



<https://publications.dainst.org>

iDAI.publications

DIGITALE PUBLIKATIONEN DES
DEUTSCHEN ARCHÄOLOGISCHEN INSTITUTS

Das ist eine digitale Ausgabe von / This is a digital edition of

Speidel, Michael – Fukushima, Tomoko

Dawn of Japan: Emperor Jimmu with his gods and warriors on third-century bronze mirrors

der Reihe / of the series

Forschungen zur Archäologie außereuropäischer Kulturen; Bd. 10

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34780/a13t-adf9>

Herausgebende Institution / Publisher:
Deutsches Archäologisches Institut

Copyright (Digital Edition) © 2022 Deutsches Archäologisches Institut
Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Zentrale, Podbielskiallee 69–71, 14195 Berlin, Tel: +49 30 187711-0
Email: info@dainst.de | Web: <https://www.dainst.org>

Nutzungsbedingungen: Mit dem Herunterladen erkennen Sie die Nutzungsbedingungen (<https://publications.dainst.org/terms-of-use>) von iDAI.publications an. Sofern in dem Dokument nichts anderes ausdrücklich vermerkt ist, gelten folgende Nutzungsbedingungen: Die Nutzung der Inhalte ist ausschließlich privaten Nutzerinnen / Nutzern für den eigenen wissenschaftlichen und sonstigen privaten Gebrauch gestattet. Sämtliche Texte, Bilder und sonstige Inhalte in diesem Dokument unterliegen dem Schutz des Urheberrechts gemäß dem Urheberrechtsgesetz der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Die Inhalte können von Ihnen nur dann genutzt und vervielfältigt werden, wenn Ihnen dies im Einzelfall durch den Rechteinhaber oder die Schrankenregelungen des Urheberrechts gestattet ist. Jede Art der Nutzung zu gewerblichen Zwecken ist untersagt. Zu den Möglichkeiten einer Lizenzierung von Nutzungsrechten wenden Sie sich bitte direkt an die verantwortlichen Herausgeberinnen/Herausgeber der entsprechenden Publikationsorgane oder an die Online-Redaktion des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts (info@dainst.de). Etwaige davon abweichende Lizenzbedingungen sind im Abbildungsnachweis vermerkt.

Terms of use: By downloading you accept the terms of use (<https://publications.dainst.org/terms-of-use>) of iDAI.publications. Unless otherwise stated in the document, the following terms of use are applicable: All materials including texts, articles, images and other content contained in this document are subject to the German copyright. The contents are for personal use only and may only be reproduced or made accessible to third parties if you have gained permission from the copyright owner. Any form of commercial use is expressly prohibited. When seeking the granting of licenses of use or permission to reproduce any kind of material please contact the responsible editors of the publications or contact the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (info@dainst.de). Any deviating terms of use are indicated in the credits.

6. Jimmu, Founder of Japan

Where would we best dwell to rule
all-under-heaven peacefully?
I am thinking of going East.
Kojiki 47,2

JIMMU'S MIRROR AND THE LEGEND

If the Mirror portrays Jimmu, all that follows from it must agree with what is otherwise safely known of Jimmu, above all the date of his lifetime. The problem here is that the Mirror is dated to the third century A.D., while the legend puts Jimmu's conquest in 660 B.C. The legend's conventional date, however, is far too early. Literary criticism has shown that it derives from Chinese calendar speculation⁶⁶³ that led the compilers to fabricate eight long-lived emperors to fill the time gap between Jimmu and Sujin, the first possibly historical emperor⁶⁶⁴. Sujin lived in the later third century of our era⁶⁶⁵, hence if the fabricated emperors are struck from the record, as by general consent they ought to be, Jimmu as Sujin's immediate predecessor also ruled in the later third century. Thus restored, the legend's date agrees with that of the Mirror.

Though some historians may claim that 'critical examination of the documents' disproves the actual existence of the first Emperor Jimmu⁶⁶⁶, no evidence in any document does so⁶⁶⁷. It is true that the legend labels Emperor Sujin the 'First Ruler of the Country'⁶⁶⁸, but it also calls Jimmu the 'First Ruler of All-Under-Heaven'⁶⁶⁹. These titles reflect the Chinese belief that the first sovereign (in Japan: Amaterasu or Takamimusubi) ruled heaven⁶⁷⁰, the second (Jimmu) earth, and the third (Sujin) men⁶⁷¹. The epithets are not likely to have any historical substance, but if they do, Jimmu was the first ruler of Japan.

Jimmu's rise to power in the later third century makes historical sense. According to the *Wei History*, Queen Himiko ruled as a shaman during the first half of the third century, then, after her death in 248, turmoil plagued the land on and off. If Jimmu was the founder of Japan, he will have conquered Yamato during the turmoil under Himiko's successors and

then brought new stability. But *was* Jimmu the founder?

Archaeologists and historians have gathered much evidence for the rise of Yamato in the mid-third century⁶⁷², hence it is likely that a new

⁶⁶³ *Nihon shoki* NKBT 580ff. (supplemental commentary); Kidder 2007, 7.

⁶⁶⁴ Eight emperors were made up, not nine, that is, not including Jimmu: Kanda 1959; Bentley 2006, 78f. Contra: Kidder 1993, 105.

⁶⁶⁵ *Nihon shoki*, NKBT 236; Aston 1896, 138; Barnes 2007, 21 and 89f.; Kidder 2007, 314, note 97. Sujin may have died in 258 C. E. (Philippi 1969, 18f.; Kidder 2007, 4; cf. *ibid* 189), or in 318 (Ellwood 1990).

⁶⁶⁶ E. g. Imamura 1996, 188. Jimmu's conquest not a historical fact: Tsuda, according to Uemura 1957, 20. Others preferred vagueness, like Philippi 1969, 13f. 'The *Kojiki*'s account of the legendary Emperor Jimmu's expedition from Kyushu to Yamato may be a concrete statement of the complex historical process of the cultural penetration of the Yayoi culture' or 'The people reduced long, complex historical processes to rousing legends centered in a single heroic figure'.

⁶⁶⁷ And no evidence at all supports the rather blunt claim of Brownlee 1997, 211 'if Emperor Jimmu existed at all, he was at best a putative tribal leader in prehistoric times before the organization of the Japanese state'.

⁶⁶⁸ Historians have made too much of this: Ellwood 1990, 200. Barnes 207, 155; Kidder 2007, 3; 186; 189. Kidder 1964, 354: 'Many scholars now consider the emperors before Sujin to be entirely imaginary, since one literary tradition refers to Sujin as the 'first ruler of the land'.

⁶⁶⁹ *Nihon shoki* 133 versus *Kojiki* 68, 7. Philippi 1969, 208 uses this difference to doubt the genuineness of Jimmu's account in the legend. Naumann 1981, 102 also seeing here a meaningful difference between the world ruler and the ruler of the land, concludes that Jimmu was not real.

⁶⁷⁰ Cf. *Kojiki* 12,2; *Nihon shoki* 18 (Amaterasu), a cosmology perhaps rightly dismissed by Blacker 1975, 70ff. as of little meaning to people outside the court.

⁶⁷¹ See Sima Qian's 'Three Rulers' in the *Sbi ji*, Chavannes 1895, 17. Bentley 2006, 261. Also Hoshino 1976, 90–92 and 104–106 for a review of research and opinion, and Akima 1993, 140.

⁶⁷² E. g. Imamura 1996, 194ff.; Edwards 1999; Barnes 2007; Kidder 2007.

dynasty came in and fostered this growth⁶⁷³. The legend supports this, describing Jimmu as the founder of the country and the dynasty. Its tales of Jimmu match those about Sujin in style and density of detail and therefore in credibility⁶⁷⁴. Indeed, the legend's account of Jimmu's conquest is strategically sound and from a military standpoint has the ring of history, not fantasy, as scholars have long pointed out⁶⁷⁵. There is no compelling reason to reject the legend either on military or cultural grounds, while archaeological evidence positively supports the tale of a conquest of Yamato by an invading force coming from Kyushu at the beginning of the Early Kofun period (around A.D. 250)⁶⁷⁶.

It has been said that 'Kamu-yamato-iware-biko-no-sumera-mikoto, known posthumously as Emperor Jimmu, as the personification and symbol of a Yayoi chieftain, led a tribal group that worked its way toward Yamato, constantly gaining experience in battle strategy and techniques, using better weapons than their enemies'⁶⁷⁷. This is in the main a believable statement, but one needs to replace 'personification and symbol of a Yayoi chieftain', a phrase nowhere attested to or hinted at in historical sources, with the term 'Great King' (*Okimi*), as in the written tradition.

Could the historical tradition recorded in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* during the eighth century have detailed knowledge of the third-century Jimmu and his deeds? It could indeed, for the compilers of the legend, steeped in oral tradition, also had access to written Chinese, Korean, and Japanese records⁶⁷⁸.

One may state with confidence, then, that Jimmu indeed *could* have been the conqueror of Yamato. Yet we claim more than that: if the written legend is not alone in telling of Jimmu's conquest, if a third-century mirror also records it, then Jimmu will indeed have been the founder of Japan and his legend will be true, both in sundry details and in the main outline.

Cast soon after the events, the Mirror could hardly tell a tale greatly at odds with what happened, for Yamato aristocrats, keenly interested in the deeds of their forefathers, resisted changes in the collective memory⁶⁷⁹. Hence, wherever the Mirror agrees with the legend, the legend gains in trustworthiness and the Mirror in meaning. Indeed, the Mirror so closely agrees with the legend that it lends some credibility even to those parts of the legend it does not directly verify⁶⁸⁰. Within reason, then, the Mirror and the legend together reflect the historical truth as understood at the time; from these two sources

combined, Jimmu's conquest emerges as a truly historical undertaking⁶⁸¹.

JIMMU'S CONQUEST OF YAMATO

Seizing the moral high ground

Jimmu took Yamato from his elder brother Nigihayahi⁶⁸². He thus needed to make a strong claim that right was on his side. The myth of Hiko-Hohodemi was his best argument in this, but it was not the only one. Stories of an elder brother, destined to be overcome by the right-minded younger one, are brought up also in the legend's tales of the Ukashi brothers (above,

⁶⁷³ A review of the latest Japanese scholarship (such as Terasawa 2000) on this point: Barnes 2007, 124 ff. Specific years of Jimmu's rule are still out of reach, however: Barnes 2007, 22.

⁶⁷⁴ E. g. Kitagawa 1966, 8; Matsumae 1993, 350: 'Sujin is the first emperor after Jimmu about whom considerable detail is provided' – contra: Kidder 2007, 3: 'With . . . Sujin . . . the processing of information was changing. There were actual stories'.

⁶⁷⁵ Especially in the last part of Jimmu's campaign, from the Yoshino river to Yamato: Uemura 1957; Ōkubo 1981, 45 ff.; Naumann 1981, 104 ff.; Sakamoto 1991, 57: 'The details have many legendary aspects and cannot be taken as historical, but the main outline can be accepted'.

⁶⁷⁶ The legend of Jimmu compatible with Yamatai archaeology: Barnes 2007, 124 ff.

⁶⁷⁷ Kidder 2007, 83. Similarly Naumann 1996, 182: 'Historisch nicht verifizierbares Eindringen kriegerischer Horden aus dem Süden'.

⁶⁷⁸ Philippi 1969, 3 ff. Bentley 2006, 96: 'Naturally, I don't insinuate that the Jimmu story is historical, nor based on any concrete records (though such a possibility may exist)'. Barnes 2007, 12 ff. compares the archaeological record for Nara in terms of the Jimmu legend. To know the history of Jimmu (if he existed) cannot have been any harder than to know the history of Sujin of nearly the same time. Further arguments for the legend's genuine antiquity: Yasumoto 1999, 102.

⁶⁷⁹ Witness Imbe no Sukune Hironari's preface to his *Kogoshūi*, written in 807. Yasumoto 2005, 283 adds that there was no cultural background for making up a long story about Jimmu in the 6th and 7th century.

⁶⁸⁰ Compare the parallel case of Izumo architecture, Kidder 2007, 78: 'good reason to consider the old literature more seriously'. Contra: Piggott 1997, 40 (on Sujin).

⁶⁸¹ Cf. Aston 1905, 116: 'Legend with a historical kernel . . . begins with the story of Jimmu, as it has in all probability a foundation in actual fact, namely, the conquest of Central Japan by an invading army from the western island of Kiushiu'. For the historiography of this see Hoshino 1976; Brownlee 1997; for modern archaeological assessment: Barnes 2007; for sentiment: Sakamoto 1991, 57; Izawa 1993, 126.

⁶⁸² Yasumoto 2005; Bentley 2006, 86–89.

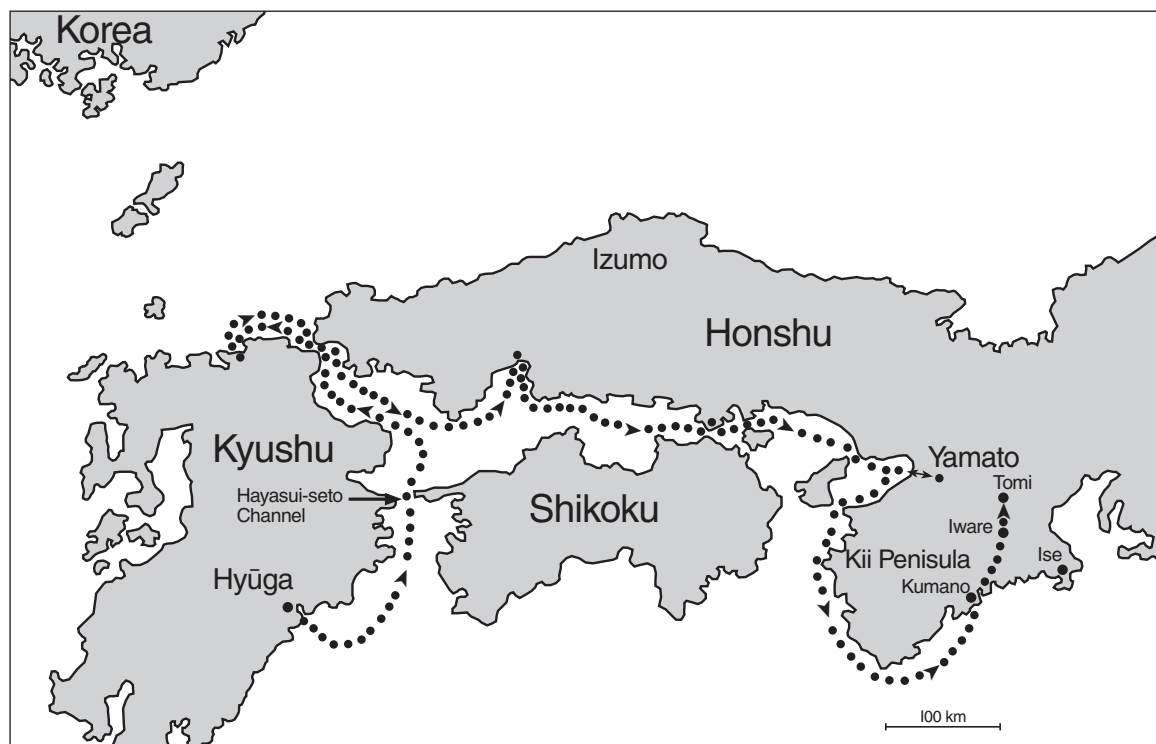


Fig. 47. The route of Jimmu's eastern campaign.

fig. 9) and the Shiki brothers⁶⁸³. The Mirror's image of the seventh warrior confirms that the Ukashi tale was told already in Jimmu's own time, while it follows from the *wani* of the first warrior that the Hiko-Hohodemi myth was also used then – both to justify Jimmu's conquest of Yamato.

Sailing from southern Kyushu

The Mirror seems to imply what the legend states: that it was from Kyushu Jimmu set out on his mission of conquest. It does so by showing Jimmu's earliest allies, personified in the fifth warrior, to be very likely the Hayato of southern Kyushu. The strait on which Jimmu met Saonetsuhiko seems therefore to be the modern Hayasuiseto (Hōyo) channel between Kyushu and Shikoku, as the *Nihon shoki* reports, rather than a strait between Honshu and Shikoku (fig. 47)⁶⁸⁴.

Winning northern Kyushu and Izumo before sailing on to Yamato

When Jimmu came to Yamato, he must already have won Izumo, for according to both the legend and the Mirror, the mythic sword of Izumo,

Kusanagi, was with him on his campaign⁶⁸⁵. The Izumo rulers are unlikely to have given him the sword freely; the legend tells at great length how they were coaxed into giving up their sovereignty so the gods of heaven could hand it over to Jimmu's line. If one may glean history from myth⁶⁸⁶, Jimmu took Izumo by diplomacy rather than conquest. Building on earlier alliances between Kyushu and Izumo⁶⁸⁷, he seems to have won overlordship over Izumo during his long stay in northern Kyushu and western

⁶⁸³ *Nihon shoki* 117; 125; *Kujiki* 258f.).

⁶⁸⁴ *Kojiki* 47; *Nihon shoki* 111. Discussion: *Kojiki* NKBT 149 (commentary). The Mirror here shows a rare case of the *Kojiki* erring and the *Nihon shoki* having the true story. For the strait see Tsugita 1924, 264f. and Philippi 1969, 563, s. v. Paya-Supi.

⁶⁸⁵ The legend has it that Susanoo gave the sword to Amaterasu, who bestowed it on the divine grandchild: *Kojiki* 19, 21–22; *Nihon shoki* 58; *Kujiki* 178f. This, however, is a late fabrication to shrink Izumo's role: for the sword truly belonging to Susanoo see Gotō 1947, 142; Naumann / Miller 1995, 404ff.; Naumann 1996, 109.

⁶⁸⁶ Philippi 1969, 412: 'No doubt the story of the abdication of Opo-kuni-nusi is a mythological reflection of some such process of historical development'.

⁶⁸⁷ Kidder 2007, 122.

Honshu, even though the legend later chose not to mention this⁶⁸⁸.

Jimmu's gods and regalia from Izumo, such as Kotoshironushi and the sword Kusanagi, mean that the full religious power of Izumo came to back his campaign. Kusanagi was the Yamato rulers' token for having the right to rule the earth that once belonged to Ōnamuchi of Izumo⁶⁸⁹. The sword thus links the Izumo myths to the Yamato rulers, a linkage, as the Mirror shows, that is due to Jimmu, the founder of Japan, and not, as has been said, to late compilers of the legend⁶⁹⁰.

Jimmu's winning of Izumo implies that he had already, as the legend says, won northern Kyushu. That was, of course, basic strategy – he had to be master of the West before he could go east. Japanese powers at the time were sea-borne, Jimmu's as well as Himiko's: they controlled chains of small states from Tsushima to Yamato, linked by water, not by land⁶⁹¹. Jimmu fashioned a strategy to fit these conditions⁶⁹².

Up the Inland Sea

By confirming the sequence in which Jimmu won the Hayato, Ukai, Ukashi, and Kume as his allies, the Mirror shows that the route of Jimmu's advance as reported by the legend (above, fig. 1) is historically true. His sea-borne invasion force thus came from Kyushu up the Inland Sea toward Osaka Bay. His rowing boats, depicted on the Gorōyama paintings and the Takaida drawings, show that his advance was by sea, very likely fighting the strong currents around Osaka Bay with the prow of one ship touching the stern of another, as the *Nihon shoki* puts it⁶⁹³. This is the way of rowing, not sailing, boats, to make it easier to move against the current.

A first, failed attack and a sea storm

Like the legend, the Mirror knows of Jimmu's first, failed attack on Yamato from the West of the Kii Peninsula, for the arrows depicted in Itsuse's shield tell of the deadly wound Jimmu's brother received there. In this too the Mirror confirms the legend, and the legend reveals the Mirror's meaning. Moreover, looking back on this attack, Jimmu learned a strategic lesson that would stand him in good stead, namely that an indirect approach may succeed where a direct one fails.

Retreating from the western approaches to Yamato, Jimmu's armada sailed south, around the Kii Peninsula. In so doing, he and his

men had to brave the swells and storms of the open Pacific, an undertaking quite unlike a sail through the sheltered Inland Sea. One may thus well believe the legend when it says that both of Jimmu's other brothers were lost there.

Through the mountains

Understandably, both the Mirror and the legend record Jimmu's successful advance on Yamato from the South in much greater detail than the failed first assault from the West. Scholars have long seen that the legend's account of this part of Jimmu's campaign rings true: the strategy of landing troops behind the enemy is sound, and the place names fit⁶⁹⁴.

Jimmu's main task now was to find allies. This is why the legend records at such length whom he met in the mountains and why the Mirror portrays the sundry warriors in the order in which they joined him. The strategic steps of enlisting the cormorant fishers, winning the Ukashi, employing the Kume, defeating the Shiki, and seeing Nigihayahi switch sides, are carefully described in the legend⁶⁹⁵, and their sequence is geographically correct. With the Mirror portraying them in the same sequence, these stories are now documented history rather than mere legend.

⁶⁸⁸ *Kojiki* 19–37; Philippi 130, 412f.; Matsumura 1954–58, III, 485ff.; Kidder 2007, 114ff. Kyushu rulers as lords of Izumo: Brown 1993, 103. Kusanagi taken from others, but not by conquest: Gotō 1947, 155ff.; 163.

⁶⁸⁹ Naumann 1988, 97. Cf. Kidder 2007, 84. Wrestling Izumo regalia: *Nihon shoki*, 162f. *Kojiki* 30, 13f., with the commentary of Philippi 1969, 117; Matsumae 1993, 349; Miller / Naumann 1995, 402–409. For wresting regalia from vassals see Koide 1980; Shirai 2006, 189f. Wakamori 1973 dates the event to the sixth century – perhaps it happened twice. Overlords: Kidder 2007, 114–126. Regalia conferring the right to rule: Koide 1973; Naumann 1988, 97; 102f.

⁶⁹⁰ Contra Tsuda 1948; cf. Matsumae 1993, 323. Naumann / Miller 1995, 408f. thought Kusanagi was originally at the Atsuta shrine in Wohari and its link with Yamato was a late fabrication, but the Mirror shows that it was with the Sun-line at least since Jimmu's conquest of Yamato.

⁶⁹¹ Ledyard 1975, 230ff. ('thalassocracy'). Seafaring at the time: Matsueda 1993; Kidder 2007, 36–52.

⁶⁹² Contra: Hanihara 1986, 151.

⁶⁹³ *Nihon shoki* 112. Not by sea: Hanihara 1986.

⁶⁹⁴ Marder 1945, 4. Naumann 1981, passim.

⁶⁹⁵ The *Nihon shoki* wrongly brings the Ukai after the Ukashi; the reason being that where the Ukai should be mentioned (116f.), there is one of those clearly late insertions about the ever-popping-up, brazenly intruding Ōtomo.

One of the facts the Mirror documents is that Jimmu conquered Yamato largely with troops he gathered on his way through the mountains. Remarkably, this is also the thrust of the legend. Jimmu found the gods of the mountain tribes – that is, the tribes themselves – mostly friendly⁶⁹⁶. Rather than bringing with him a conquering nation to displace an existing population⁶⁹⁷, Jimmu won the allegiance of the people already there, in the hills as well as in the Nara Basin. Coming from the south across the mountains, as documented by the sequence of the Ukai, Ukashi, and Kume warriors (the sixth to eighth warriors on Jimmu's Mirror), is by itself proof that Jimmu did not, as some have said, stem from Yamato itself.

Victory at Iware and Tomi

Iware was the strategic center between the Uda Mountains and southern Yamato⁶⁹⁸ where Jimmu's foes are likely to have made a stand against him. According to the legend, Jimmu fought some decisive battles there, whence perhaps his name Iwarehiko, 'Prince of Iware'⁶⁹⁹. In confirming the sequence of Jimmu's allies as told in the legend, the Mirror documents Jimmu's southern approach to Iware. This, in turn, bears out the legend's location of the battles at the southern end of the Nara Basin⁷⁰⁰.

The last great battle, however, was further north, at Tomi, for the Gorōyama paintings, discussed above (fig. 17), depict it as the decisive action. It thus seems to be of this battle that the preface to the *Kojiki* says 'Dancing in rows, they swept away the bandits'⁷⁰¹, and, as we have seen, the Gorōyama paintings show dances on that battlefield⁷⁰². The fear and awe arising from the war dance at Tomi thus seem to have cowed the foe into surrender. This would also explain the presence of Nigihayahi as the ninth warrior in the dance on Jimmu's Mirror, for the legend says that he joined Jimmu only at Tomi.

By having his warriors dance on the battlefield rather than closing in for the fray, Jimmu seems to have sought to frighten his foes into surrender⁷⁰³, which fits the legend's tale that Nigihayahi (or his son Umasimazi) surrendered the army and people to Jimmu, who accepted them gracefully.

Rewarding the troops

The tattoo of the Kume leader on the Mirror confirms the legend's report that this man was one of Jimmu's nearest and most trusted follow-

ers, and that Jimmu awarded the Kume special privileges. The Mirror thus supports the legend's statement that after the conquest Jimmu rewarded his allies with positions at court⁷⁰⁴. By doing so, Jimmu became not only the conqueror of Yamato but the founder of the new Yamato State and its institutions.

Ruler of 'Middle Earth'

'Yamato is the highest part of the land' goes a famous song, and the *Nihon shoki* has Jimmu say of Yamato, 'It is, no doubt, the center of the world. Why shall we not go there and make it the capital?'⁷⁰⁵ Since the notion of the center of the world is as basic to Japanese myth as it is to all shamanism, the idea of going to and ruling from the center of the world, was more than likely also inherited from the Altaic past⁷⁰⁶.

When Jimmu set out to conquer the center of the world, he is likely to have had more than a mythical understanding of what constituted the middle: he will have known that Yamato was then the islands' demographic and economic center⁷⁰⁷, for the Nara Basin played that role already in the first half of the third century⁷⁰⁸, as it did afterwards under Jimmu's dynasty⁷⁰⁹. Jimmu,

⁶⁹⁶ Contra Naumann 1963, 149.

⁶⁹⁷ Contra Aston 1896 [1972], 09: 'A real movement of population from Kiushiu eastwards to Yamato'.

⁶⁹⁸ *Nihon shoki* NKBT 576, additional commentary to p. 188 and 348; Naumann 1981, 105, contra Philippi 1969, 488f.

⁶⁹⁹ Naumann 1981, 105. Contra: Tsuda 1948, 267f. For Ledyard's 1975, 247 suggestion to see here a Korean place name, see Miller's 1983, 270f. scathing account; cf. Bentley 2006, 244f. Decisive: *Nihon shoki* 124.

⁷⁰⁰ Cf. NKBT *Nihon shoki*, 199. Naumann 1981, 106–108.

⁷⁰¹ *Kojiki*, Preface 14.

⁷⁰² *Nihon shoki* 128f. Commentators, on the other hand, invariably link this dance to the song mentioned in the *Kojiki*, about the murders in the Osaka pit-dwelling where the Kume killed their guests at a certain line in a song (see above, p. 87): thus Chamberlain 1906 (1981) 7; Florenz 1919, 4; Philippi 1969, 38f., note 22. Yet many battles went with songs, and the Osaka pit-dwelling murders were not all that decisive.

⁷⁰³ Naumann 1981, 104.

⁷⁰⁴ *Nihon shoki* 133f.; *Kujiki* 270ff.; 360ff.

⁷⁰⁵ *Kojiki* 87, 2–3. *Nihon shoki* 111.

⁷⁰⁶ Eliade 1954, 12; 1964, 61; 168f.; 259ff.; 264ff.; 299f. See also Chamberlain 1906, 44; Naumann 1971, 186ff.; 1988, 59; 64; 79f.; 1994; Kitagawa 1966, 12.

⁷⁰⁷ Demographic: Kidder 2007, 61. Economic: Barnes 2007, 126ff.

⁷⁰⁸ E. g. Edwards 1999; Barnes 2007; Kidder 2007, 281.

⁷⁰⁹ Spelled out, e. g. *Jinnō Shōtōki* 50.

in his own view, thus founded his palace in the center of the world, as did rulers everywhere⁷¹⁰. The palace in Kashihara in the southern part of the Nara Basin, southeast of Mt. Unebi, near Mt. Kagu, then truly was the center of the land⁷¹¹, the sacred center of Japan⁷¹².

Founder of Japan

The birth of the Japanese State thus was Jimmu's work. He brought about the dynasty, the aristocracy, the army, the rituals⁷¹³, and the institutions that gave the country stability and staying power. Building the Yamato State on the loyalty of diverse groups such as the Hayato and Kume⁷¹⁴, he shaped the character of Japan for centuries to come. Because of this, the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* treat him in greater detail than any other early ruler; and the *Kujiki* states that the foundation of the state and its religious traditions began with Jimmu⁷¹⁵.

Having conquered nearly all the formerly often separate states, claiming to rule from the center of the world, and building huge mound graves for themselves, the third- and fourth-century Yamato rulers were true emperors, both by early East Asian standards and modern usage of the English language; and their country was a state in the full sense of the word⁷¹⁶. It follows from the Mirror as well as from the legend, that Chinese influence had little to do with this and that later borrowings from China were thus largely overlays on a Japan already set on its course⁷¹⁷.

Nor did the Yamato rulers, as some have said, invent their own holiness after they became emperors⁷¹⁸. The belief that they were sprung from the gods was from the beginning the ground for their self-confidence and hence for their success and long-lasting preeminence. Moreover, since Jimmu and his aristocrats led to the unfolding of the Japanese state in the third and fourth centuries, the legend is true to history in being emperor-centered and in highlighting the leaders around the emperor, as are the Mirror and nearly all later history.

JIMMU'S STANDING IN HISTORY

The birth of historical consciousness

Archaic man thinks cyclically not lineally. His acts have meaning or value only insofar as they repeat a mythical example – reality comes from reliving a heavenly archetype and from living at

the center⁷¹⁹. Jimmu too followed this pattern; he relived the ancient myths and established his palace in the center of the world.

Jimmu's conquest of Yamato, however, was a deed of such historic outcome that it could not be fully transformed into myth⁷²⁰. It was not the work of a single hero; others had part in it as well. Strikingly, the Mirror depicts only leaders of whom the legend tells great deeds⁷²¹, and it depicts nearly all of them. They too wanted to be remembered⁷²², they wanted their rank thereby to become a tradition, and thus linear history began. Under Himiko and Jimmu, as in other

⁷¹⁰ Eliade 1954, 12: 'The Sacred Mountain—where heaven and earth meet – is situated at the center of the world. Every temple or palace – and by extension every sacred city or royal residence – is a Sacred Mountain, thus becoming a Center. . . . The Ural-Altaiic people also know of a central mountain, Sumeru'.

⁷¹¹ *Nihon shoki* 131f.; *Kujiki* 264; *Manyōshū* 1940, 27; *Jinnō Shōtōki* 85; 87. Naoki 1993, 230.

⁷¹² Naoki 1993, 229; Bentley 2006, 264 comments that this is not plagiarism from the Chinese as others have said.

⁷¹³ Rituals: Cf. Bentley 2006, 106–109.

⁷¹⁴ Naumann 1981, 104.

⁷¹⁵ Thus Bentley 2006, 109, suggesting that this treatment may have been put together to slow the flood of Chinese influence.

⁷¹⁶ For 'sovereigns' or 'paramounts' of a 'league', 'polity', 'hierarchy', 'confederacy', or any other far-fangled term to avoid the words 'king', 'emperor', and 'state' see Pearson 1992, 211 and 217; Piggott 1997; Barnes 2007, 89. Bentley's (2006) 'Great Kings' (*ōkimi*) reflects ancient Japanese terms but not English usage. For kings and state: Tsude 1992; Brown 1993, 108. Emperor: Kidder 2007, passim. A 'galactic polity', as 'a central planet surrounded by differentiated satellites, which are more or less autonomous entities held in orbit and within the sphere of the influence of the center' (Piggott 1997, 46 and 339) is as hard to see as a galaxy having a planet as its center.

⁷¹⁷ Points first stressed by Hall 1966 and set into the context of later criticism by Mass 1992, 10ff.

⁷¹⁸ Thus Tsude 1948; Matsumae 1993.

⁷¹⁹ Eliade 1954, 4ff., 1958, 61. Altaic peoples sharing in this worldwide pattern: Eliade 1954, 6, 12f.

⁷²⁰ Eliade 1964, 355: 'Within the horizon of archaic mentality, "history" is continually transformed into mythical events'.

⁷²¹ An exception of sorts is Tagishimimi whom the Mirror exalts but of whom the legend only says that he led the conquering army, together with Jimmu (*Nihon shoki* 114; *Kujiki* 249). The reason why specific deeds are missing may be that after Jimmu's death Tagishimimi, the last of his house, fell from grace (*Kojiki* 55; *Nihon shoki* 138ff.; *Kujiki* 274).

⁷²² The great houses kept their own records, older than the *Kojiki*: *Kojiki*, Preface 39; Brown 1993, 511ff.; Bentley 2006, 48, etc. See Naumann 1971, 5 on the role of the high aristocracy in shaping the legend.

archaic cultures – whether ancient Rome of the sixth century B. C., or the Inca of the fourteenth century of our era – historical consciousness grew strong when history itself grew linear.

The tale of Jimmu's conquest in the literary legend tells the events so much like the Mirror that there can be no doubt that the legend too comes from the third century and not, as scholars have believed, from the eighth. To commemorate historical events with those who have taken part in them calls for balance and a broad view. Hence the Mirror gives the other leaders beside Jimmu each their place and individual characteristics, all of which required narrative complexity and some factual accuracy. The same holds for the literary legend as we still have it. This is why, when they reach the reign of Jimmu, the tales in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* begin to ring true.

The Mirror and the written legend, depicting a long series of events linked to historical characters, are, in a sense, staunchly historic. With the Mirror cast shortly after the events, this is understandable. The written legend, however, evolving over four hundred years might easily have turned to magic. Yet it upheld its historic focus even more unflinchingly – a feat that bespeaks the spirit of the Kofun period. Historic consciousness in Japan thus arose not from Chinese histories⁷²³, nor did it have to await 'the gradual spread of Chinese culture, filtering in through Korea, which allowed the keeping of records'⁷²⁴. Instead, the linear view of history, together with the belief that the offspring of heaven had come to rule in unbroken succession, began in Jimmu's time and was upheld from then on⁷²⁵.

Jimmu restored

So strong was the memory of Jimmu's legend that the fourth-century Emperor Ōjin, and the seventh-century Emperor Temmu, each were thought to be Jimmu reborn⁷²⁶. In his hour of need, Temmu – then Prince Big Ocean (Ōama) – turned to Jimmu for help⁷²⁷. By the eighth century, such heroic and mythic uses of the legend gave way to its use in justifying the established order by celebrating the deeds of one's forebears. Even so, Jimmu remained forever the founding hero – worshiped, followed, and claimed as ancestor⁷²⁸.

In 1868 the leaders of the Meiji Restoration proclaimed as their aim 'to return to the events of antiquity and Jimmu Tennō's state foundation'⁷²⁹. In the war years until 1945, belief in

Jimmu as the founder of Japan was an article of faith. Then, under the American occupation, opinion swung to the other extreme and Jimmu was 'massacred'⁷³⁰.

Yet in stamping out overly great claims of tradition, this also trampled true history⁷³¹. Gone were the 'myths and legends'⁷³² of the founding of Japan, gone too was Jimmu as the founder of the country. Today few historians or archaeologists take Jimmu as a historical figure, much less as the founder of Japan⁷³³, and to reject the legend is well-nigh a must among scholars⁷³⁴, though the imperial house of Japan, to its credit, has never disowned its foundation myth.

We have been warned that if we claim Jimmu as the founder of Japan, we would have to 'fight a pitched battle with 95 % of modern historians on the whole Jimmu question'. Battle may indeed be the word, as history, inevitably, also provides the raw material for self-identification⁷³⁵. Although the Mirror's historic charms may please many, more is at stake: scholars and the public will have to readdress the fact that all of the Kofun period held Jimmu to be the

⁷²³ Contra Earhart 2004, 33: 'Even the notion of possessing a history ... seems to have been borrowed from China'.

⁷²⁴ Chamberlain 1905 [2007] 240.

⁷²⁵ Cf. Naumann 1988, 104f.; for a survey of research on early Japanese 'linealism' and the evolution of historical consciousness in Japan see Brown 1993, 504ff.

⁷²⁶ Tyler 2009, 146; Bentley 2006, 398.

⁷²⁷ *Nihon shoki* II, 318.

⁷²⁸ A classic account is Kitabake Chikafusa's fourteenth-century *Jinnō Shōtōki* (Varley 1980).

⁷²⁹ Najita 1988, 712.

⁷³⁰ Tsuda 1948; Uemura 1957, 10ff. reviews some of the oddities; so does Hoshino 1976; see also Brown 1993, 506. Sakamoto 1991, 7 bewails 'the massacre of Emperor Jimmu', see also Izawa 1993, 125f. A full account of the relevant beliefs and actions is given by Hoshino 1980 and Brownlee 1997.

⁷³¹ The same happened in Germany: Tacitus' expert account of ancient Germanic society, held together by rulers and retainers (*Gefolgschaft*), was made out to be false, and historians came to believe it – until now, when new documents have come to light that prove the *Gefolgschaft* true after all: Speidel 2006.

⁷³² MacArthur 1964, 294 and 310f.

⁷³³ *Nihon shoki* NKBT 577 (supplemental commentary). Even the very best and latest accounts reject him as such: Brown 1993, 105: 'fabricated'; Barnes 2007, 93: 'Sujin ... possibly conflatable with the legendary Jimmu'. Kidder 2007, 83: 'the personification and symbol of a Yayoi chieftain'. Yet the pendulum may swing back, see e.g. Biten 1999 and 2005.

⁷³⁴ But see Izawa 2007, 213.

⁷³⁵ For the case of Japan see e.g. Mizoguchi 2006.

founding father of Japan, something highlighted not only by the *Kujiki*⁷³⁶, the *Kojiki*, and the *Nihon shoki*⁷³⁷ but also by Kofun art and, above

all, by Jimmu's Mirror, four hundred years older than the written sources and coming well-nigh from Jimmu's own time.

⁷³⁶ Bentley 2006, 76.

⁷³⁷ Kitagawa 1966, 8 corrects Aston's translation (1896, 133) 'who thus began to rule the Empire' to the more accurate 'the August Founder of the Nation'.