanistic

possession. The terms used for possession—*utsushi iwai*, *kakaru*—may be said to express the same level of spirit functioning as the term *kuruu* seen in the tales of *Ryōiki*. If a difference between the two documents is to be noted, it may be said that in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, there tends to be greater interest focused on the person who is possessed (Amenouzume no Mikoto, Emperor Jinmu, Yamatototobimomoso-hime, Empress Jingū) than the kami who is the spirit that possesses, whereas in *Ryōiki*, rather than the medium who is possessed, it is the possessing spirit (the dead, the god Inaba, the spirit of Zenshu) who is described with distinctive qualities. This is not to say that there is a theoretical difference to be asserted. Rather, we should note that the phenomenon of divine messages or utterances by a god spirit fuses the two aspects of functioning, god possession (*kamigakari*) and spirit possession (*monogurui*). In this point, the world of *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* and the world of *Ryōiki* largely coincide.

Nevertheless, even this commonality at times exhibits irregularities. Let us consider two examples of possession as *kurui* found in the tales. In the second tale of the third fascicle, “On the Mutual Revenge for Killing by Being Reborn as a Fox and a Dog,” Meditation Master Eikō 永興 of Kōfukuji 興福寺 temple in Nara utters a spell for the sake of a sick person in the village and prays that the sickness subside. While he utters the spell, the sickness abates, but when he stops there is a relapse. While this process is repeated a number of times, a change comes over the patient.

Then, possessed by a spirit, the patient said, “I am a fox. I won’t surrender easily, so don’t try to force me!” The monk asked, “Why?” The patient replied, “This man killed me in his previous life, and I am taking revenge on him. If he dies eventually, he will be reborn as a dog and kill me.”¹³

A fox has possessed the patient in order to take revenge for having been killed. The angry spirit of the fox, however, has a premonition that it will be killed by the sick person it is seeking to kill, and this premonition, through the eerie working out of the plot, becomes an

actuality. Despite the desperate spells of the meditation master, the sick person is killed, but a year later, in the room where the sick person had lain, the monk's disciple lies in sickbed. Someone brings a dog to the place, and the dog suddenly barks violently and strains on its leash. The meditation master, who happens to be present, tries releasing the dog, which rushes into the sick person's room and seizes a fox that had been hiding in a corner. Shaking off the efforts of the monk to stop it, the dog drags the fox out and kills it.

The animal spirit seen here possesses a human being and takes revenge out of bitterness. This brings on a further recompense in this uncanny tale. In the depths of this story there infiltrates the concept of the recompense of the spirit that transmigrates in rebirth. Here we find clear traces of Buddhist thought.

Another tale indicating the same tendency of thought is Volume 3, Tale 36: "On Receiving a Penalty for Building a Lower Pagoda and Taking down the Banners of the Temple." Fujiwara no ason Nagate 藤原朝臣永手, Senior First Rank, had performed deeds in opposition to the Buddhist dharma while alive, but then died. Then his son Ieyori 家依 fell ill, but through the spells and prayers of monks attending his sickness, the father Nagate's spirit possessed the son.

Then the patient talked, being possessed by a spirit, saying, "I am Nagate. I had the banners of Hokkeji 法花寺 taken down and later was responsible for the pagodas of Saidaiji 西大寺 temple having four corners instead of eight and five stories instead of seven. Because of this sin, I was summoned to the office of King Enra 閻羅, who made me hold a pillar of fire and drove bent nails into my hands, interrogating and beating me."¹⁴

The patient's "being possessed by a spirit" (*kuruite*) means that Nagate's spirit has possessed Ieyori's body and speaks through it. Hence, it is also, simultaneously, the state of possession (*monogurui*) of Ieyori. The "spirit" confesses that, because of its evil acts of negligence in the

construction of Buddhist temples and towers, it has been called before King Enma (Enra) of hell and forced to recognize its guilt. We see here the notion that the spirit of a dead person wanders in an "intermediate state" (*chūu* 中有), a period or realm between death and rebirth, and while drifting in other realms, visits hell. The spirit adrift in the intermediate state of *chūu* is a dangerous spirit of the dead that has not yet been purified or has not been pacified. In the notion that it receives the recompense of its acts and is compelled to visit hell, we see the interjection of a new conception. In this case the spirit communicates a Buddhist sense of disparate cosmological dimensions to the world of the living through the special circuit of spirit possession.

Thus, even from the above two examples of tales dealing with spirit possession, we gain a general idea of the process of transformation by which the view of spirits among the ancient Japanese, in gradually fusing with Buddhist faith, gave birth to new conceptions.

3

Since the condition of being possessed by a spirit (*mono ni kuruu* ものに託う) signifies a temporary trance or frenzy that induces physical and psychological abnormalities, release from this state is a return from madness to sanity. From the perspective of the functioning of the spirit, it is abandonment by the invading spirit or its expulsion. After the expulsion, the working of the particular spirit that had been silenced by the intrusion of an outside spirit returns to its original state. Thus, this kind of sporadic trance state is not necessarily a danger to life. Of course, as seen in the tale discussed above concerning the fox and dog spirits, there are cases when a person is killed by the possessing spirit, but this is not an expression of the primary function of possession (*kuruu*). Rather, the relationship between the possessing spirit (*kuruu rei* 託う霊) and the possessed person (*kuruu mono* 狂う者) may be seen as the discordant relationship of the contact of the dominant spirit (possessing spirit) and the recessive spirit (living spirit). The possessing spirit exerts a supernatural power over the living spirit. When this dominating power is excessive,

the recessive spirit may expire.

If the scene of the struggle between the possessing spirit and the living spirit is the charged field of madness (*monogurui*, spirit possession), then for the living spirit to depart from the physical body is a scene of the crisis point of death through the separation of spirit and body. This is a state of self-oblivion or divestment of spirit. While possession may have a commonality with madness, the ecstatic condition as a divestment of spirit is closer to death. Rituals for pacifying the spirit are essentially revival rites for attaching once more to the physical body the living spirit that is separating and drifting off. When that functioning ceases, the danger of death arises. In this case, the danger of death emerges in two aspects. First, there is the case of the wandering spirit becoming moored in another world (for example, the realm of death) and thus unable to return to the physical body. Second, a change (such as cremation) may occur in the living body that has been left in this world (remains of a false or temporary death). Thus, in addition to possession, the case of divestment of spirit (death or false death) must be considered here as an important variation of the functioning of the spirit. Here again, *Ryōiki* proves to be a rich resource.¹⁵

First, let us turn to Volume 2, Tale 25, "On the Fiend, Messenger of King Enma, Who Accepted the Hospitality of the One for Whom He Had Been Sent and Repaid It." In Yamada 山田 district of Sanuki 讃岐 province, there was a woman named Nunoshiki no Omi Kinume 布敷臣衣女. During the reign of Emperor Shōmu 聖武 she fell ill and so placed delicacies of the mountains and seas at her gate as an offering to the deity of plagues. The demon who had been sent to bring Kinume to King Enma received the offering of food. Quite delighted, the demon told Kinume that if there were another woman with exactly the same name, he would take the other woman in her place. This was a proposal made in order to return the favor. The Kinume of Yamada district (Kinume A) did in fact know that in Utari 鵜垂 district of the same province there was another Kinume (B), and she took the demon to her home. Thus, Kinume A was able to return to Yamada, while Kinume B, as her replacement, was dragged off to King Enma. Enma, however, saw

that it was the wrong Kinume and ordered that the situation be corrected. The demon, unable to conceal what he had done, went once more to Kinume A in Yamada district and brought her to King Enma, and Kinume B was given a reprieve. When Kinume B returned home, however, she received a shock. Her body had already been cremated, and there was nowhere for her (i.e., her spirit) to settle. There being no other recourse, she explained matters to King Enma, "I have lost my body and there is no place in which to settle." King Enma told her that since the body of Kinume A still remained yet to be cremated, she should enter that body and return to life. Thus, the spirit of Kinume B entered the body of Kinume A, while the spirit of Kinume A stayed with King Enma. Seeing the combined person of Kinume B (spirit) and Kinume A (body), the parents of Kinume A considered her their own daughter, while the parents of Kinume B denied that she was their child. Gradually, however, the new Kinume made up of A (body) and B (spirit) was able to explain matters to all and dispel misunderstandings, and this new woman inherited the wealth of all four parents and both houses. The tale concludes that the merit of making offerings to spirits and demons will inevitably come to fruition.

In this tale of return to life, which was the Kinume who actually died? And which of the two Kinumes returned to life? In this case, it is probably meaningless to ask. This is because the central focus of the tale lies in the tension between two possibilities of the wandering spirit: the movement in the direction of death (mooring in hell) and movement in the direction of life (return to life). Kinume B's chances for return to life are threatened by the loss (cremation) of her own body, but resuscitation becomes possible when Kinume A's yet uncremated body is found. Here, the crisis-filled sense of tension is well evoked. Thus, it is clear that the basic motif of this tale is the wandering spirit's revival or restoration to the physical body, but at the same time, it is also important that cremation of the dead body is put forward as an obstruction to the possibility of such return to life. For this reason, it is impossible to ignore the special character of this tale. That is, in order to engage the problem of cremation in conjunction with the motif of the return to life

of the wandering spirit, the tale must involve two characters with the same name.

It is commonly pointed out that the earliest written record relating to the origins of Buddhist-style cremation in Japan dates from Monmu 文武 4 (700), third month, when the monk Dōshō 道昭 died and was cremated (*Shoku nihongi* 続日本記). Cremation as a religious manner of the disposition of a corpse was imported from China by Buddhist monks. Thus, the record of Dōshō's cremation in Monmu 4 holds a symbolic meaning. This does not necessarily mean, however, that there was no custom of cremation in Japan before the importation of Buddhism. For example, Kakinomoto no Hitomaro 柿本人麻呂 (7th-8th cen.) composed a poem on the occasion of the cremation (*yakihafuri* 火葬) of the maiden of Hijikata 土形 at Hatsuseyama 泊瀬山 (*Man'yōshū* III: 428), and when the maiden of Izumo drowned and died, he composed two poems (*Man'yōshū* III: 428, 429) on her cremation at Yoshino 吉野, one of which reads:

In the mountains,
the child of Izumo
is mist
drifting at the peak
of Mt. Yoshino.

yama no mayu / Izumo no kora wa /kiri nare ya
Yoshino no yama no / mine ni tanabiku

There are numerous such examples in the early literature. Moreover, it was a common custom widespread in ancient societies for fire and smoke to be regarded as symbolic of spirits, and Japan was no exception. Fire was not only a protective device against spirits, but it also served to guide the spirits of the dead and of gods, and was an important religious means for the purification of defilement. The torch that accompanied funeral processions even served as guide inviting the dead spirit to the burial ground.¹⁶

In view of the above, it is clearly difficult to determine whether or not the cremation of the body of Kinume B recorded in the tale above reflects Buddhist funeral practices. The tale's major theme of the separation and union of body and spirit (or of return to life) forms a warp into which crossthreads of the notion of cremation of the corpse have been interwoven, creating a vivid and effective design. Moreover, at the points of intersection stands King Enma of the realm of darkness. In other words, reflected in the scene is the conception of the recompense of hell, so that it is possible to consider the cremation of the body of Kinume B also in the context of Buddhist ritual. The narrative creation of Kinume A-B appears to suggest a state in which the motif of the spirit returning to life and the custom of Buddhist cremation have been fused together.

Another significant tale is found in Volume 3, Tale 38: "On the Appearance of Good and Evil Omens Which Were Later Followed by Their Results." This tale is actually divided into two parts. In the first part, the compiler Keikai asserts that portents precede occurrences of good fortune or misfortune, giving examples from historical events and his own experience. In the latter part, he speaks of strange movements and appearances of heavenly bodies as bad omens and relates his own experience of mysterious dreams. In addition, Keikai relates that after peculiar behavior of animals and insects, his son or horse died. Particularly in the latter part of the tale Keikai records autobiographical remarks and reflections, giving valuable clues about himself as a person. As a whole, this is an important tale that concisely narrates the principle and the concrete working of causal recompense. Here, let us take up in more detail the content of Keikai's own "dream experience," for just as in the tale discussed above, we find here that the theme of the cremated body and the spirit (*tamashii*) wandering apart from the corpse is again described with a strangely grotesque touch.

On the night of the seventeenth day, third month, Enryaku 7 (788), Keikai had a dream of death. He had died, cords of firewood were piled, and his body was being burned. Looking closely, he sees that beside his corpse his own spirit is standing. He notices, however, that his corpse

does not burn as well as he would like. So his spirit takes a branch and skewers his body, turning it while it burns, so that the legs, knees, joint bones, forearms, and head are all consumed and bit by bit crumble and fall. His spirit, which had been watching over the cremation, finally tries to speak to someone standing nearby, but he cannot be heard. Then Keikai thinks to himself in the dream that, after all, the spirits of the dead do not make sounds, so others cannot hear them.

After waking from the dream, Keikai wonders how the outcome of this dream will be manifest. Perhaps he will be blessed with long life. Perhaps he will be given an official rank. He decides to wait and see.

Keikai's record of this dream experience clearly indicates the character of his conception of the handling of his own corpse after his death. If the dating of Enryaku 7 for the dream is accurate, then eighty-eight years would have passed since the time of the Buddhist cremation of Dōshō. We may, therefore, assume that the method of cremation depicted in the dream reflects the handling of corpses based on Buddhist cremation practices. Within the dream, however, it is Keikai's own spirit that watches his body burn, and the tale narrative does not describe the concrete figure of the spirit. The events of the dream are related as though another "personality" were at the side of the corpse, but since the spirit does not possess a form or shape, even though it may be a definite existence, of course it is not a "person." There are contradictory expressions and psychological hesitation in this passage, and perhaps for this reason somewhat awkward expressions such as *konshin* 魂神 and *shinshiki* 神識 appear to refer to matters of spirit (*tamashii*).

In this tale, Keikai employed the rather fanciful notion of his own spirit witnessing the scene of the cremation of his own body in order to make all the more conspicuous the vivid contrast between body and spirit from the time of death. When we consider that this dualistic contrast between spirit and body is actually completely unrelated to Buddhist doctrinal thinking, it is possible to surmise that the consciousness of Keikai the Buddhist monk is deeply imbued with pre-Buddhist native notions of body and mind. Because it is a dream experience, all the more it appears to sharply delineate a reality in the

deep strata of consciousness.

The problem does not end here. The drama in the guise of a dream treating the spirit and body in the realm after death was, for Keikai, set up as a stage for a prediction that would bring him long life or official rank. Here an interpretation in terms of Buddhist salvation is completely lacking. The notion of retribution or recompense that flows through *Ryōiki* as a whole turns on mechanistic causal relationships that lack interior motivation, and is supported by a this-worldly, materialistic interest in benefits and disadvantages. Precisely because of this, it was a natural conclusion for Keikai. If this is so, considering only this tale, Buddhism's cultural impact on Keikai appears solely in the purely physical theme of cremation, and the deepening of a salvific meaning is still to a great degree held in suspension.

The final example of a tale involving the perplexity, or the drift, of a spirit mourning its "landlord" (its body) is one we have also considered above, Volume 3, Tale 36, "On Receiving a Penalty for Building a Lower Pagoda and Taking Down the Banners of the Temple."

Fujiwara no ason Nagate, the second son of Fusasaki 房前 and Minister of the Left, dies having committed evil acts toward Buddhism and goes to the place of King Enma. As related above, his son Ieyori later falls ill and, possessed by a spirit, describes the sufferings experienced in hell. To continue here, the spirit of Nagate states the following. Enma's palace suddenly filled with smoke. When Enma asked what was happening, the reply was that attendant monks (*kanbyō zenji* 看病禪師) had gathered around the ailing Ieyori seeking to extend his life, and when one of them offered spells and prayers while burning incense on his hand, the smoke soon permeated into the palace of hell. Hearing this, King Enma immediately pardoned Nagate and returned him to this world. But, he laments, his body has already disintegrated and, having nowhere to abide, he drifts in the roads.

Nagate's spirit is a ghost or spirit of the dead that has undergone suffering in the palace of King Enma. This departed spirit is still an unstable existence that has yet to attain salvation; hence, in the world of the living also, it cannot cease from emitting signals of danger. Passing

between the land of the dead and the land of the living, it communicates information about the world of death to those in the world of life. I have already stated that the condition of possession harbors this character in its background. The first half of the present tale focuses on the scene of the possessing of his son Ieyori by the spirit of Nagate, and may be said to present a typical case of the aspect of such spirit possession. By contrast, the second half may be said to suggest the aspect of the dispossession (or ecstasy) of the spirit. Viewed in terms of correspondences with the first half, the second half describes the spirit of Nagate that has separated and wandered away from the body that had been his and, having lost its sheltering place, drifts about in the air. To grasp this tale as a unity, we may focus on the single dimension of possession. Nagate's dead spirit, however, while possessing his son, also laments the fact that his own body has been destroyed and that there is no world for him to return to. Here, the motif of possession and the motif of death as the dispossession of the spirit are mingled and interfused.

To assume a different point of view and approach the tale from the perspective of the narrative pattern of the two daughters named Kinume, it is also possible to grasp the scene as a struggle between the dead spirit of Nagate and the living spirit of Ieyori over the single body of the latter. The bitter lament of Nagate suggests this situation, and in fact, following the logic of the Kinume tale, it may be imagined that, were Ieyori not saved by the spells and prayers said over him, King Enma may have permitted the father Nagate, who had already lost his own body, to take residence in the body of his son Ieyori. In other words, if we reinterpret the tale of Nagate-Ieyori by tying the motif of possession to the desire for return to life of Nagate's spirit, then we find almost the identical structure as in the tale of the two women named Kinume. One minor difference is that the tale states only that Nagate's body has already perished; whether that entailed, as in the case of Kinume and in Keikai's dream, the burning of the corpse in cremation, is unclear. Nevertheless, given the other examples, the possibility that cremation was assumed appears strong.

Finally, it is noteworthy regarding the problem of the treatment of the corpse by cremation that the distinction between cremation and burial of the corpse has an important meaning regarding the view of the spirit. To dispose of the corpse by cremation implies, in principle, the notion that with death the spirit departs and separates from the corpse, or else itself dies. By contrast, the custom of burial and of making offerings at a gravesite suggests the idea that the spirit is with the body, and the expectation that the spirit of the dead takes joy in the offering. A comparative tact may be suggestive for our considerations here. Ide Takashi 出隆 discusses the view of the soul or spirit (*psyche*) among the Greeks before Socrates. In the ancient view, upon death an individual exhales his final breath, and the person's dead spirit resides near the place of the burial of the corpse. Later, in Homer and among the Achaeans whose beliefs he expresses, perhaps because their common practice was cremation rather than burial, it was believed that a person's *psyche* did not abide with the corpse but separated from it and descended into an underground realm. According to Ide, the Achaeans, having a custom of cremation, developed a notion of the spirit wandering to the other world, but in the south there was a far older culture, the Micean, which practiced burial, and which maintained a belief that the *psyche* remains at the place of burial.¹⁷

The narrative pattern based on the separation of spirit and body seen in all three examples from *Ryōiki* that we have examined above appears to be associated with the assumption of the treatment of the corpse by cremation, thus displaying a commonality with the thinking manifested in the ancient Greek view of the spirit. In the example of the tale of Keikai's own dream experience, his spirit watches over his burning corpse with intense anxiety, but this does not mean that the spirit is eternally to be at the corpse's side. Rather, the tale seems to suggest that after the cremation, the fate of the spirit will be to journey to a distant realm.

4

As we have seen above, in the case that the spirit separates from the body and journeys to other realms or to death, how its body is treated is a major concern for the spirit. If, during the spirit's absence, the body is cremated or otherwise injured, the spirit loses the locus to which it might return. In the ancient belief in the separation and union of spirit and body, the most dangerous predicament is for one dimension of the dualism—that is, the physical body—to disappear. The three tales discussed above forthrightly express the ancients' apprehension regarding this crisis.

In this case, what sort of defensive strategy might be devised in order to avert such a danger? This problem was of vital and urgent concern not only to the compiler of *Ryōiki*, but to the people who actually lived in and maintained the world of the *Ryōiki* tales. The result of the search for a solution was the adoption of symbolic rites based on the conception of the return to life of the wandering spirit. It was the thinking by which the dispossessed spirit that separated from its body, by following a previously determined path (the spirit path) and by being guided by its own thread of causation and by the procedures of mythical rites, was able to return again to life in this world.

The tale of the wandering spirit's return to life typically includes two structural elements: the ritual treatment of the physical body to which the spirit is to return, and the narrative, by the resuscitated spirit, of the mysterious experiences during its sojourn in other realms. Concerning the former, it was thought that after the spirit had departed, the physical body remained in a state just before death, a condition, of temporary death or mock death. In this condition, the body was a vessel for receiving the roaming spirit. The ritual activity of *mogari* 殯 reflects such thinking concerning mock death and the body as a vessel to receive the spirit.

By contrast, the mysterious narrative relating experiences in other realms assumes the intellectual reconstruction of imaginary worlds such as Yomi, the palace of King Enma, and hells. It is rooted in the motive of

seeking to prove, through mechanical causal associations, that the supernatural occurrences that arise in such a world possess a prophetic power regarding good and ill fortune for the actual world of the living. In other words, the ritual acts of prophesy, repentance, and redemption of evil are established through the medium of a sojourn in other realms by a particular wandering spirit. The functioning of the dispossessed spirit is a wave of light that dispels at a stroke the meshes of the obscure net of causation cast over the space between the living (this world) and the dead (the other world). Thus, the imaginary world spread out before the eyes of the wandering spirit is depicted with concreteness and detail, and in response, the motives of repentance and redemption of evil are rendered all the more vivid.

In this way, we may understand the theme of *mogari* as a problem of the treatment of the physical body that is moving toward death in this world, and by contrast, the theme of "the other world" as a problem of the psychological reinterpretation of the spirit moving toward life in the supernormal realm. In particular, in treating the world of *Ryōiki*, we should note that while the first theme of *mogari* has its origins in the characteristic beliefs of the early Japanese, the second theme of the view of the other world involves the mingling of a Buddhist cosmology imported from abroad. Here, characteristic beliefs in spirits and imported notions of other worlds overlapped and combined in a form of syncretism.

Above, I have sketched some issues in the framework of our central topic, the tales of revival or the spirit's return to life. Below, I will investigate these issues further by taking up the various types of tales in *Ryōiki*.

Ryōiki comprises 116 tales in total (Volume 1 includes thirty-five; Volume 2, forty-two; and Volume 3, thirty-nine). Of these, fifteen tales treat the theme of the wandering spirit's return to life: Volume 1: 5, 30; Volume 2: 5, 7, 16, 19, 22, 25; Volume 3: 9, 22, 23, 26, 30, 35, 37. This is 13 percent of the whole. It is impossible to determine the level of importance of the tales of revival in the entire *Ryōiki* simply on the basis of numbers, but when we bear in mind that, as stated in the full title, the

collection as a whole was meant to illustrate the theme of causal recompense in this world, then the fact that the motif of return to life from the other world is central to more than a tenth of the tales is surely not insignificant.

To begin, let us locate the major issue by turning to Volume 3, Tale 9, "On King Enma, Manifesting a Mysterious Appearance, Encouraging a Person to Practice Good." During the reign of Empress Shōtoku 称徳, Fujiwara no ason Hirotari 藤原朝臣広足 became ill. On the seventeenth day of the second month, Jingo keiun 神護景雲 2 (768), in order to cure the disease, he entered a mountain temple in Yamato province, keeping the eight precepts and observing abstinences. One day, however, he collapsed facing upward and his breathing ceased. His attendant, in shock, returned to his home and explained matters, whereupon Hirotari's relatives immediately began preparations for *mogari*. Three days passed. Going to the temple, the family found that Hirotari had returned to life. In response to their questions, he related how he had been summoned to King Enma's palace, and there had a reunion with his wife, who had already departed from this world.

He told them that King Enma's messenger had come for him. The whiskers on his cheeks grew upward. He wore red robes, and over that armor, and bore arms. He said that the King's office had called for him, Hirotari. Then, with three guards around him, they all set off. After going for a time, they came upon a deep river. The waters were black, and the flow had stopped. Fording the river following the messenger, he came to a brightly lit pavilion. It was the King's offices. On entering, he saw that jeweled blinds were hung, and on the far side sat the great King Enma, though his face could not be seen. The king listened to the report of the messenger, then moved the blind slightly. He asked, "Do you know the person standing behind you?" Turning, Hirotari saw his former wife. She had been with child, but could not give birth and died. Hirotari answered that it was certainly his wife. The king said, "Because she died in childbirth, this woman must undergo six years of pain, but of these three years have passed. Since you also have responsibility in the death in labor, you must undergo the remaining three years of pain

together with your wife." To that, Hirotari answered, "I wish instead, for the sake of my wife, to copy the *Lotus Sutra* and make offerings, thus saving her from the suffering." His wife was also in agreement with this request, and the king granted it, permitting Hirotari to return to life in the present world. When it came time to return, he asked the name of the great king, who said, "I am King Enma. In your land, I am the one known as Bodhisattva Jizō 地藏菩薩."

Thus, Hirotari related the story of his sojourn to the other world, and as he had promised, he copied the *Lotus Sutra* and made offerings for the sake of his wife who had died and thus saved her from suffering further pain.

In this tale of return to life, we see clearly how important an assumption the concept of temporary death (here, *mogari* 喪殯) is to the tale structure that leads from a journey to the other world to a return to life. Further, in the narrative of the other world, there is a valuable statement that King Enma is the same as Bodhisattva Jizō. It indicates an early form of the Jizō faith that developed later.

It is characteristic of *Ryōiki* that the theme of offerings for the elimination of sins, made for a wife who had fallen into hell, should emerge in a narrative of a journey in the other world and return to life. It is the pattern of discovering relatives who are suffering in the other world and returning to this world to devote the merit from rituals for the elimination of their sins. Here, the passageway that connects the two worlds of darkness and light is the temporary corpse transformed by *mogari*. The *mogari* corpse is the ritual stage upon which death and resurrection, or false death and rebirth, are realized.

In this way, the tales of return to life that appear in *Ryōiki* all assume the concept of *mogari*, but it is not that this term is used throughout. In the case of the tale introduced here, Hirotari's relatives hear of his death and "prepare items for *mogari*." To give an example of other tales that record the usage of the term "*mogari*," there is Volume 3, Tale 22, "On Being Repaid Good and Evil for Copying the *Lotus Sutra* and for Exploiting Others with Heavy Scales." It relates the story of a man named Osada no toneri Ebisu 依田舍人蝦夷, of Shinano 信濃

province, who suddenly died in the latter part of the fourth month, Hōki 宝亀 4 (733). His wife and children discussed the matter and decided that since he had been born in a year of fire (*hinoe* 丙), he cannot be cremated. A grave was built and he was left in "*mogari*," when after seven days he returned to life. The reasoning in the tale is that since "*hinoe*" indicates fire, fire should be shunned and therefore a cremation should not be performed, but this is of course completely fanciful. The *mogari* that occurs in this tale should be seen as treatment of the corpse that anticipates a journey to the other world and a return to life.

Another example is Volume 3, Tale 23, "On the Immediate Repayments of Good and Evil in Return for a Vow to Copy the *Dai hannya* 大般若 and for the Use of the Temple Property." A man named Ōtomo no muraji Oshikatsu 大伴連忍勝 of Shinano province earnestly practiced the Buddhist path and built a temple hall, but he was slandered by people of his village, leading to his being beaten to death by supporters of the temple. His family conferred together and decided that since it would prove the murder, the corpse should be left uncremated. Thus, they selected a spot for the corpse and "placed it in *mogari*." After five days, however, Oshikatsu returned to life.

Here, *mogari* rites are performed based on the need for verification of the corpse, but the artificiality of the reasoning is the same as in the previous tale. It is impossible to reach an immediate conclusion based on these two examples alone, but at least we may take the tale described above as suggesting that the performance of *mogari* had come to be felt by the tale composer to be unnatural without a special reason or motive. This is even more the case if at the time of the tales, cremation as a method of treating corpses had already become a general practice. From Keikai's dream discussed before we may again conjecture the strong possibility that cremation had become widespread. *Mogari* here also is not problematized in itself, but rather is introduced in anticipation of the spirit wandering to other realms, in order to rationalize the narrative of the experience of the sojourn.

Finally, as a tale in which the issue of *mogari* appears, there is Volume 2, Tale 22, "On the Stolen Bronze Buddha Which Gave an

Extraordinary Sign and Identified a Thief." There was a thief who lived in Hine 日根 district of Izumi 和泉 province. During the reign of Emperor Shōmu 聖武, he stole into Jin'ei 尽恵寺 temple in the district and took a bronze Buddhist image. A man traveling down a road on horseback heard a voice crying out from somewhere as he passed by. He was troubled by it, and going back and searching, finally ascertained the location. He sent a retainer to investigate, and learned that a buddha image had been laid on its back, and someone was cutting off its arms and legs. He stopped the man, who eventually confessed that it was the buddha image of Jin'ei temple, which he had stolen. On hearing of this, the monks and patrons of the temple rushed to the scene. Mending the statue, they again enshrined it with adornments on the altar. The tale states, "The monks purified a palanquin (*mikoshi* 輿) to enshrine the broken buddha, held a tearful interment service (*mogari*) at the temple, and let the thief go without punishment." But people caught the man and sent him to court, which imprisoned him.

In this tale, the buddha image that had been stolen by the thief was repaired, enshrined, and then a *mogari* was observed. In other words, the damaged statue was treated in the manner of a human death. The buddha image that had "died" was given a funeral (that is, a temporary interment of *mogari*) and thereby it was able to return to life. The statue, though it might have been dismembered, had not been burned, and therefore it was possible for the "spirit" to enter it once more and for it to be returned to its original place on the altar as the central object of worship. Thus, to express the process of the simulated death and return to life of the buddha image, it is quite appropriate that the analogy of *mogari* should be employed. Of course, in this tale there is no account of a journey to the other world by the buddha image, but as an example of a modified use of the notion of *mogari*, it is exceptional.

As we have seen above, of the fifteen examples in *Ryōiki* of tales of return to life, only four employ the term *mogari*. This does not mean, however, that the notion of *mogari* is altogether absent from the other examples. Even though a scene of ritual observance of *mogari* may not be depicted, there is some device calling for a period during which the

corpse is not cremated, taking the form, for example, of the specific instruction of the deceased, a revelatory message, or some special human decision.

In Volume 2, Tale 5 ("On Gaining an Immediate Penalty for Sacrificing Oxen to a Pagan Deity and the Merit of Good Deeds of Freeing Living Beings"), a wealthy householder, at the time of his death, instructs his wife and children, "Don't cremate my corpse after I die, but keep it for nine days." His instructions are followed, and after nine days he returns to life, recounting his sojourn in the palace of King Enma. In Volume 2, Tale 7, the monk Chikō 智光 likewise leaves instruction, "When I pass away, do not cremate my corpse, but let it remain for nine days," and after nine days he revives. Concerning the meaning of the sojourn in hell that Chikō experienced during this period, the tale states in its title, "A wise man who abused an incarnated sage out of envy visited the palace of King Enma and experienced suffering in hell." In Volume 2, Tale 16, a wealthy householder of Sanuki 讃岐 province dies and his spirit declares through a diviner (*kaminagi*), "Don't cremate me, but leave my corpse for seven days." After seven days, he awakens ("On the Immediate Retribution of Good and Evil Because of Giving No Alms and Freeing Living Beings"). In Volume 1, Tale 5, Ōtomo no Yasunoko 大伴家持野古 dies on the eighth day, twelfth month, of the thirty-third year of the reign of Suiko, and his corpse emits a fine fragrance. The empress commands that the body be left for seven days, and on the third, he returns to life ("On Gaining an Immediate Reward for Faith in the Three Treasures").

Apart from the above examples, there are also cases where there is no instruction left behind or revelation by the spirit, but in which the corpse is allowed to remain for a certain period. In Volume 1, Tale 30, Kashiwade no omi Hirokuni 膳臣広国 dies on the fifteenth day, ninth month, Keiun 慶雲 2 (705). He goes to the palace of King Enma, and after passing three days there, is returned to life ("On Taking Others' Possessions Unrighteously, Causing Evil, and Gaining a Penalty Showing an Extraordinary Event"). Similarly, in Volume 2, Tale 19, a devout laywoman of Kawachi province dies while chanting the *Heart Sutra*

(*Hannya shingyō* 般若心經). She visits King Enma, and after three days returns to life ("On the Visit to the Palace of King Enma by a Woman, Devotee of the *Heart Sutra*, and the Following Extraordinary Event"). In Volume 3, Tale 26, a woman of Sanuki province, Tanaka no mahito Hiromushi me 田中真人広虫女, is possessed of deep greed, but takes ill and has a dream in which she is summoned to the palace of King Enma. On waking from the dream, she relates her dream experience and then dies. After seven days, she returns to life, but half of her body has turned into an ox. When the lid of the coffin was opened after seven days, a terrible stench emerged, and from her waist up she was an ox, with horns on her forehead and her hands transformed into ox hooves, while from her waist down she was still in human form. In other words, she had undergone a transformation into a minotaurus, and she continued to live for five days, after which she died ("On Receiving the Immediate Penalty of Violent Death for Collecting Debts by Force and with High Interest").¹⁸ In Volume 3, Tale 30, the aged monk Kanki dies and returns to life after two days in order to leave a message for his disciples. After two more days, he achieves a grand birth in the Pure Land ("On the Monk Who Accumulated Merits by Making Buddhist Images and Showed an Extraordinary Sign at the End of His Life").

Further, in both Tales 35 and 37 of Volume 3, there is a return to life but no record of the precise number of days between. In Tale 35, Hi no kimi 火の君 of Hizen province in Tsukushi dies and reaches the "land of Enma 琰魔," but he is soon returned to this world as premature ("On Being Penalized for Abusing an Official's Authority and Ruling Unrighteously"). In Tale 37, a man travels to Chikuzen province, where he suddenly dies. He goes to the palace of King Enma where he is tormented, but during that time he carefully observes the circumstances of punishment of a person nearby. He returns to life from Yomi and reports what he has experienced to the administrative offices in Dazaifu, including the name of the person suffering in hell, Saheki no sukune Itachi 佐伯宿禰伊太知, Junior Fourth Rank. In this case, the person who returns to life is not the central figure of the tale and remains unnamed, making this an unusual example as a revival story. Another exceptional

and curious story, Volume 2, Tale 25 about the two women named Kinume 衣女, employs the notion of a return to life after being substituted for another ("On the Fiend, Messenger of King Enma, Who Accepted the Hospitality of the One for Whom He had Been Sent and Repaid It").

Above we have reviewed the revival tales that do not directly touch on the issue of *mogari*. Notable among them is the motif of instruction by the dying person or by spirit message not to cremate the corpse. Even in cases where there is no such specific instruction, there is clear presupposition that the wandering spirit traveling in the other world will return to the corpse that is kept in a *mogari* condition of temporary interment. Regarding the period during which the spirit wanders from its original body, a span of nine days at the longest to two days at the shortest indicates the scope of the *mogari* period in *Ryōiki*. To be precise, there are two cases of nine days (Volume 2, Tales 5 and 7); three cases of seven days (Volume 2, Tale 16; Volume 3, Tales 22 and 26); one case of five days (Volume 3, Tale 23); four cases of three days (Volume 1, Tales 5 and 13; Volume 2, Tale 19; and Volume 3, Tale 9); and one case of two days (Volume 3, Tale 30). In the remaining four cases (Volume 2, Tales 22 and 25, and Volume 3, Tales 35 and 37), the number of days is not clearly specified.

From these fifteen tales of return to life, it is clear that in explaining the wandering spirit's revival after a sojourn in the other world, the compiler considered the custom of *mogari* passed down from previous ages as a method of the treatment of corpses as a logical framework. Regarding notions concerning the treatment of corpses, there was a gradual transition during this period toward cremation in addition to burial treatments, and in this context, the concept and practice of *mogari* was considered effective and indispensable as a condition for the concretization of the theme of return to life. The issue concerning *mogari*, however, is not exhausted in relation to the association with the tale world depicted in *Ryōiki*. For the revival tales of *Ryōiki*, to be sure, it is a vital point, but if we take a broader perspective, and seek to view the theme of *mogari* in relation to ancient beliefs or the contact with

Buddhism as a imported religion, then more complex issues arise in relation to the ancient worldviews. Below, let us turn to some of these considerations.

5

It appears that, in ancient societies, the passage back and forth between this world and the other world was quite freely accomplished as a kind of mutual interpenetration through the unrestricted movements of the wandering spirit, but there operated here spontaneously a concept of rules of prohibition or religious taboo regarding communication between the two realms. Ignoring or breaking such taboos would cut off passage to the other world or make return impossible. In *Ryōiki*, the central figures in the various tales of return to life who provided news of the spirit realm were of course conscious of such taboos, and their witness gives valuable indications of the early beliefs of the Japanese. Let us consider several examples.

Volume 1, Tale 30, which we have taken up earlier, relates that Kashiwade no omi Hirokuni died and went to Yomi no kuni, the "land of yellow springs" or land of the dead. There, he encounters his deceased wife and father. To begin, he first arrives at Tonan no kuni 度南の国 (the name of an imaginary land that appears in *Chuang-tzu* 莊子, but which is taken in the tale to indicate Yomi no kuni, the site of Enma's court). There he has an interview with the king, who sits on a golden throne. The king summons a woman, who is Hirokuni's deceased wife. Iron nails pierce from the top of her head through her buttocks, and from her forehead through her neck, and her four limbs are bound with iron ropes. Hirokuni is asked what sins he has committed while alive, and he answers he does not know. His dead wife adds that she has fallen into hell because the husband drove her from the house, making her subject to the feeling of hatred. The king, however, judges Hirokuni to be free of sin, and states, "You are really innocent. You may go home. I warn you, however, not to talk thoughtlessly about the land of the dead." Here, Hirokuni has his sins overlooked, but in exchange must keep silent

about Yomi no kuni after his return to the land of the living.

The discretion in not speaking openly about one's experiences of Yomi no kuni is a ritual conduct based on a sense of fear with regard to the land of the dead or a conception of defilement concerning the world of dead spirits.¹⁹ It was believed that to speak of the corruption of death or the dead was none other than to sully oneself with the defilement of the spirits of the dead. The prohibition given Hirokuni on his return to life from Tonan no kuni was a fragment of a conceptual system rooted in such ancient beliefs. But of course, if those returnees to life in fact had observed the taboo prohibiting talk about their experiences in the other world of Yomi no kuni, we would not have the tales of such revival. As indicated in the tales of return to life in *Ryōiki*, those who came back to life, through returning to bodies that had been in *mogari*, all without exception discussed their experiences in detail. In other words, they violate the taboo of the land of death. Thus, paradoxically, this understanding of taboo indicates that the tales of return to life can only be formed supported by an awareness of the danger in violating the taboo of the land of death. The situation of returning to life from the world of death, from the very beginning, harbors the contradiction of moving toward the world of life while burdened with death. As long as this is so, the returnee can never be free of the threat of the boundless darkness that spreads in the background.

The issue of the taboo of the land of the dead is illuminated more concretely in the following example. In Volume 2, Tale 7 (mentioned before), Chikō is banished to the realm of darkness because of the sin of slandering the virtuous and renowned bodhisattva Gyōki 行基, and there he visits the Hell of Abi 阿鼻. He first experiences the scorching heat of hell and suffers violently, but on the path comes upon a golden pavilion. Two messengers guard the gate by King Enma's command. Chikō is told that the lofty pavilion is the place of rebirth for Gyōki, whose arrival they are awaiting. Then Chikō is admonished, "Eat nothing cooked with the fire of this land of Yomotsu 黄竈. Return quickly now." In the other world, Chikō is taught vividly the difference between the realm of pain (Abi Hell) and the realm of pleasure (golden pavilion), and reflecting on

his conduct in life, which was appropriate to hell, he is permitted to return to life. At that point, he is commanded to observe the taboo against eating anything cooked with the fires of hell if he earnestly desires to return to this world.

The expression "food cooked with the fire of Yomotsu" (Yomotsu *he mono*) occurs in *Ryōiki* only in this tale of Chikō's sojourn in hell, but it is an ancient term that has parallels in *Kojiki* and *Nihongi*. To summarize the relevant passage in *Kojiki*, Izanami no Mikoto gives birth to the god of fire and departs for Yomi no kuni. Her husband Izanagi no Mikoto, wishing to meet her, follows her to Yomi no kuni. The wife desires to return somehow to the land of the living, but it is already too late, and she tells her husband: "How I regret that you did not come sooner. I have eaten at the hearth of Yomi (Yomotsu *he*). O my beloved husband, how awesome it is that you have entered here! Therefore I will go and discuss for a while with the gods of Yomi my desire to return. Pray do not look upon me!"

Izanami laments, Would that you had come a little sooner! I have already eaten the food of Yomi no kuni, and therefore cannot return to the land of the living. She has violated a taboo, and thereby fixed herself in the realm of the dead. She has already become liable for a magical act that cannot be reversed. Out of her intense desire to return to the land of the living, however, she seeks to consult the gods of Yomi. The situation is near hopeless, and she tells her husband at this point he must not look at her body in her absence. But Izanagi heedlessly breaks this taboo, and he discovers that his wife's body is infested with maggots, and its various parts have undergone a transformation into thunder. This is a personification of the defilement of death. Having seen the tabooed world, he is pursued by a great army of death defilements and evil spirits (Yomotsu *shikome*, Yomotsu *ikusa*). He reaches the level pass of Yomotsu (Yomotsu *hirasaka* 比良坂), which forms the boundary between life and death, and with an immense boulder (*chibiki no iwa* 千引の岩), blocks the pursuers. In this way, he is able to return to the land of the living.

The narrative as related in *Nihon shoki* displays almost the same structure. The pattern of a sojourn in the other world and return to life

in the case of the story of Izanagi and Izanami does not necessarily exhibit the dualistic opposition of body and spirit that we have seen in tales of wandering spirits and mock deaths in the case of *Ryōiki*. Further, the personification of the spirit of Izanami in her sojourn in the other world is highly exaggerated, indicating the strong working of the intention to represent concretely the world of death defilement and spirits of the dead. Moreover, in the tale in *Ryōiki*, Chikō returns to life without eating “food cooked with the fires of Yomotsu,” but Izanami in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* narratives, because she partook of such food, was unable to return to the world of life. Concerning this point, the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* myth, from the outset, is not conceived as a tale of return to life with Izanami as mediator. It is Izanagi who journeys to the other world and returns to the world of life, but he has not once died and gone to the other world; hence, strictly speaking, his is not a “return” to life. Here, the line of demarcation between life and death is not sharply drawn. The center of the narrative is the terrifying nature of the world of death communicated through the description of demonic figures of the spirits of the dead. It does not employ the pattern of return to life, in which the visitor returns to the world of the living with news of the dreadful landscape. The thoroughgoing personification of the dead spirit and death defilement is suggestive of this. Thus, Izanami, the heroine of the myth in *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, by eating of the food of Yomotsu gives rise to a unique tale of a spirit of the dead, while by contrast, Chikō, the hero of the *Ryōiki* tale, by abstaining from the food of Yomotsu, fulfills the tale of return to life.

Izanami, who has eaten of food from the hearth of Yomi, must give up hope of returning to life in the world of the living; hence, the problem of the mock death or *mogari* for her original body, to which her spirit may return, need not be developed in the later narrative and is outside the sphere of concern from the start. This does not mean that, after her spirit has departed for Yomi no kuni, her physical body has no existence whatsoever. In Yomi no kuni, the dead spirit of Izanami gained a body squirming with maggots and covered with thunder, but her corpse-body, both in principle and experientially, remains in this world.

In this connection, we find an illuminating passage in *Nihon shoki*.

It is a sentence in a variant account concerning Izanagi's pursuit of Izanami: "Izanagi no Mikoto, desiring to see his wife, reached the place of *mogari*." Seeking a reunion with the deceased Izanami, Izanagi immediately went to the place of *mogari*. This place is of course not Yomi no kuni or the other world, but her place of burial in this world. Izanagi's search for Izanami takes the form of a living human being visiting Yomi no kuni, but given that Yomi no kuni is the other world where dead spirits go, this kind of act is unreasonable from a cosmological perspective. It is not necessarily viewed as odd, probably because at the mythic stage of *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, conceptions of an other world as a distinct dimension had not yet fully developed. In any case, when we view the narrative of the myth from the perspective of faith in wandering spirits, it appears more natural that Izanagi's desire for reunion with Izanami, rather than taking the form of a visit to Yomi no kuni, leads to the scene of *mogari*, in anticipation of the moment when her wandering spirit will return and the mock death is resuscitated. In this sense, the variant account provided by *Nihon shoki* regarding the visit to the place of *mogari* is a valuable witness. If we rearrange the situation of the struggle between life and death in Izanami in the light of the variant account, it is possible to view her in the formula of a tragic spirit of the dead, whose path to resuscitation of the corpse in *mogari* has been cut off through the act of eating the food of Yomi. This is precisely the corresponding and reverse pattern of the case of Chikō in *Ryōiki*, who avoids the taboo of eating the food of Yomi and who is able to return to his own mock corpse or *mogari*, which has been set in place for nine days. We see that "eating the food of Yomi" and "*mogari*" function as ritual symbols indicating the structure of crisis in the distinct aspects of death and life. Concerning this, it may even be said that the tales of return to life in *Ryōiki* and the tale of the spirit of the dead in the myth of *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* are in almost perfect agreement.

Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長 asserted that there is a distinction between pure and defiled fire. Eating food of Yomotsu no kuni (Yomotsu *he gui*) means to take food prepared with the defiled fire of the land of

death, and those who violate the taboo against this can never return to their own world (*Kojiki den*). Yanagita Kunio 柳田国男 also adopts this theory that in the Shinto faith of Japan, there is a distinction of two kinds of fire, pure and defiled. Matsumura Takeo 松村武雄, however, has sharply criticized Norinaga's interpretation of Yomotsu *he gui*, and has argued on the basis of numerous examples from world mythologies that the motif of being unable to return to one's own land because of having eaten elsewhere is exceedingly widespread, but does not have to do solely with a defiled world such as the afterworld of darkness, but also with the realm of fairies and the pure world of gods. After considering Babylonian mythology, in which the creator god forbids the first man from taking food in the realm of the gods, Greek mythology in which Persephone is abducted to the realm of Hades, examples from Finnish mythology, the ancient Scottish tale of the minstrel Thomas, and other sources, he concludes that the concept of being unable to return to one's own abode is based not on notions of defilement through ingesting food of the underworld, but rather on faith in the establishment of close relationships through the magical power of food.²⁰

6

We have seen that the motif of *mogari* in the tales of return to life in *Ryōiki* stands in a relation of antagonism and tension with the concept of taboo regarding the realm of darkness. *Mogari* rituals as a system, however, in the course of history, gradually underwent a change in meaning. Here, as an approach to this issue, I will consider one further condition in determining the character of the tales of return to life in *Ryōiki*.

In the fifteen tales of return to life in *Ryōiki*, the period up to the time the wandering spirit returns to the body in simulated death—that is, the period of *mogari*—ranges from two days, at the shortest, to nine days, at the longest. It is difficult to determine the significance of this length of the *mogari* period, but we may conjecture that it involves consideration of such conditions as the actual putrefaction of the corpse, the measures to prevent decomposition, and the economic burden

incurred in maintaining the *mogari*. Further, it appears likely that these limiting conditions naturally determined the scope and period of the sojourn in the other world by the wandering spirit. Thus, the time span of two to nine days for the *mogari* period may be considered to have been determined by the period allowed mutually by the physical conditions of the corpse and the mythic time of the wandering spirit's travels in the other world.

The *mogari* rituals are neither merely a temporary abandonment of the corpse nor a refinement of mortuary exposure, for it reflects a characteristic and distinctive view of spirits. The period of two to nine days was determined by its conceptions and customs. By the time the chief tales of return to life in *Ryōiki* were formed, however, some measure that denied or modified these conceptions and customs was enacted by the court bureaucrats. We see one example of such a measure recorded in *Nihon shoki*, the "Record of Kōtoku" 孝徳, as a decree of Taika 大化 2 (646), third month, twenty-second day. This decree is known as the Taika edict on the simplification of mortuary rites. It is a lengthy edict, but its contents may be divided into four topics:

1. reduction of expenses;
2. distinctions in the scale of funerals depending on rank;
3. burial of corpses in determined graveyards;
4. prohibition of self-immolation.²¹

Under the second topic of distinctions in the scope of funerals according to rank, the following regulations are recorded.

When ordinary persons die, let them be buried in the ground, and let the hangings be of coarse cloth. Let the interment not be delayed for a single day.

The construction of places of temporary interment (*mogariya*) is not allowed in any case, from princes down to common people.

Not only in the home provinces, but in the provinces generally, let plots of ground be set apart for interments. It is not permitted to pollute the earth by dispersed interments in various places.²²

In the case of the deaths of common people, corpses are to be clothed in rough robes and buried immediately. They must not be left as they are for even a day. Thus, from princes down to the common people, the observance of *mogari* is forbidden. Throughout the country places for the burial of corpses are to be determined, and there must be no random dispersal of defilements. "Let the interment not be delayed for a single day" corresponds in meaning to the following prohibition of *mogari*. Thus, this document appears to be clearly a declaration of the total abolition of the *mogari* rites, which were rooted in the characteristic view of spirits. It should have represented a challenge by the dominant authorities to a traditional value system that had functioned since ancient times. In the prohibition of observance of *mogari* rites from princes down to the common people, it indicates that at the time, the custom of *mogari* was maintained by a broad spectrum of social classes.

We must note here, however, that the expression, "from princes down to common people," excludes the case of the emperor. Already from before this period, elaborate structures for *mogari* (known as *araki no miya* 殯宮, where *araki* is another term for *mogari*) were constructed on the death of an emperor. The following examples are found in *Nihon shoki*.

The "Record of Ingyō," fifth year [5th cen.], seventh month: There was an earthquake. Before this time Tamada no Sukune, grandson of Kazuraki no Sotsuhiko, had been commanded to superintend the temporary burial of the Emperor Mitsuawake. On the evening after the earthquake, Aso, Owari no Muraji, was sent to examine the condition of the shrine of temporary burial (*mogari no miya*). . . . Tamada no Sukune, the High Officer of the shrine of temporary interment, was not to be

seen at the temporary place of interment. (I, 317)

"Record of Bidatsu," fourteenth year [585], eighth month:
The emperor's disease having become more and more inveterate, he died in the Great Hall. At this time a palace of temporary interment was erected at Hirose.

"Record of Suiko," thirty-sixth year [627], third month to ninth month:

The empress died at the age of seventy-five. She was temporarily interred in the Southern Court [of the palace]. . . . The rites of mourning for the empress began. At this time all the ministers each pronounced a funeral eulogy at the shrine of the temporary burial-place.

"Record of Jomei," thirteenth year [641], tenth month:
9th day. The emperor died in the Palace of Kudara. 18th day. He was temporarily interred north of the palace. This was called the "great temporary tomb" (*ōmogari*) of Kudara.

Further, regarding examples after the promulgation of the Taika edict discussed above on the reduction of mortuary rites ("Record of Kōtoku") there are the following.

"Record of Tenchi," tenth year [671], twelfth month:
The emperor died in the Palace of Afumi. . . . He was temporarily interred at the New Palace. (II, 299)

"Record of Tenmu," Shuchō 1 [686], ninth month:
The emperor's disease having shown no sign of abatement, he died in the principal palace. . . . Lament was begun for him, and a temporary burial palace (*mogari no miya*) erected in the South Court.

In addition, a headnote in *Man'yōshū* records, on the death of Emperor Tenchi, "Two poems at the time of the great *mogari* (*ōmogari*) of the emperor" (II, 151-152).

Even if the case of the emperor was regarded as exceptional, we must inquire into the actual situation in the case of princes. The issue is whether observance of *mogari* actually ceased in accord with the Taika edict on reduced mortuary rites. It is impossible to investigate concrete examples of the scope with which the prohibition of *mogari* in the edict was compulsorily enforced, but by drawing several examples from *Man'yōshū*, Volume 2, we may note evidence that contradicts the notion of effective implementation of the Taika edict on reduced mortuary rites. Kakinomoto no Hitomaro, who was active during the period 686-696, approximately half a century after the promulgation of the edict, composed a long poem (*chōka* 長歌) and two envoys (*hanka* 反歌) at the time of the temporary enshrinement (*mogari no miya*) of Prince Kusakabe (Hinamishinomiko no Mikoto 日並皇子尊) (II, 167-169). He also composed poems in a similar format on "the *mogari no miya* at Kinohe 城上" of Prince Takechi 高市 (II, 199-201). An example of the case of a princess may be seen in the set of elegies written by Hitomaro for the temporary enshrinement (*mogari no miya*) at Kinohe of Princess Asuka (II, 196-198).

Even from these examples we may surmise that thoroughgoing enforcement of the Taika edict on reduced mortuary rites was impossible. This indicates the resilient power of the traditional notions of the wandering spirit and of *mogari* in resistance to the *ritsuryō* restrictions on, or rationalization of, funeral rites. We must turn next, therefore, to the level of the "common people" that the edict speaks of and ask how the trend seen above was received. Concerning this, the revival tales in *Ryōiki* provide a significant answer, and together with the contradictory evidence seen in *Kojiki*, *Nihon shoki*, and *Man'yōshū*, offer valuable resources for considering this problem.

In Volume 2, Tale 5 of *Ryōiki*, a wealthy householder (i.e., a common person), tells his family when dying after a long illness, "Don't cremate my corpse after I die, but keep it for nine days." In Tale 7 of the

same volume, Chikō (official monk), leaves word as his life ends, "When I pass away, do not cremate my corpse, but let it remain for nine days." These expressions—"keep my corpse for nine days"—which presuppose rites of *mogari*, stand in sharp tension and opposition in thought and expression to the deliberate prohibition, "Do not leave the corpse for even one day," of the Taika edict on reduced mortuary rites. These two revival tales from *Ryōiki* are both recorded as events of the late years of Emperor Tenmu. If the ritual contents described in the tales and the period as the era of Emperor Tenmu are in accurate correspondence, then the *mogari* period (nine days) recorded in the tales belongs to a time approximately a century after the Taika edict. Even if we avoid for a moment determining an actual historical period, the group of revival tales in *Ryōiki* preserves examples of a period from two to nine days of *mogari* of simulated corpses, and from this alone, we may conjecture that there is a strong possibility that the Taika edict on reduced mortuary rites was not necessarily strictly observed on the level of the common people.

If this is the case, we must ask whether the regulations, "Let the interment not be delayed for a single day; the construction of places of temporary interment (*mogariya*) is not allowed in any case, from princes down to common people," were simply ignored as empty words after being promulgated in Taika 2 [646].

The imperial proclamation of Taika on funeral practices, in so far as it sought to decrease the size of graves, deserves its name as the "Edict on Reduced Mortuary Practices." Further, it was a period of transition when the age of large burial mounds (the Kofun period) was finally drawing to a close, and the attempt to regulate funeral practices was symbolic of this. At the same time, the new custom of treating the corpse by cremation was beginning to spread among the nobility and the common people. We have already seen the custom of cremation appearing and disappearing between the lines of the revival tales in *Ryōiki*, and this tendency in the handling of corpses began to spread rapidly at about the time of the edict on reduced funeral practices.

Despite this wide diffusion of the practice of cremation, however,

the concept and custom of *mogari*-like practices displayed surprising persistence and did not easily disappear. This is clear from the examples given before, ranging from princes to common people. The documentary evidence is fragmentary, but it is undeniable that there was widespread and deeply rooted interest in the topic of the return to life of wandering spirits, and regarding this, the evidence is more than fragmentary. Changes in the scale of funeral practices brought about by institutional regulation do not necessarily signify changes in the understanding of funerals or of spirits on the conceptual level. Through a comparison of the edict on reduced mortuary rites in the "Record of Kōtoku" and the tales of return to life in *Ryōiki*, we gain a general impression of the concrete trends regarding this issue.

We have already seen that a tacit exception is reserved for emperors in the Taika edict prohibiting *mogari* rites for everyone from princes to the common people. An examination of the funeral rites for Emperor Tenmu will provide a new perspective on this topic. I say "new perspective" because the scale and period of the funeral rites for Emperor Tenmu indicated a new and epocal standard, and in them we see how the *mogari* rites and the Buddhist funereal procedures that transmitted cultural forms from the Asian continent were fused in a format appropriate for sending off the personage of greatest authority of the times. If the revival tales of *Ryōiki* express *metaphorically* the struggles between the Buddhist law of causation and the earlier view of spirits within the logic of the tales, the funeral rites of Emperor Tenmu, on the occasion of the death of the most powerful figure of the nation, was the great observance that in actuality sought to bind the ritual knowledge of official monks with the unbroken traditions of spirit pacification of the imperial household, mobilizing all the conceptual and institutional resources of the nation in the treatment of the corpse.

Regarding the funeral rites for Emperor Tenmu, the research of Yasui Ryōzō 安井良三 includes valuable suggestions. His article, "Tenmu tennō no sōrei kō," focuses on passages of *Nihon shoki* related to the rites, from the emperor's death to his interment at the Ōuchi 大内 burial mound, and analyzes a number of important issues regarding the rites.²³

Yasui's argument presupposes that the funeral rites for Emperor Tenmu were not based on his own actions, but on the considerations of his consort, Empress Jitō, but he also recognizes that they strongly reflect the intentions of Emperor Tenmu while alive. The article takes up a number of topics, but the important points for our concerns here are the following two. First, the period from Tenmu's death to his interment at the Ōuchi mound was over two years and two months. In other words, the *mogari* period extended more than two years. When we compare this with the average length of *mogari* of slightly more than six months recorded in *Nihon shoki* for other emperors, we see that Tenmu's *mogari* was abnormally long. Yasui attributes this to the fact that the crown prince was not yet in an adequate condition to succeed to the throne, and further points out that the occurrence of the insurrection of Prince Otsu probably contributed as a cause. Even so, however, it must be said that this extended span of time is a ritual period that far exceeds the effective range of the concept of *mogari*.

Second is the assertion that Buddhist rites have been affirmatively and extensively incorporated into the traditional funereal procedures. Restricting ourselves to *Nihon shoki*, this adoption of Buddhist procedures cannot be found in the funeral rites of earlier emperors. For example, even in the funeral of Empress Suiko, who instituted a policy of promoting Buddhism, there is no evidence that Buddhist rites were performed, and the Taika edict on funeral practices, even though it appears to be influenced by Buddhist factors, includes not a single rule related to Buddhist rites. Rather, we find in it regulations in line with ancient Chinese customs.

To consider these two points of Yasui's article from the perspective of our concerns in this chapter, there emerges here the question of how the procedures of the elaborate rites of imported Buddhism were incorporated into the native concept of the simulated corpse that underlies the process of the dispossession of the spirit and its return to life. Within the world of tales such as found in *Ryōiki*, the Buddhist elements from abroad are deposited as conceptual fragments of ritual in the crevices of the conduct of daily life, but by contrast, in the funeral

rites for Emperor Tenmu, they rather, as symbols that sacralize power and authority, are externalized in adornments as much as possible, and as links in formal ritual patterns, are ostentatiously displayed. Let us examine this concretely.

Yasui extracted all the items related to Tenmu's funeral rites, spanning two years and two months, recorded in *Nihon shoki*, assembling thirty-one entries. The first relates to Tenmu's death in Shuchō 朱鳥 1 (686), ninth month, ninth day, and the last concerns his burial in the Ōuchi mound on the eleventh day, eleventh month, second year of Empress Jitō's reign (688). Of Yasui's thirty-one entries, fifteen relate to *mogari*.

Mourning began, and the *mogari no miya* shrine for temporary interment was constructed in the South Courtyard (Shuchō 1 [686], ninth month, eleventh day, third day after death)

Mogari interment in the South Courtyard (ninth month, twenty-fourth day)

Monks and nuns begin lamenting in the *mogari* court (*mogari niwa*) (ninth month, twenty-seventh day)

Monks and nuns make lament in the *mogari* court (ninth month, twenty-eighth day)

The prince, accompanied by the ministers and public functionaries, proceeds to the palace of temporary interment and makes lament (Jitō 1 [687], first month, first day)

The prince, accompanied by the ministers and public functionaries, proceeds to the palace of temporary interment and makes lament (Jitō 1, first month, fifth day)

An ornamental chaplet is offered at the palace of temporary interment (Jitō 1, third month, twentieth day)

The prince, accompanied by the ministers and public functionaries, proceeds to the palace of temporary interment and makes lament (Jitō 1, fifth month, twenty-second day)

Offerings of food made at the palace of temporary interment (Jitō 1, eighth month, fifth day)

A maigre entertainment is given at the palace of temporary interment (Jitō 1, ninth month, tenth day)

The prince, accompanied by the ministers and public functionaries, proceeds to the palace of temporary interment and makes lament (Jitō 2 [688], first month, first day)

A company of priests make lament at the palace of temporary interment (Jitō 2, first month, second day)

An ornamental chaplet is offered at the palace of temporary interment (Jitō 2, third month, twenty-second day)

Offerings of food made, and lament raised at the palace of temporary interment (Jitō 2, eighth month, tenth day)

The prince, accompanied by the ministers and public functionaries, as well as by the guests from the frontier lands, proceeds to the palace of temporary interment and makes lament (Jitō 2, eleventh month, fourth day)

To these entries treating *mogari*, I will add those dealing with the Ōuchi burial mound.

The emperor dies (Shuchō 1, ninth month, ninth day)

The Ōuchi burial mound is built (Jitō 1, tenth month, twenty-second day)

The remains are interred in the Ōuchi mound (Jitō 2, eleventh month, eleventh day)

We find here that the Ōuchi burial mound was constructed precisely halfway through the two year, two month *mogari* period, or one year and one month after Tenmu's death. In other words, final interment in the Ōuchi mound occurred only after another year and one month of extended *mogari* observance. In the related entries, there is no mention whatsoever of cremation and no hint of its performance; hence, during this lengthy *mogari* period some sort of treatment of the emperor's corpse probably took place, but no details are recorded.²⁴

Yasui states that, according to *Nihon shoki*, when an emperor died,

the structure for temporary interment (*mogari no miya*) was constructed, music and dances were offered, and rites of mourning were performed. When completed, the body was interred in a burial mound. Yasui further notes that, during this period, the central rite was the offering of praise and lament (*shinobigoto* 誄).

The *shinobigoto* was offered at the *mogari* shrine by such persons as ministers, *ōmuraji* 大連, princes, and so on. They praised the deceased emperor and his policies and sorrowed at his passing; in this way, they renewed their awareness of the close relationship between the emperor and themselves. Concerning this traditional funereal ritual of mourning, however, in the case of Tenmu's funeral, in the *shinobigoto* ritual performed in the *mogari* court, monks and nuns participated and offered lamentation (*mine* 哭). According to Yasui, the ritual participation of monks and nuns and their act of lamentation was a new feature completely unseen in imperial funerals prior to Tenmu. The entry in the "Record of Tenmu" concerning the lamentation of monks and nuns in the *mogari* courtyard is the first historical record of such a practice.

On the occasion of Emperor Tenmu's death, *shinobigoto* (necrology, or self-deposition or declaration) was conducted by the imperial family and court officials, and in parallel, lamentation was offered by monks and nuns. The former consisted of political memorialization and the later, religious (Buddhist) mourning, and these two were fused in the observances.²⁵ This was surely an appropriate ritual ceremony for the funeral of Tenmu, who possessed great political charisma. Further, on the one hand, *shinobigoto*, through being spoken as though to a living, sacred body in facing the remains of the emperor in *mogari*, was a ritual act that recalled his benevolence and achievements. On the other hand, lamentation for life that had already been completely and irrevocably lost was a ritual act of mourning from the depths of a sense of impermanence. Thus, it is the notion of simulated corpse in *mogari* that is appropriate to the psychological ritual space of *shinobigoto* remembrance, while the ritual structure of emptiness through cremation is compatible with lamentation.

Thus, the entire process of the funeral rites for Tenmu enacted a

fusion of the secular mourning of remembrance and the Buddhist mourning of lamentation. If we take a psychological perspective, this entailed an attempt to unify the contradictory elements of the native conception of spirits that anticipated the return to life of the wandering spirit, on the one hand, with the denial of spirits of Buddhism, which grasped the vanishing of life as impermanence. Because this was a self-contradictory union, in the actuality of the conception and awareness, the psychological struggle and tension surely deeply permeated the minds of those who administered the rites. Concerning this, the dualistic structure that informed the funeral rites for Emperor Tenmu has intellectual and cultural points in common with the complex exposed in the revival tales of *Ryōiki*.

7

We have noted earlier that in the pattern of the revival tales, *mogari* and the other world form two indispensable elements. From the perspective of the wandering spirit that traverses over and back between these two poles on a unique track, *mogari* might be said to correspond to the point of summer solstice, and the other world to the winter solstice. The wandering spirit revived in the *mogari* state (the temporary corpse) returns in order to live in the context of warm life, while the shadowy spirit of the dead adrift in the other world and following a chill and lonely path, on the way of death, must live only to waste away and suffer. The sojourn from the solstitial point of summer to that of winter consists of the dead spirit's travels, and the circumnavigation from the solstitial point of winter to that of summer signifies the return to life.

Up to this point we have focused on the elements of *mogari* that appear in the various revival tales, and on its structure and meaning, conducting our investigation from a particular, limited perspective. Below, let us go on to take up the opposite pole of the other world. In doing so, we will be able to grasp the complete image of the tales related to the theme of return to life.

The other world is not simply a realm distinguished from the

present world, but a world of a different dimension from this one, isolated from this world and transcending it; it may also be a mystical, pantheistic world that indwells within this world. Thus, there may be cosmologies of distinct structures of this world in relation to the other world. The heavens and hells in the cosmologies of Christianity and Buddhism possess the character of the other world—being isolated from this world and transcending it—that has a vertical structure. This is close to the first type of other world. By contrast, the notions of Yomi no kuni 黄泉の国, Tokoyo no kuni 常世の国, or Ne no kuni 根の国 manifest a notion of the other world as an extension of this world, contiguous with the horizons of this world or just below its surface. This is closer to the second, pantheistic cosmology. In this case, by “pantheistic, mystical world” I mean that the world ordered by our everyday awareness is enveloped by the temporal and spatial sense of the other world, completely covered without the slightest gap, and, from the opposite perspective, the other world, as a projected system intimately related to this world, directly exchanges minute particles through symbols and codes with this world. Our next topic, therefore, is how this cosmology is expressed in the texts of *Ryōiki*.

The central data necessary for investigating the view of the other world in *Ryōiki* may be found in the tales of return to life that we have been considering. Not all of the revival tales, however, treat the problem of the other world. Moreover, there are tales apart from those focusing on the theme of return to life that provide suggestive materials for considering the other world. As an example of a case in which a revival tale does not concern itself with the other world, there is Volume 3, Tale 30, in which the elderly monk Kanki 観規 dies but returns to life after two days. Because he was a virtuous practitioner with a store of merit, however, he has been spared the experience of the other world. At the end, the spirit of Master Kanki simply moves in space, manifesting a wondrous sign.

By contrast, as examples of tales that do not treat the phenomenon of the wandering spirit's restoration to life, but nevertheless provide resources for delineating the other world (and also quote from Buddhist

scriptures), there are Volume 1, Tale 23; Volume 2, Tales 18, 22, and 24; and Volume 3, Tale 36.

The other world, in terms of the Buddhist worldview, is usually interpreted as the notion of transmigration in the six paths or courses. When we restrict ourselves to the narratives in *Ryōiki*, however, the image is overwhelmingly that of hell.²⁶ Of course, there are in *Ryōiki* statements regarding the realm of animals (the pattern of transformation into an ox), but as we have seen in the revival tales, rebirth in the realm of animals is, for the returning spirit, no more than a temporary condition, described merely as one of the aspects of the other world. Moreover, the realm of famished spirits (*gaki dō* 餓鬼道) does not appear at all in *Ryōiki*. We see, therefore, that in *Ryōiki* the notion of the other world is made up almost entirely of images of hell.²⁷

In investigating the images of hell in *Ryōiki*, particularly the group of tales treating the return to life of wandering spirits, we notice that, although it is clearly a hell-like realm that is being described, the compiler of the text Keikai almost never employs Buddhist terms regarding hell. As a practicing monk trained at Yakushiji temple, Keikai was no doubt deeply familiar with Buddhist cosmology. Nevertheless, for some reason he exhibits a cautious attitude regarding the use of the Buddhist technical term "hell" (*jigoku* 地獄). We must begin our inquiry here. Of course, we would expect that Keikai possessed a self-conscious sense of his role as a teller of edifying tales, and thus distinguished between the narrow, scholastic level of sectarian Buddhist doctrine and scriptures and the level of tale literature directed and available to the sensibilities of ordinary people. I believe, however, that the problem lies at a far deeper level, involving a realm of a complex of notions.

That the term "hell" was the object of extreme caution does not mean, of course, that notions regarding "hell" were completely excluded. In laying the groundwork for considering this problem, we must first investigate those few, exceptional cases in which the term "hell" is actually employed.

To begin, "Hell" as a proper noun appears in the entire text of *Ryōiki* only once. This is in Volume 2, Tale 7, "On a Wise Man Who

Abused an Incarnated Sage out of Envy, Visited the Palace of King Enma, and Experienced Suffering in Hell.” The name of the hell is Abi Hell (Abi jigoku), or in the Sanskrit original, Avīci, “Uninterrupted Hell.” We have already considered the taboo against eating the food of Yomotsu or Yomi recorded in this tale. As a common noun, “hell” (*jigoku*) appears in tales of return to life twice. It is used in Volume 3, Tale 35, “On Being Penalized for Abusing an Official’s Authority and Ruling Unrighteously.” Here, the idea of hell is expressed not only by *jigoku*, but by “the land of Enma” and “Yomi” (“yellow springs,” land of the dead). The second example of the usage of hell as a common noun occurs in Volume 3, Tale 23, “On the Immediate Repayments of Good and Evil in Return for a Vow to Copy the *Dai hannya-kyō* and for the Use of the Temple Property.” We considered this tale earlier for its vivid expression of the theme of *mogari*.

Finally, there are tales in which the actual term “hell” (*jigoku*) does not directly appear, but to which explanatory, admonitory notes have been appended, and in those notes, passages from Buddhist scriptures using the term “hell” are quoted. In these notes, the term hell appears in formulas expressing the logic that evil causes lead to evil effects and good causes lead to good effects. There are four examples in *Ryōiki*. *The Sutra of Contemplation on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life* is quoted in Volume 1, Tale 23 (“On an Evil Man Who Was Negligent in Filial Piety to His Mother and Gained an Immediate Penalty of Violent Death”), the *Lotus Sutra* is quoted in Volume 2, Tale 18 (“On the Immediate Penalty of Being Given a Twisted Mouth and Death for Speaking Ill of the Monk, Devotee of the *Lotus Sutra*”), the *Nirvana Sutra* is quoted in Volume 2, Tale 19 (“On the Visit to the Palace of King Enma by a Woman, Devotee of the *Heart Sutra*, and the Following Extraordinary Event”) and also in Volume 2, Tale 22 (“On the Stolen Bronze Buddha Which Gave an Extraordinary Sign and Identified a Thief”).

Of these four tales that include examples of the appearance of the term “hell” within scriptural quotations, three (the first, second, and last) do not belong within the category of tales treating the theme of return to life. This does not appear to be merely accidental. When we

consider the above data showing that the term “hell” appears in only three tales depicting the characteristic process of the wandering spirit’s return to life, it appears that the author and compiler Keikai, in conceiving the theme of the spirit’s revival, consciously avoided the concept of Buddhist “hell.” If this is so, the question arises of the meaning of his actual usage of the term “hell” in the three examples above, but I will take this up later. Here, to offer a general remark about the issue as a whole, it is clear that in the cases of quotations from the Buddhist scriptures, Keikai seeks to express the doctrinal intent rooted in the Buddhist cosmology of hell, and consequently it also becomes apparent that in the other examples, he seeks to distance himself as much as possible from the doctrinal view of hell. It appears possible to conjecture, therefore, that regarding images of hell, Keikai consciously distinguished between the doctrinal level and the level of edifying tales.

We must next, therefore, consider concretely the examples of tales involving a sojourn in the other world against a background of a tale-like image of hell. The tales involved are: Volume 1, Tale 30; Volume 2, Tales 5, 16, 19, 24, and 25; Volume 3, Tales 9, 22, 26, 36, and 37.²⁸

8

The road along which the wandering spirit travels to the other world is colored by the structure and landscape of this world. To clarify that landscape and the steps along the path is in itself to highlight the character of the cosmological imagination. It is natural, therefore, that the landscape of the other world that appears in *Ryōiki*, while showing signs of fusion with elements of Buddhist India or Taoist China, possesses a form fundamentally at variance with the images from abroad.

In Volume 1, Tale 30, the spirit of Kashiwade no omi Hirokuni, led by two messengers, crosses a “large river” and reaches “the land in the southern direction.” “The land in the southern direction” (Tonan no kuni) here refers to Yomi no kuni. In its capital there is a palace made of gold. Within the palace is King Enma. There, Hirokuni is shown the figure of his dead wife suffering with iron nails driven through her and

fetters of iron rope, and going further south, he sees the figure of his dead father, also with nails in his body, forced to embrace molten copper. The sins that the dead had committed while alive and the causal recompense in the realm of darkness are explained, and then Hirokuni, pushing open the doors of the palace gate through which he had entered, returns to life.

In Volume 3, Tale 9, the central figure is the spirit of Fujiwara no ason Hirotari. He suddenly finds himself surrounded by a messenger from the hall of Enma and three guards. Passing along a road, they come upon a "deep river" into which the road disappears. The waters are black, and the flow has ceased. There is no bridge, but with the messenger going first, they are able somehow to ford the river. Then, before them appears a pavilion shining resplendently. Inside, blinds are hung, and on the other side is the great king Enma. There, Hirotari encounters his tormented dead wife. The evil performed by his dead wife while alive and good practices are weighed in the scales, and after this tally of salvation is explained, Hirotari returns to life.

In Volume 3, Tale 22, the wandering spirit of Osada no toneri Ebisu 他田舎人蝦夷, summoned by four messengers, crosses a "broad field." After climbing a "steep slope" for a time, they come upon a large number of people sweeping the road clean. He finds that this is where persons who have gained merit by copying the *Lotus Sutra* pass. Going further, they come to a "golden palace" where King Enma dwells. Ebisu is made to hold an iron pillar, and hot iron and copper are pressed against his back in harsh torment. Here also, evil acts and good acts committed while alive are weighed, and a balance sheet of suffering in accord with the weight is thrust before him.

In the above three examples, the description of the journey leading to the palace of King Enma appear to follow a fixed formula. In addition, there is also a tale that describes, standing at the gate in front of the palace, guards with a single horn in the forehead and bearing large swords, who are about to cut off the traveler's head (Volume 2, Tale 16). Other passages (Volume 3, Tales 36 and 37) describe beings made to hold pillars of fire in the palace, having nails driven into the hands, and

being beaten so that their screams echoed in the earth. There is further a tale in which seven “non-humans” (*hinin* 非人) with human bodies and heads of oxen pull the traveler along by the hair and threaten him with carving knives (Volume 2, Tale 5). Clearly circumstances expressing the torments in hell of the Buddhist cosmology are developed as events inside the palace of King Enma. We should note, however, that at the same time, as in Volume 1, Tale 30, the palace of Enma is seen as a “golden palace” existing in the Taoist land of Tonan²⁹ or in Yomi no kuni, which stems from the mythology of *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*.

Thus, in the offices of King Enma, the brilliant golden embellishments of a royal palace and the cruel pain of those who have fallen into hell (including the traveler), screaming with pain at being scorched with iron and copper, are intermingled in the descriptions, and the conception of a dualistic recompense based on good and evil acts is deftly expressed in tale form. From the perspective of teaching and admonishment aimed at salvation, hell is an object of dread to be rejected, but it is also a strange, imaginary world where the hierarchical world of the dead (Enma and followers) and those who will return to life briefly converse, transmitting to this world information about that transcendent other world. It is for this reason that the true heroes in the drama of the other world are not the dead who have received the fate, either weighted or reduced, of the recompense for their sins, but rather the wandering spirits, who roam temporarily bereft of their bodies, for a determined period, who conduct themselves as curious observers, and who return to life. The tales are not narratives of the revenge or ordeals of the dead (hell tales), but rather travel records of the far-off, mysterious other world by those who have simulated death and come back to life (tales of resurrection). Further, the author of the tales does not describe the circumstances of the dead in hell in terms of the “hell” that is the lowest of the six courses on the cosmological map, but rather, from the outset, narrates the events in the palace of King Enma as wholly occurring in an extension of this world. Thus, the road leading to the golden palace in the land of Tonan or Yomi no kuni passes not through a supernatural landscape of Buddhist cosmology, but rather through the

features and colors of a this-worldly topography. Fundamentally, it is an image of the other world that inherits the ancient images of Ne no kuni or Yomi no kuni.

It may be said, therefore, that the character or structure of the conception of the other world manifested in the revival tales of *Ryōiki* represents a particular stage in the intense fusion or stratification of knowledge about the cosmology of hell in Buddhism as an imported religion, on the one hand, and the traditional conception of the other world, on the other. It may be, of course, that the form as a tale of return to life was a factor in determining the direction of this complex, but further, it may also be taken to indicate a form of adoption of the Buddhist conception of hell during this period. As a typical expression of this tendency we have an important *Ryōiki* revival tale (Volume 2, Tale 7, relating the sojourn in hell by Master Chikō), but before going into an analysis of it, I will comment on the outlook of this period.

The Man'yō poet Yamanoue Okura 山上憶良 died at the age of seventy-four in 733, approximately one century before the composition of *Ryōiki*. The worldview of the tales of *Ryōiki*, however, may be said to be contemporaneous in thought and cultural context with Okura. Okura was dispatched as emissary (*shokikan* 書記官 [*Shoku Nihongi*]) with a mission to China in 702 and remained in China for approximately five years before returning to Japan. His observations and experiences abroad exerted a deep and subtle influence on his learning and sensibilities.³⁰ For example, Okura's knowledge of Confucian, Buddhist, and Taoist traditions conspicuously surpasses that of the other Man'yō poets. He exhibits an understanding of Buddhist metaphysics, the thought of Taoist wizards, and Confucian ethics. Thus, to read Okura's verse is, simultaneously, to follow the tracks of the impact and the fusion of alien thought and belief systems.

The official envoy Okura came from a family of naturalized intellectual officials, and the first half of his career was as a "sutra copyist"; hence, he did not come from a privileged background.³¹ Nevertheless, late in life, in 726 at the age of sixty-seven, he went to Kyushu as lord of Chikuzen (Chikuzen no kami 筑前守). Before long, as

his superior, Chūnagon no Ōtomo Tabito 中納言の大伴旅人 arrived to fill an appointment as Dazai no sotsu, and the rivalry and reaction between these two strong personalities sparked the formation of a vigorous and dazzling poetic circle of Tsukushi. *Man'yōshū*, Book 5, is a monument marking the intense interaction between these two figures.

Okura's verse is commonly characterized as follows: the prefaces in Chinese state the intention, the long poems (*chōka*) narrate the pain of human life, and the envoys (*hanka*) express the conclusion or ideal. With regard to Buddhism, which occupies an important position in his thought, it may be said that in his prefaces in Chinese, selected and specified fragments of doctrinal thought frequently appear; in the long poems, the Buddhist sense of impermanence collides with natural feeling; and in the envoys, condensed images of Buddhism spurt forth. In Okura's compositions, the concepts of causal recompense and rebirth in the six courses are clearly apparent, for example, in "Untitled Preface in Chinese" at the beginning of *Man'yōshū*, Book 5, "Passage of Lament on Falling Ill," and "Verse of Dialogue on Poverty." The perspective, however, on these concepts of karmic reward or rebirth in the six courses is fundamentally not that of an awakened person but that of "the world" or "the people." He seeks constantly to draw Śākyamuni, who stands on the other shore of enlightenment, to the realm of this shore. This is Okura's characteristic spirit of an ironical, paradoxical anti-utilitarianism. This is the assertion of Imura Tetsuo 井村哲夫.³² Concerning this point, Imura compares the poetic expressions of Okura's "Verse of Dialogue on Poverty" and the style of Keikai's *Ryōiki* (especially the final section of Volume 3, Tale 38) and conjectures that they share a contemporaneous type of adoption of Buddhism. This has close bearing on our considerations.

It is impossible here to offer an analysis of the various aspects of Okura's reception of Buddhism based on his literary and poetic composition, but restricting ourselves to a limited consideration, I will sketch the issue as it is manifested in two poems from the close of *Man'yōshū*, Book 5. There are three poems under the title, "An Elegy on the Death of Furuhi," a long poem and two envoys. I will take up the

two envoys.

Being young
and ignorant of the path,
he will lose his way.
O Messenger from Shitae,
bear him there on your back!

wakakereba / michiyuki shiraji / mai wa semu
shitae no tsukai / oite tōrase
(905)

Making this offering,
I beseech you:
Do not lead him astray,
but guide him directly
along the road to heaven.

fuse okite / ware wa koi-nomu / azamukazu
tada ni i-yukite / amaji shirashime
(906)

These are poems of sorrow and mourning for Okura's young son Furuhi.³³ They are plaintive prayers for the safe journey to the other world and for peace and security there for the wandering spirit of his dead son, which has parted from this world and set off for the other.

The first poem states that the child, being so young, will not know the way, and requests the messenger from the other world to bear him on his back to Yomi no kuni (Shitae 黄泉), promising to make offerings. Okura states that since he is making offerings and prayers, he hopes that his son will be taken directly to heaven (*amaji* 天路).

There are various theories regarding the words *shitae* and *amaji* in these two poems. The question turns on whether these two terms should be understood as manifesting Buddhist concepts of the realm of darkness

or whether, instead, images of Yomi no kuni or Ne no kuni from the mythology of *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* should be seen. In the expression, "O Messenger from Shitae, bear him there on your back!" in the first poem, however, we may sense the pattern of the journey to the other world that frequently appears in the revival tales of *Ryōiki*. The messenger of Shitae reminds us of the summoning servants of King Enma. Okura's prayer, "O Messenger from Shitae, bear him there on your back!" is surely directed toward the desolate, taboo world that appears in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* mythology. Or rather, is it not spoken to the world of King Enma's halls, with their mixture of severe judgments and warm benevolence, where the measure of sins is mechanically taken? Further, if the "messenger from Shitae" may be understood as a servant of the palace of King Enma, then there is no necessity of limiting the meaning of "heaven" (*amaji*) in the second poem solely to the "heaven" of "the gods of heaven and earth" in Buddhist thought. Okura, through making offerings, prays that his son may receive the recompense of ascending to heaven. Tachibana Chikage 橘千蔭 (*Man'yōshū ryakukai* 万葉集略解) and Kaji Masazumi 鹿地雅澄 (*Man'yōshū kogi* 万葉集古義) both reject the interpretation of "heaven" (*amaji*) here as referring to one of the six courses in Buddhist cosmology.

Having noted this, however, it is not my intent here to assert that Shitae and heaven in these two poems of Okura are completely free of Buddhist notions of the other world or the Buddhist cosmology of the six courses. As we have already seen in our analysis of the revival tales in *Ryōiki*, the wandering spirit's journey to the other world has decisively received the influence of Buddhist cosmology, and at the same time, at the core of notions of that world, concepts of Yomi no kuni and *mogari* as well as characteristic notions of taboos regarding dead spirits have been assiduously preserved. This may be understood as the stratification of images resulting from the collision and conflict with the religious thought and belief system from abroad, and this situation, in another form, may be seen in the two poems by Okura (and, in fact, his poetic works as a whole) in the *Man'yōshū*.

Hori Ichirō 堀一郎, in analyzing the funeral practices and concepts

of the ancient Japanese, employed the elegies (*banka* 挽歌) of the *Man'yōshū* as resources.³⁴ According to his research, examples of the spirits of the dead attaching to lofty points such as mountains, cliffs, clouds, mists, and trees are in a vast majority. There are also examples of settling down into level places such as the sea, islands, wild fields, rivers, and valleys, but spirits attaching to mountains account for 50 percent of the examples, indicating that cases of attaching to high points in the natural landscape reflects the dominant notion of the other world in the world of the *Man'yōshū*. By contrast, Hori found that there are only seven examples of the spirit of a dead person going to a cosmological other world, such as the world of darkness, Yomi, or an underground realm. Thus, we may conjecture that Okura's references to Shitae and heaven are traces of a transition in the view of the other world among the *Man'yō* poets that was taking place at the time. The pattern of the reception of Buddhism seen in Okura may thus be said to be a valuable key in seeking to understand the form of the reception of Buddhism in the revival tales of *Ryōiki*.

9

We have explored the pattern of the wandering spirit and its return to life from the other world by considering the revival tales of *Ryōiki* and investigating a number of complex related issues. In order to delineate a categorization of the various prescribed forms we have seen, it will be necessary now to turn to a fuller consideration of *Ryōiki*, Volume 2, Tale 7, which we have put off until now. This tale, "On a Wise Man Who Abused an Incarnated Sage out of Envy, Visited the Palace of King Enma, and Experienced Suffering in Hell," is, among all the revival tales of *Ryōiki*, the outstanding example in terms of both quality and length. There are several reasons for its conspicuousness. To begin, in using the name "Abi Hell" (Abi jigoku), it is one of the very few tales that employs the proper noun for hell. Avīci Hell is described in *Shōbōnenshogyō* 正法念處經 and other scriptures as the lowest of eight great hells, where the most inferior of sinners suffer interminable pain. The author of the tale

seeks here to grasp directly the nature of hell. Second, in this tale the dark landscape of death leading to arrival in hell is painstakingly depicted. That is, Chikō, who boasted preeminence in knowledge at Gangōji temple at the time, criticized the appointment of Gyōki to the rank of *daisōjō* and fell into hell, where during a *mogari* period of nine days he underwent an uncanny experience of sojourn in the other world. His sojourn may be analyzed into the following points:

—Led by two messengers of King Enma, he journeys toward the west.

—Before him, a golden pavilion appears; he is told this is where Bodhisattva Gyōki is to be reborn.

—At the gate to the golden pavilion, on either side, stand two “god-men” fitted with armor and with red headbands on their foreheads. Chikō is directed to go further toward the north.

—Eventually he reaches a place where scorching heat rises up. On asking about this, he is told that it is “the heat of hell.” Chikō is made to hug a scorching pillar of iron. His flesh melts away until only bone remains, but the messengers, guards of hell, utter a spell and his body is restored to its original state. Three days have passed.

—He is told to go further in the northern direction. There is a copper pillar hotter than the previous one, which he is told to embrace. As before, his flesh drops away and he becomes white bones. Again, he is restored to his former condition. Here also three days pass.

—Going further to the north, he reaches a place where the heat of flames is so great that birds flying in the sky drop. In response to his question, Chikō is told it is the “Hell of Abi” where he is to be parched. Day and night he undergoes the torment of being roasted. Only when he hears from far off a temple bell for offerings does the heat cool and temporarily allow him respite from the pain. Again, three days pass.

—After this ordeal for a total of nine days, Chikō is given a reprieve and taken to the golden pavilion. The two “god-men” at the gate tell him, “You were summoned here because you slandered Bodhisattva Gyōki. You are here to atone for and eliminate your acts of evil karma. We are waiting for the arrival of the venerable Gyōki. Avoid eating anything

cooked with the fire of Yomotsu, and return to the world of the living.”

In the description of Chikō's sojourn in hell, the scenes in which he embraces pillars of iron and copper are reminiscent of the “hell of scorching heat” among the eight great hells in Buddhist cosmology. Further, the repeated revivals through the spells of the guards of hell at three day intervals clearly reflects the notion of the uppermost of the eight great hells, the “hell of repeated revival.” There can be little question, therefore, that the author of the tale has incorporated the Buddhist formulas of the eight great hells in narrating Chikō's journey in the other world. Next, the path taken in the realms of hell has the structure of first going westward until encountering the golden pavilion, then heading northward to reach the various places in hell. The depiction of hell in Buddhist texts generally traces a structure of vertical strata, but in the *Ryōiki* tale, we find it described with a horizontal sense of directions, so that the path goes first west, then north. Further, going westward, Chikō encounters the golden pavilion; from there, he goes north to the places of hell. If the golden pavilion may be said to in fact represent the land of bliss as an idealized land, then it lies in cosmological structure as a point on the way to hell.

The image of the golden pavilion as lying to the west derives from the conception of the Pure Land in the west, or to go back further, to the ancient faith in the western direction. In any case, in this tale the divergent points of the Pure Land and hell are determined according to the westward and northward sense of direction. Thus, the land of bliss and hell both lie on the same plane, existing together simultaneously. Here, we see the collision and fusion of two distinct views of the other world, the Buddhist conception of hell and the mythological conception of Yomi in *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*. Further, the tension between these two different views of the other world is increased in symbolic form in the scene in which, at the point Chikō's wandering spirit is about to return to life, he is admonished not to eat the food prepared in Yomi. These words of taboo prohibition do not necessarily impress us as sudden and abrupt because in this tale of Chikō's sojourn in hell, images

of Yomi no kuni have already appeared in different form, skillfully worked into its structure.

We have already considered this matter, but the general trend of the revival tales of *Ryōiki*, when expressing the wandering spirit's journey to the other world, is to break away as far as possible from the rigid doctrinal understanding of the image of hell. At the same time, we have also seen that the intentions of literary production latent in the tales show the tendency of drawing apart the motif of the treatment of the corpse that makes possible the return to life of the wandering spirit from the traditional conceptions of *mogari* rituals. In all the tales of return to life, there are only three cases in which the term "hell" (*jigoku*) appears as a proper or common noun, and the term "*mogari*," restricted in use to a bare minimum, appears in only four tales (Volume 2, Tale 22, and Volume 3, Tales 9, 22, and 23). If the revival tales of *Ryōiki* sought to stand on their own as examples of the genre of "tale literature," then to adopt the direction of actively becoming free of the rigid conceptual worlds of hell and *mogari* was a natural device. It was not the conceptualization of causal recompense, but rather the transformation into tale literature that was the aim of *Ryōiki*; hence, the tendencies seen above.

Nevertheless, we must not forget that the compiler and author of *Ryōiki*, Keikai, was a monk (*shamon* 沙門) of Yakushiji temple in Nara, a specialist whose foundation for personal existence was fundamentally the worldview and understanding of salvation of Buddhism. It is not at all strange that his countenance as a Buddhist intellectual should suddenly appear vividly in the tale of Chikō. This is because it is probable that he was a cultured person who could, in the process of his daily chanting of scriptures, experience in self-reflection the oppression of the Hell of Abi through the stories of others. Thus, the compiler, who was so vigilant in most of the revival tales to avoid the term "hell," here for a moment takes an attitude in which he seems to forget his vigilance. In correspondence with the term "hell," however, Keikai employs another term, the "food from the hearth of Yomotsu" (Yomotsu *he mono*). Keikai, who displayed the Hell of Abi as the extreme limit of the other world,

used in contrast the notion of the food of Yomi that symbolizes the taboo of the other world, a term that appears only this once in the entire *Ryōiki*.

Above, we have clarified the fact that the revival tale, Volume 2, Tale 7, in which Chikō appears, is a typical example of a tale that includes, in a relationship of sharp opposition and tension, both the Buddhist view of hell and the view of the land of Yomi in the mythology of *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*. In the belief in spirits of ancient Japan, there was only an impoverished metaphysical imagination with regard to the other world, but by contrast, the view of the other world in Buddhism, which was imported from abroad, in spite of the negative attitude toward spirits, was rich in constructive powers. These two mutually repelling elements were planted in the cultural soil of Japan, each supplying what was lacking in the other, and as a result of their fusion, came to be expressed in the revival tales of *Ryōiki*. This is an unusual experimental example of religious syncretism.

Finally, regarding the issue above, it is necessary to mention the other two tales among the revival tales of *Ryōiki* in which "hell" (*jigoku*) occurs as a common noun. One is Volume 3, Tale 35, "On Being Penalized for Abusing an Official's Authority and Ruling Unrighteously." A man named Hi no Kimi of Tsukushi province dies and goes to "the land of Enma." The king sends him back home, and on the way back to life, Hi no Kimi encounters the existence of a "hell like a kettle" in a great ocean and learns that a man named Mononobe no Komaro 物部古丸 of Tōtōmi 遠江 province is suffering there. On returning to this world from Yomi, Hi no Kimi reports on what he has seen to the government office in Dazaifu, but it is ignored by the imperial court officials, who fail to bring it to the attention of the emperor, and thus the "report on matters of Yomi" recording Komaro's circumstances was filed away for twenty years. Then a head secretary, Sugano no ason Mamichi 菅野朝臣真道 happens to read the report and presents it to Emperor Kanmu. The emperor asks Sekyō sōzu 施皎僧都 whether, in hell, one is not likely to be released from suffering after twenty years. Sekyō answers that one hundred years in the human world corresponds to only one day and one

night in hell. Therefore, although twenty years may have passed in this world, not even a day has passed in hell, and thus Komaro's sins are not yet atoned for and dissolved. For this reason, the emperor, out of pity, gathered monks for copying and reciting the *Lotus Sutra* to save Komaro from suffering.

The second example is Volume 3, Tale 23, "On the Immediate Repayments of Good and Evil in Return for a Vow to Copy the *Dai hannya-kyō* and for the Use of the Temple Property." A man named Ōtomo no muraji Oshikatsu 大伴連忍勝 of Shinano province dies and his body is placed in a condition of *mogari*. During this period, his spirit separates from his body and is led to hell by five dead men. They climb a steep slope and come to a three-forked road. One branch is broad and flat, the second is covered with grass, and the third is blocked by a thicket of bushes. In the middle of the three-forked road is King Enma. The king indicates the flat path, and taking that path, Oshikatsu comes to a huge kettle at the end. Water is boiling violently and steam rises like flames; the sound is thunderous. Oshikatsu is thrown into the kettle, but it turns cold and breaks into four pieces. There, three monks appear, explain the causation behind the boiling kettle, and allow him to return. Upon returning to life, Oshikatsu reflects on his experience in the other world and says, "I have received this suffering because of the evil I have committed. It is not the fault of 'hell'."

From these two tales we may ascertain the following. In the first, Tale 35, a Buddhist axis consisting of the "land of Enma" and "a hell like a kettle," and an axis of the mythology of *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* represented by "Yomi" and "the suffering of the spirit," stand in a strange contrast. In the second, Tale 23, "hell," on the one hand, and "*mogari*" rites, on the other, indicate a similar contrast. This contrast is based on completely distinct conceptual systems regarding the cycle of death and rebirth, and at the same time, it represents a fusion of contradictory ritual conceptions. In this, it is a reemergence in a variant form of the tale of Chikō.³⁵

We have seen above, on the one hand, that the world of the revival tales of *Ryōiki*, through adopting the ritual concept of simulated death or

mogari into its tale motifs, is successful in exhibiting to the greatest extent the power of flight and the freedom of the wandering spirit. On the other hand, by uniting an image of the other world formed through the medium of the concept of hell with the traditional image of Yomi no kuni, the land of the dead, a three-dimensional depth is given to the stage of the revival tales. The image in which Yomi and hell are fused is formed here, and the spirit's space connecting the two poles of the *mogari* condition and the other world gains transparency and expanse. In other words, the various forms of the world of the tales of *Ryōiki* manifest a particular reaction of fusion occurring when belief in wandering spirits encountered the sharply delineated concept of the other world as hell.³⁶

In investigating the religious tales of *Ryōiki*, we find that the view of spirits of the ancient Japanese underwent a deep and significant cultural change. *Ryōiki* provides unique data regarding the world of spirits in a context distinct from the meaning and function of spirits luminously depicted in the *Man'yōshū* and the mythology of *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*. Thus, the tales of return to life in *Ryōiki* vividly and acutely indicate the intense fusion or syncretism of the pervasive spirit culture in Japan.