

# The Jinshin Rebellion and the Politics of Historical Narrative in Early Japan

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This article examines the historical representation of the Jinshin Rebellion as a foundational event in the *Nihon shoki* and other eighth-century Japanese texts. Focusing on the differences between two alternative stories of Tenmu's departure from the Ōmi capital to Yoshino, I argue that the *Nihon shoki* contains traces of several competing historical narratives that are the expression of a historical process: the political struggles over the historical record and the representation of Tenmu's legitimacy in the early eighth century when the *Nihon shoki* was being compiled.

When viewed from the far future, the Jinshin Disturbance of summer 672 stands out as a major event in Japanese political history, the moment when generations of foreshadowing gave way to decades of fulfillment. In significant part the moment looks that way because our primary source of information, *Nihon Shoki*, wishes it to do so. But even when we discount that source's grand hyperbole, shrewd selectivity, and handsome inventiveness, the summer of seventy-two still displays a watershed quality comparable to that of such years as 1185, 1600, 1868, or 1945.

Conrad Totman, *A History of Japan*<sup>1</sup>

As someone who specializes in late seventh century Japan, I am inclined to agree with Conrad Totman's proposal to upgrade the Jinshin Rebellion into that class of "major events" that determine the boundaries of historical periods. Such recognition is surely well deserved. After all, its victors and their descendants were responsible for adopting the titles, promulgating the laws, establishing the institutions, and building the capital cities that transformed the Yamato court into the imperial-style state of "Nihon." In a sense, therefore, we could say that the victors of the Jinshin Rebellion were the first to articulate the political contours of the "Japan" that is the subject of Totman's history. I suspect, however, that most people working in later periods of Japanese history would be unlikely to identify the date of 672 with the same readiness as they would the Genpei Wars, Tokugawa Ieyasu's victory at Sekigahara, the Meiji Restoration, or the end of the Pacific War. In large part, this is due to the fact that our "primary source of information," the *Nihon shoki*, does not present the Jinshin Rebellion in the unequivocal terms that Totman suggests, but rather as the culminating event of a highly convoluted narrative of imperial history that has multiple other watershed moments. In addition to the mythical and legendary foundations of the imperial realm—Ninigi's heavenly descent to earth, Jinmu's conquest of Yamato in 661 B.C., and Jingū's conquest of the Korean kingdoms—the Jinshin Rebellion is preceded by other watershed events such as the Isshi Incident of 645 that led to the Taika reforms and Prince Shōtoku's reforms during Suiko's reign in the early seventh century. In fact, it was only in the late twentieth century, when all of these previous foundational moments came to be treated as anachronistic fabrications—to different degrees—of the *Nihon*

1. Totman, *A History of Japan* (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2000), 60.

*shoki*,<sup>2</sup> that Totman's "far future" finally arrived and the Jinshin Rebellion came to be treated as the epoch-making event that he describes.

Most of the voluminous scholarship produced on the Jinshin Rebellion in the last fifty years<sup>3</sup> has been dedicated to reading between the lines of the *Nihon shoki* account in order to try to separate the facts of the historical process from the fictions of historical writing.<sup>4</sup> Some of these attempts, such as those that speculate about the intentions of the main actors, have not been very productive.<sup>5</sup> Others, however, have been quite successful, particularly those that deal with broader issues such as the involvement of *uji* lineages from outside the Yamato area and the overall significance of the conflict. My aim in this article is quite different. Rather than attempting to discount the "grand hyperbole, shrewd selectivity, and handsome inventiveness" of the *Nihon shoki* account, my main focus is precisely the fictional nature of the account and the ways in which imperial historiography is configured as a literary narrative.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, however, my point is not simply that the historical process is only accessible through the constructed narrative of historiography, but also that historiography itself is in turn subject to the historical process. Although the *Nihon shoki*'s account of the Jinshin Rebellion appears on the surface to make up a unified narrative that has been constructed by the winners, upon closer examination there is an underlying tension concerning the nature and basis of Tenmu's authority throughout the last four volumes of the

2. Reforms during Suiko's reign probably included the use of imperial titles (given the evidence in the *Suishu*), but the Rank System of 603 and the Seventeen Article Code of 604 as they appear in the *Nihon shoki* are clearly the creations of a later age. The question of the Taika Reforms is more subtle: archaeological evidence points to substantial reforms undertaken in the mid-seventh century, but they were clearly not the major imperializing reforms that are described in the *Nihon shoki*.

3. For a summary of Japanese historiography on the Jinshin Rebellion see Hoshino Ryōsaku, *Kenkyūshi Jinshin no ran, zōhoban* (Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1978) and *Jinshin no ran kenkyū no tenkai* (Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1997). The three classical studies from the early postwar are Kameda Takashi, *Jinshin no ran* (Shibundō, 1961), Naoki Kōjirō, *Jinshin no ran* (Hanawa shobō, 1961), and Kitayama Shigeo, *Jinshin no nairan* (Iwanami shoten, 1978). More recent works are Tooyama Mitsuo, *Jinshin no ran* (Chūō Kōronsha, 1996), Kuramoto Kazuhiro, *Jinshin no ran* (Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2007), and Hayakawa Mannen, *Jinshin no ran o yomitoku* (Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2009). For a description of the Jinshin conflict in English, see Joan Piggott, *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1997), 128–31; William Wayne Farris, *Heavenly Warriors: The Evolution of Japan's Military, 500–1300* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard Univ. Press, 1992), 41–47; Herman Ooms, *Imperial Politics and Symbolics in Ancient Japan* (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai'i Press), 30.

4. A recent attempt to do this is Kuramoto Kazuhiro's study *Jinshin no ran* (Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2007), in which he analyzes the Jinshin volume of the *Nihon shoki* and attempts to distinguish between actual historical material that was based on "original sources"—diaries written by some of the participants in the different battles of the Jinshin Rebellion—and fictional additions and embellishments. There are traces of these "original sources" in the *Shaku Nihongi*'s citations of the collected "Private Records" 私記 of the *Nihon shoki* lectures carried out during the Heian period, which in turn cite fragments of no longer extant texts that appear to have been accounts of the Jinshin conflict. These include three texts called "The Diary of Ato no Chitoko" (安斗智徳日記), the "Diary of Tsuki no Muraji Ōmi" (調連淡海日記), and the "Record of Wanibe no Omi Kimite" (和迺部臣君手記). However, as Hayakawa Mannen has pointed out, if the Jinshin account in the *Nihon shoki* was based on various "original sources," then why does it provide such sparse and unbalanced details of the actual conflict? Moreover, the few brief citations of these texts that survive do not make up sufficient material to provide any sense of what kind of accounts they were, and whatever their original form was, there is no reason to believe that they necessarily preceded the Jinshin Rebellion account in the *Nihon shoki* or were any less ideologically motivated.

5. Examples of such unresolvable debates are Tooyama Mitsuo's argument that Tenchi's offer of the throne to his brother Tenmu was part of a plot to try to eliminate him, versus Kuramoto Kazuhiro's view that Tenchi genuinely intended to have his brother succeed him.

6. For the most part I use the term "historiography" in this article in its older sense of "the writing of history." On a few occasions I also use it in its more modern senses of "historical writing on a given topic," and "historical methodology."

*Nihon shoki*. This is most evident in the differences between alternative stories of Tenmu's departure from the Ōmi capital to Yoshino in 672. As I will show, these different stories form a complex tangle of competing succession narratives that are the expression of a historical process—the political struggles over the nature of Tenmu's legitimacy and the historical record in the early eighth century when the *Nihon shoki* was being compiled.

#### THE PLOT OF THE JINSHIN REBELLION

The Rebellion of the Jinshin Year (壬申年之亂)<sup>7</sup> was a brief succession dispute that took place in 672, the year of the “yang water monkey” (*mizunoe saru* or *jinshin*)<sup>8</sup> from which it takes its name. According to accounts in the official imperial chronicle, the *Nihon shoki* 日本書記 (*Document Chronicles of Japan*, 720), shortly before his death the ruler we know by his posthumous name of Tenchi 天智 (r. 662–671) offered his younger brother Prince Ōama 大海人 (631?–686) the throne. Ōama declined, alleging ill-health, and suggested that Tenchi make his main consort (the childless Yamato-hime 倭姫王) his successor and appoint his son Prince Ōtomo 大友 (648–672) as crown prince. Ōama then left the Ōmi capital to go and practice Buddhism at Yoshino,<sup>9</sup> south of the old capital of Asuka, and Tenchi died less than two months later.<sup>10</sup> In the summer of the following year, Ōama received news from Mino province that Ōtomo was planning to attack him. He immediately set out eastward and with the help of his allies in Mino established a blockade in order to cut off the Ōmi capital from any potential allies in the east. The Ōmi armies were defeated in less than a month and Ōtomo committed suicide. Once the conflict was over, Ōama pardoned the entire Ōmi court except for the top ministers in Tenchi's government, all of whom had sworn loyalty to Ōtomo.<sup>11</sup> The Minister of the Right, Nakatomi no Muraji Kane 中臣連金<sup>12</sup> (d. 672), was executed along with eight other people (presumably troublesome mid-ranking officials), and Minister of the Left Soga no Omi Akae 蘇我臣赤兄, Great Councilor Kose no Omi Hito 巨勢臣比等, and the children of Nakatomi no Muraji Kane and Great Councilor Soga no Omi Hatayasu 蘇我臣果安 (who had committed suicide during the rebellion) were all banished. Having removed the entire upper level of the previous court's government, Ōama—more commonly known as the ruler with the posthumous name of Tenmu 天武 (r. 672–686)—now held a degree of power unlike any ruler before him.

By making participation on the winning side a main criterion for the awarding of titles, rank, and office, Tenmu radically transformed the traditional configuration of political influence in the Yamato state. Such participation was memorialized in the account of the Jinshin Rebellion in the *Nihon shoki*, which lists the “original followers” (元從者) who are with Tenmu from the very first day when he leaves Yoshino and sets out toward the east on the twenty-fourth of the sixth month of 672, as well as those who join him at their first stop at

7. This is the term by which it is referred to in both the *Kaifūsō* 懷風藻 (*Anthology of Remembrances of Old Styles*, c. 751) and the *Man'yōshū* 万葉集 (*Collection of Myriad Ages*, c. late eighth century?). See *Kaifūsō*, *Bunka shūreishū*, *Honchō monzū*, NKBT vol. 69 (Iwanami shoten, 1964), 71, and *Man'yōshū* Vol XIX: 4260–61. I refer to the conflict by using the literal translation “Jinshin Rebellion” here instead of a more neutral term like “Jinshin War” or “Jinshin Disturbance” because there is nothing neutral about the word 亂. The question is how different parties understood it. In the case of the *Kaifūsō*, there is no doubt that the term is used to suggest that Ōtomo was the victim of the rebellion. In the *Man'yōshū*, however, Tenmu is portrayed as the one who quelled it.

8. The ninth year in the sexagenary cycle.

9. On Tenchi 10 (671). 10. 19. See SNKZ *Nihon shoki* 3 (Shōgakukan, 1998), 292–93.

10. On Tenchi 10. 12. 3. *Ibid.*, 296–97.

11. SNKZ *Nihon shoki* 3 (Shōgakukan, 1998), 294–95.

12. Younger brother of Fujiwara no Kamatari 藤原鎌足 (614–669).

Aki in the district of Uda (菟田吾城). In addition to his main consort Jitō and their eleven-year-old son Prince Kusakabe 草壁皇子 (662–689), these include a small group of loyal retainers, of whom thirteen are listed by name. Later he is joined by more loyalists, who leave the Ōmi capital and join him at Tsumue 積殖 (in Iga) and at the Tō River 迹太川 (in Ise); his sons, the nineteen-year-old Prince Takechi 高市皇子 (654–696) and the ten-year old Prince Ōtsu 大津皇子 (663–686), as well some twenty-odd retainers, all of whose names are also listed.<sup>13</sup> As Tenmu's "followers," these men are the co-protagonists of the Jinshin campaign that is the foundation of Tenmu's imperial order, and thus are granted recognition and a central role in the imperial history. The names of many of these men reappear in the second Tenmu volume, which features numerous announcements of the deaths of those who "rendered service in the Jinshin year" (壬申年之勞). In most of these cases the text emphasizes that Tenmu was "greatly shocked" (大驚), "greatly saddened" (大悲), or "greatly grieved" (大哀) upon hearing news of their death, and it records their posthumous advancements in rank. A total of seventeen men are memorialized in this manner in the fifteen years of Tenmu's reign, with entries occurring almost every year. The ostensible purpose of these tributes and posthumous grants of rank was to recognize the men and reward their offspring, but they also seem to have functioned as continuous ritual commemorations of the Jinshin victory throughout Tenmu's reign. It is significant that while these tributes continue in decreased number throughout Jitō's reign (the *Nihon shoki* records three instances in eleven years), in Monmu's reign (697–707) they increase again and appear almost yearly; the *Shoku Nihongi* 續日本紀 (*Chronicles of Japan Continued*, 797) records eight instances in ten years, including a gift of fiefs to all those "subjects who served in the Jinshin year" (壬申年功臣) in the first year of Taihō 大宝 (701).<sup>14</sup> Service in the Jinshin Rebellion thus led to court office, higher rank, economic rewards, and historical recognition, which in turn served as unmistakable proof of office and rank for posterity.<sup>15</sup>

#### IMPERIAL HISTORIOGRAPHY

What makes historiography imperial? Like Sima Qian's (145 or 135–89 B.C.) *Shiji* 史記 (J. *Shiki*, *Records of the Historian*, c. 100 B.C.E.), the *Nihon shoki* is a universal history that begins in mythological times and ends in the recent past. In most other respects, however, it is a dynastic history on the model of the *Han shu* 漢書 (J. *Kanjo*, *Documents of the Han*, c. 92 C.E.) and *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 (J. *Gokanjo*, *Documents of the Later Han*, c. 432 C.E.). The *Nihon shoki*'s conception of imperial historiography, like that of its Sinic dynastic models, is founded upon the ideal of comprehensively chronicling the emperor's acts. "The Treatise on Arts and Letters" 藝文志 (C. *Yiwenzhi*, J. *Geimonshi*) in the *Han shu* describes this ideal as follows:

13. See SNKZ *Nihon shoki* 3 (Shōgakukan, 1998), 310–15.

14. See SNKBT *Shoku Nihongi* 1 (Iwanami shoten, 1989), 42–43. There are two more references in Genmei's reign (707–715) in 707 and 710, and one in Genshō's reign (715–723) in 716, after which they no longer appear.

15. On the topic of meritorious service in the Jinshin conflict, see Hayakawa, 125–31. Hayakawa's analysis shows that such instances of recognition of meritorious service not only functioned to reward past services, but also as strategies to establish present and future alliances. It is in this light that the references in the "Private Records" of the *Nihon shoki* collected in the *Shaku Nihongi* to the "Diaries" and "Records" of those who participated in the Jinshin Rebellion should perhaps be evaluated: not so much as the "original sources" that served as the basis for the embellished *Nihon shoki* account, but as texts that functioned to memorialize the part played by their protagonists in the Jinshin Rebellion and were thus as likely to have been embellished (although perhaps in different ways) as the Jinshin account in the *Nihon shoki*.

As for the kings in ancient times, each reign had its official scribes, and the acts of the ruler were certain to be recorded. This was to revere his words and deeds and make manifest his laws and rites. The scribe of the left recorded his words, and the scribe of the right recorded his deeds. The record of deeds became the *Annals*, and the record of words became the *Documents*.

古之王者世有史官、君舉必書、所以慎言行、昭法式也。左史記言、右史記事、事為春秋、言為尚書。<sup>16</sup>

A similar passage appears in the *Record of Rites* 禮記 (C. *Liji*, J. *Raiki*) in the “Jade Pendants” 玉藻 (C. *Yuzao*, J. *Gyokusō*) volume, which is dedicated to the ceremonial propriety and etiquette of the ruler’s daily attire, food, and drink: “When [the son of heaven] moves, the scribe of the left records it; when he speaks, the scribe of the right records it” (動則左史書之、言則右史書之).<sup>17</sup> While both of these texts claim to describe the situation at the Zhou court, in all likelihood they are a reflection of Han dynasty ideals of court recording in ancient times. This idealized version of imperial historiography as originating in the ritual recording of the ruler’s deeds and words remained highly influential throughout the various subsequent re-imaginings of imperial historiography that culminated in the Tang dynasty (618–907). The *Han shu* and *Liji* descriptions of such diligent recording of the emperor’s deeds and words were not so much models to be enacted at court—even though they could be<sup>18</sup>—as ideal principles that served to structure imperial historiography: just as the court scribes of ancient times recorded every deed and word of the king, so the imperial chronicle (帝紀) should be structured as a record of the deeds and words of the emperor.

The extant eighth-century Yamato administrative codes 令<sup>19</sup> make no reference to this idealized division, but both the *Han shu* passage, which is cited in the “Histories and Biographies” (史傳) section of volume 55 of the *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚 (*Collection of Classified Literature*, J. *Geimon ruijū*, c. 624), and the *Liji*, which according to the “State Learning Ordinances” 學令 (*gakuryō*) was one of the nine classics on the imperial university curriculum,<sup>20</sup> would have been familiar to the *Nihon shoki* historiographers. As is the case in the imperial chronicles of Sinic dynastic histories, in the *Nihon shoki* the figure of the emperor is the organizing subject that defines the historical field, that is to say, the geographical and temporal frames of the historical narrative and the types of information that it includes or excludes. As a general rule, the places and persons that appear in the *Nihon shoki* are mentioned only by virtue of their interaction with the sovereign, who is the main protagonist and subject “common to all the referents of the various sentences that register events as having occurred”<sup>21</sup> in the historical narrative. All dialogue is either spoken by or addressed to someone who is or

16. See Ban Gu, *Han shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 30.1715. The passage appears as a comment after the bibliographical list on the *Spring and Autumn Annals* 春秋 (C. *Chunqiu*, J. *Shunjiū*) bibliography, in the “six arts” 六藝 section at the beginning of the volume.

17. See *Liji zhengyi* in *Shisanjing zhushu*, vol. 14 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000), 1022.

18. In the late seventh century, two parallel groups of diarists at the Tang court that had been institutionalized at different times in the late sixth and early seventh century were given the names of “scribes of the right” and “scribes of the left,” and “theoretically divided their functions on the lines described in the *Liji* and other early texts.” See Denis Twitchett, *The Writing of Official History under the Tang* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992), 7.

19. The codes are only extant in the form of a mid-Heian period commentary to the Yōrō code 養老令 of 757 called *Ryō no shuge* 令集解 (c. 868) that includes citations from a commentary to the Taihō code of 701 known as the “Old Record” 古記.

20. See *Ryō no shuge* 2, *Shintei zōho Kokushi taikai*, ed. Kuroita Katsumi (Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1974), 447.

21. Hayden White, “The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality,” in *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1987), 16. Indeed, the sovereign is the explicit or implicit grammatical subject of almost all court actions and pronouncements recorded in the *Nihon shoki*.

will be emperor, with the interesting exception of characters involved in plotting treason. All movements take place between the capital and somewhere else. Either the sovereign leaves the capital to tour the realm, or he summons or dispatches his subjects. All movement in the realm depends on the sovereign's acts and deeds.

The representational field of the *Nihon shoki* can be described in geometrical terms as a series of concentric squares around the central figure of the emperor: those privileged enough to be in the inner square will appear in the historical record and those who are not will be forgotten. This geometry of historical representation is based on the ideal structure of the classical "all-under-heaven" realm as a series of concentric square areas with the imperial palace as the center, surrounded by the "home provinces," and by successive areas of decreasing civilization until the outer "barbarian" areas that remain untouched by the emperor's influence and thus outside the boundaries of history. Just as the figure of the emperor represents the center and origin of order in the spatial and temporal realms (in the forms of the imperial palace and the calendar), so too does it organize and bring unity to the historical text. Indeed, the analogy between spatial and textual organization is exemplified by the close correspondence between the exclusive physical space of the sovereign's court and the textual space of imperial historiography, both of which are restricted to aristocrats of lower fifth rank and above. The main "subject" that brings unity to the historical record of each reign in the *Nihon shoki* is thus not the one who records, but the one whose acts and words must be recorded.<sup>22</sup>

If the narrative of each reign is organized around the figure of the reigning sovereign, what unifies the entire text of the *Nihon shoki* is the plotline of imperial succession. While Tenmu may have been the first ruler to take the title of "Heavenly Sovereign" 天皇, the *Nihon shoki* retroactively articulates an imperial genealogy of Heavenly Sovereigns since legendary times. The text begins in a mythical age of heavenly gods who create the islands of Japan and then send a god down to rule the earth. This "heavenly descendant" (天孫) is the ancestor of the legendary first emperor "Divine Yamato Iwarebiko" (a.k.a. Jinmu 神武). From this point on, the text narrates the genealogical history of the succession of Heavenly Sovereigns of the state called Nihon/Yamato and its historical formation as a universal realm of "all under heaven" complete with tributary peoples on the Korean peninsula. Unlike its Chinese dynastic models of historiography, the *Documents of the Han* 漢書 (*Han shu*) and *Documents of the Later Han* 後漢書 (*Hou Han shu*), the *Nihon shoki* focuses exclusively on the chronicling of each sovereign reign and the plot of imperial succession. Indeed, the title *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 is believed to be an abbreviation of *Nihonsho no teiki* 日本書帝紀, literally, "The Imperial Chronicles of the Documents of Japan," thus explicitly modeling itself only on the "imperial chronicle" (帝紀) volumes of the *Han shu* and *Hou Han shu* without incorporating the volumes of tables 表 (J. *hyō*, C. *biao*), treatises 志 (J. *shi*, C. *zhi*), or biographies 列傳 (J. *retsuden*, C. *liezhuan*) that collect a wide variety of other significant information about the imperial realm.

Thus in its ideal version of itself, the *Nihon shoki* is a unified genealogical account in which first the heavenly gods create the islands of Nihon/Yamato and the natural world, and then their imperial descendants create the human realm of "all under heaven" through their conquests, marriages, and institutional reforms. In practice, however, the text is far messier and more complex. The structure of polygynic marriage, the importance of matrilineal rank,

22. The *Nihon shoki* has no authorial perspective in the modern sense, the kind that some twentieth-century theorists have conceived as a "triangle" of representation. Neither does it have the kind of "official court scribe" 史 perspective that can be seen in much Sinic historiography—perhaps most famously in the commentaries of the "Lord Grand Historian" (太史公) at the end of each volume of the *Shiji*. The *Nihon shoki* editors are anonymous, occasionally citing other texts (none of which are extant) when offering variant accounts of the same incident.

and the absence of clear rules of succession mean that in any given reign the central figure of the sovereign is surrounded by a constantly shifting web of marriage alliances and genealogical/political interests. Each time a ruler dies, succession to the throne involves a struggle among multiple candidates and a subsequent genealogical reconfiguration of the court around the new sovereign. At each change of reign, the political process of succession typically involves a combination of negotiation, tactical yielding, and often considerable violence. Among legendary emperors, famous cases of succession struggles are those of Nintoku 仁徳 (r. 313–399), who has his older brother Ōyamamori 大山守 killed, and Yūryaku 雄略 (r. 456–479), who kills all three of his brothers. In the last volumes of the *Nihon shoki*, succession is particularly violent, with disputes after the death of Suiko 推古 (r. 593–628), after Kōgyoku's abdication in 645, after Saimei's death in 661, after Tenchi's death in 671, and after Tenmu's death in 686, each of which ends in the assassination or execution of one of the claimants to the throne (Princes Yamashiro, Furuhito, Arima, Ōtomo, and Ōtsu, respectively). The messy reality of court politics shapes the historical narrative in that, while the main protagonist of each reign is the sovereign, the appointed crown prince also claims a degree of protagonism as the future ruler, and would-be usurpers also claim their share of protagonism as might-have-been rulers. Whereas the figure of the sovereign defines the field of representation within a particular reign, the figure of the crown prince serves to foreshadow the diachronic plot of the narrative, and the figure of the defeated usurper—the loser in the succession struggle—can serve to structure alternative visions of imperial history.

Unlike the *Kojiki*, which is a unified and internally coherent account expressed in a consistent linguistic and narrative style, the *Nihon shoki* is a text that incorporates multiple variant versions of events, as well as different linguistic and narrative styles. This suggests that the *Nihon shoki* is the product of a highly complex compilation process by different parties. Indeed, differences in the styling of variant texts, inserted notes, kana usage, particle usage, and citations from other texts have led scholars to distinguish between two groups or “lines” of volumes that appear to have been compiled by two different compilers or compiling committees. As summarized in Fig. 1, most scholars agree that Vols. 3 to 13 (Jinmu to Ingyō/Ankō), Vols. 22 and 23 (Suiko, Jomei), and Vols. 28 and 29 (Tenmu 1 and 2) were composed by a different compiler from Vols. 14 to 21 (Yūryaku to Yōmei/Sushun) and Vols. 24 to 27 (Kōgyoku to Tenchi). There are differences of opinion concerning the status of Vols. 1 and 2 (the two “Age of the gods” volumes), with some arguing that they share characteristics of both groups, and others putting them in the first group. Vol. 30 (the Jitō volume), on the other hand, may belong to a third compiler—one who was perhaps the final compiler of the entire chronicle.<sup>23</sup>

#### TENMU AND THE JINSHIN REBELLION IN THE *KOJIKI* PREFACE

Before examining the multiple perspectives of Tenmu's reign in the *Nihon shoki*, for the purpose of comparison it is useful to look at the more straightforward “pro-Tenmu” account in the *Kojiki* preface, which celebrates Tenmu's reign as follows:

Then came the reign of the Heavenly Sovereign who ruled over the Great Land of Eight Islands from the Asuka Kiyomihara Palace. A submerged dragon, he embodied the imperial virtue, and responded to the time of repeated thunder. Hearing the song in a dream, he divined he would succeed to the duty. Arriving at the river by night, he knew he would receive the throne. But

23. See Nishimiya Kazutami, *Nihon jōdai no bunshō to hyōki* (Kazama shobō, 1970). For a more recent overview, see Mori Hiromichi, *Nihon shoki no nazo wo toku: josakusha wa dare ka* (Chūkō shinsho, 1999), who argues that one of the compilers was a native speaker of Tang Chinese and the other a non-speaker of Chinese from Yamato.

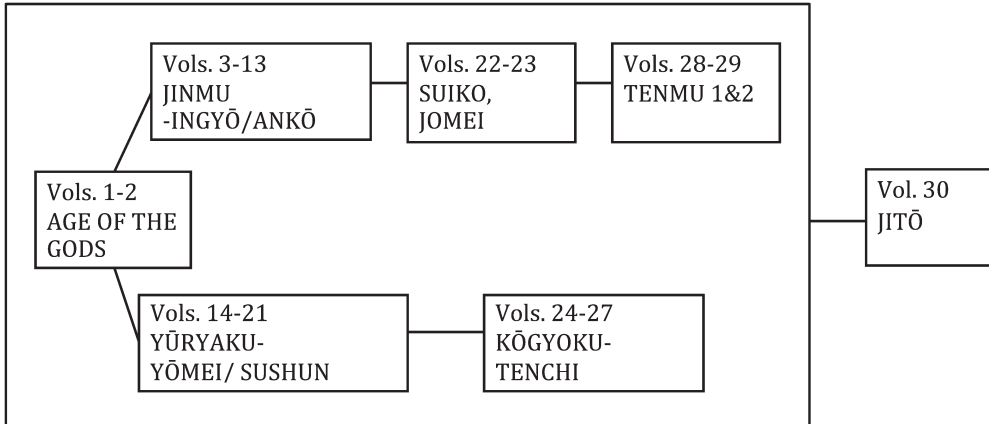


Fig. 1. The “two lines” of *Nihon shoki* compilation.

the time of heaven had not yet arrived, so like a cicada he molted in the southern mountain, and when the will of men eventually gathered, like a tiger he marched on the eastern lands. His imperial carriage swiftly set forth, traversing and crossing mountains and rivers, his six regiments rumbled like thunder and his three armies advanced like lightning. The long battle axes inspired fear and the fierce warriors rose up like smoke. The red banners shone upon the weapons and the evil rebels scattered like tiles. Before a fortnight had passed, the calamitous vapors were naturally purified. Then he released the oxen and rested the horses, with joy and reverence returned to the central land, furled the flags and stored the spears, and amid dances and songs settled in the capital.

暨飛鳥清原大宮、御大八州天皇御世。潛龍體元、滄雷應期。聞夢歌而相纂業、投夜水而知承基。然、天時未臻、蟬蛻於南山。人事共給、虎步於東國。皇輿忽駕、凌渡山川、六師雷震、三軍電逝。杖矛舉威、猛士烟起、絳旗耀兵、凶徒瓦解。未移浹辰、氣診自清。乃、放牛息馬、愷悌歸於華夏、卷旌戢戈、儼詠停於郡邑。<sup>24</sup>

The passage begins by describing Tenmu as a “submerged dragon” 潛龍—one reluctant but with the necessary virtue to become emperor—who was called upon by heaven (repeated thunder 滄雷) and encouraged by dreams and divination to take the throne. While waiting for the right “time of heaven” (天時), Tenmu “molted like a cicada” (蟬蛻) at Yoshino. The “molting cicada” is often taken to be a reference to becoming a monk (shedding the secular world), but it could also be interpreted as suggesting “corpse liberation” 尸解 (C. *shijie*, J. *shikai*), a magical transformation in which a recluse sheds his body and is reborn as a transcendent.<sup>25</sup> The fact that Yoshino is referred to as the “southern mountain” 南山 could lend support to either interpretation.<sup>26</sup> From Yoshino, Tenmu leads his men as a mighty general (tiger) and defeats the enemy forces—an accomplishment referred to as the purification of “calamitous vapors.” The purification metaphor is an important one here. For instance, earlier in the *Kojiki* preface, before the heavenly grandson Ninigi descends to earth, the heavenly

24. SNKZ *Kojiki* (Shōgakukan, 1997), 18–21.

25. A process described in *Yiwenleiju* 73.4. See Ouyang Xun, ed. and comp., *Yiwen leiju*, vol. 2 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), 1255.

26. Poem no. 73 in the *Kaifūsō*, by Ki no Obito, refers to Yoshino as “the southern peak” (南岳) and describes it as “the dwelling of immortals” (仙靈宅). See *Kaifūsō*, *Bunka shūreishū*, *Honchō monzui*, NKBT vol. 69 (Iwanami shoten, 1964), 136–37.

gods “pacify all under heaven” (平天下) and “purify the land” (清国土),<sup>27</sup> and in the *Nihon shoki*, after his conquest of Yamato, the first emperor Jinmu remarks:

In the six years that my subjugation of the east has lasted, due to my reliance on the majesty of sovereign heaven, the evil rebels have met their death. Although the frontier lands are still unpurified and the remaining rebels are still fierce, in the Central Land there is no more wind and dust. Truly we should make a vast and spacious imperial capital, and plan it great and strong.  
自我東征、於茲六年矣、賴以皇天之威、凶徒就戮。雖辺土未清、余妖尚梗。而中洲之地、無復風塵。誠宜恢廓皇都、規摹大壯。<sup>28</sup>

Just as the act of “purifying” is associated with the legitimate exercise of ritual and military imperial authority, “wind and dust” (風塵), along with similar expressions of the impure such as “calamitous vapors” (氣疹), are common metaphors in classical Sinic texts for rebellious armies.<sup>29</sup> The *Kojiki* preface account thus eulogizes Tenmu as one who was called upon by heaven to cleanse the Eastern Lands 東國 of “evil rebels” 凶徒 (a conventional term that is also used to describe Jinmu’s enemies in the *Nihon shoki* passage). His victorious return to the capital is described in the grandiose language of a great pacification of the realm and dynastic change—employing expressions such as “released the oxen and rested the horses” (放牛息馬) similar to those in the account of King Wu of Zhou’s 周武王 defeat of the Shang in the “completion of the war” (武成) section in the “old script text” of the *Shangshu* 尚書 (J. *Shōsho*).<sup>30</sup>

Following the description of Tenmu’s victory in the Jinshin Rebellion, the *Kojiki* Preface portrays Tenmu as an exemplary sage emperor whose wisdom enabled him to see clearly into the “mirror” of history:

In the Way he exceeded the Yellow Emperor, in virtue he surpassed the King of Zhou. Holding the heavenly regalia he ruled over the six directions, and gaining the heavenly succession he embraced the eight outer regions. He conformed to the truth of the Two Essences and regulated the order of the Five Phases. He established divine principles and encouraged them throughout the world, cultivated excellent customs and propagated them throughout the realm. And this was not all: amid the vast sea of his wisdom, he investigated the depths of high antiquity; through the brilliant mirror of his mind, he saw clearly into previous ages.

It was then that the Heavenly Sovereign issued an edict, saying, “I have heard that the Imperial Chronicles and Old Tales kept by the various lineages have come to differ from the truth, and that many falsehoods have been added to them. If now at this time we do not correct these errors, before many years have passed their significance will be lost. They are the warp and weft of the state and the great foundation of kingly rule. Thus I think to select and record the Imperial Chronicles and examine and research the Ancient Tales, erasing falsehoods and establishing the truth, in order to transmit them to later ages.

27. SNKZ *Kojiki* (Shōgakukan, 1997), 16–17.

28. See SNKZ *Nihon shoki* 1 (Shōgakukan, 1994), 230–31.

29. Like its classical Sinic models, the *Nihon shoki* is full of expressions that refer to military conquest as a “purifying.” This can be seen in such phrases such as “all within the seas has been purified and pacified” 海内清平 (Keitai 7.12.8, in SNKZ *Nihon shoki* 2, 304–5), “all under heaven has been purified and calmed” 天下清泰 (Keitai 24.2.1, in SNKZ *Nihon shoki* 2, 322–23), “within and without has been purified and cleared” 内外清通 (Ankan 2.1, in SNKZ *Nihon shoki* 2, 342–43).

30. See *Shangshu zhengyi*, in *Shisanjing zhushu*, vol. 3, 341–42. The source for the *Nihon shoki* episode is probably an unattributed citation in *Yiwen leiju*, which notes that “After King Wu overcame the Shang, he released his oxen and horses into the fields around Taolin” (武王剋商後。放牛馬於桃林之野). See *Yiwen leiju*, vol. 2, 1467. For a detailed commentary on the complete *Kojiki* preface see David Lurie, “Ideology and Writing: The *Kojiki* and Its Preface,” in “The Origins of Writing in Early Japan” (PhD. diss., Columbia Univ., 2001).

道軼軒后、德跨周王。握乾符而摠六合、得天統而包八荒。乘二氣之正、齊五行之序。設神理以獎俗、敷英風以弘國。重加、智海浩汗、潭探上古、心鏡焯煌、明視先代。

於是、天皇詔之、朕聞、諸家之所齋帝紀及本辭、既違正實、多加虛偽。當今之時不改其失、未經幾年其旨欲滅。斯乃、邦家經緯、王化之鴻基焉。故惟、撰錄帝紀、討覈舊辭、削偽定實、欲流後葉。<sup>31</sup>

Most scholars have characterized the historiography of the Yamato state in the absolutist terms suggested by the *Kojiki* Preface's record of Tenmu's command to compile "Imperial Chronicles" 帝紀 and "Ancient Tales" 舊辭. In the usual reading of this passage, Tenmu's instruction to correct previous historical accounts by "erasing falsehoods and establishing the truth" (削偽定實) represents a desire to establish a single version of history that favors those in power and eliminate all narratives that might suggest anything other than their legitimacy.<sup>32</sup> As David Lurie has suggested, however, the most immediate context within which Tenmu's statement should be interpreted is as part of the *Kojiki* Preface's attempt to legitimize the version of history that the *Kojiki* text represents.<sup>33</sup> In fact, as I argue in this article, the presence of different versions of the past within the *Nihon shoki* suggests that the establishment of historical narratives was a far more complex and contested process than the *Kojiki* preface suggests.

#### TWO NARRATIVES OF THE JINSHIN REBELLION

The *Nihon shoki* represents the Jinshin Rebellion as the final conflict that marks the conclusion of a long period of political unrest. Tenchi, known in life as Prince Naka no Ōe 中大兄皇子 (626–671), was himself a veteran of three succession struggles (the so-called Isshi Incident of 645, Prince Furuhi's rebellion later that same year, and Prince Arima's plot in 658), as well as three changes of capital (to Naniwa in 645, back to Asuka in 655, and to Ōmi in 667), and a disastrous conflict on the Korean peninsula from 660 to 663. In fact, Tenchi spent most of his life as crown prince—the twenty-seven years that spanned the reigns of Kōgyoku 皇極天皇 (r. 642–645), Kōtoku 孝德天皇 (645–654), Saimei 齊明天皇 (r. 655–661), and the first six years of his own reign (r. 662–671)<sup>34</sup>—and only officially acceded to the throne in 667, four years before his death. There is some ambiguity in the *Nihon shoki* over who Tenchi appointed as crown prince after his accession. In general, the text refers to Ōama in terms that indicate he was the crown prince: "Eastern Prince" 東宮, or with the unusual title "Mighty Sovereign's Younger Brother" 太皇弟, which most commentators read as *hitugi no miko* (prince successor). On the other hand, as we will see, a variant account within the *Nihon shoki* suggests that the appointed heir to the throne was in fact Tenchi's son Prince Ōtomo.

FIG. 2 shows the genealogical configuration of Tenchi and Ōama's alliance as well as Ōtomo's peripheral position within it. On paper, Ōama certainly looks like he would have been the more legitimate candidate of the two, since, like Tenchi, both of his parents were previous sovereigns,<sup>35</sup> whereas Ōtomo's mother Yakako was an *uneme* 采女 (a low-

31. SNKZ *Kojiki*, 20–21.

32. See, for instance, Gary Ebersole, *Ritual Poetry and the Politics of Death in Early Japan* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1989), 8.

33. It should be emphasized that the claim that the *Kojiki* was commissioned by Tenmu is not confirmed anywhere else. For a discussion of the *Kojiki* preface, see Lurie, "The Origins of Writing in Early Japan," 246–305.

34. This is according to the *Nihon shoki* account. It is likely, however, that the crown prince during Kōgyoku's reign was not Tenchi but his older brother Furuhi no Ōe.

35. Jomei 舒明 (r. 629–641) and Kōgyoku/Saimei.

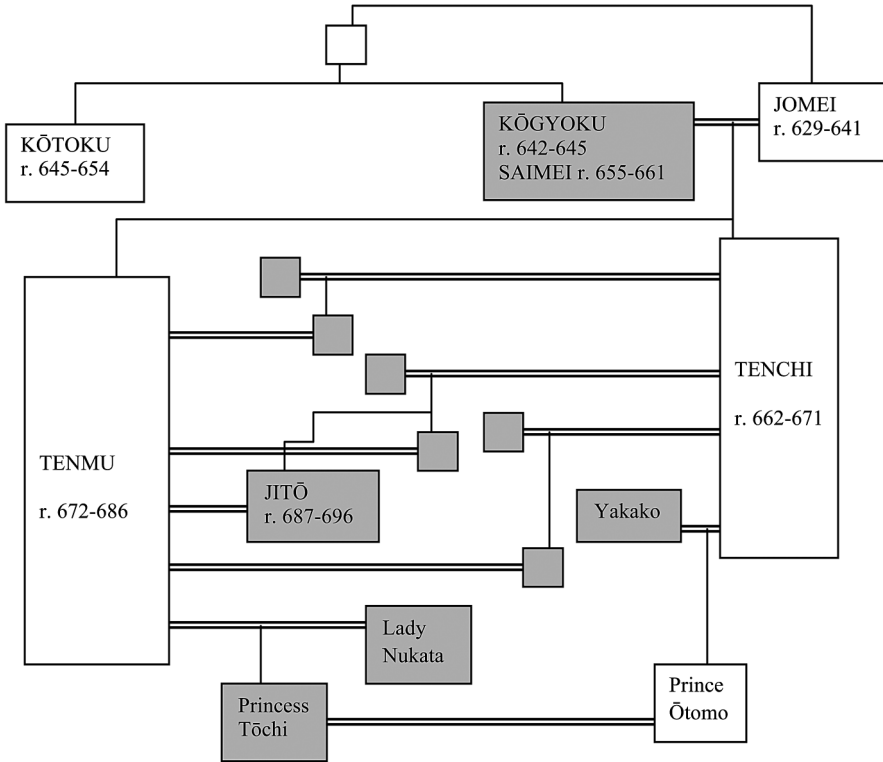


Fig. 2. The genealogical configuration of Tenchi and Tenmu's alliance (women are shaded in grey, sovereigns are in upper case).

ranking tribute concubine) from the province of Iga.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, Tenchi and Ōama had clearly been allies throughout most of their lives, given that Tenchi had married four of his daughters to Ōama—a move that seems to have been intended to keep the succession within the ruling family and curb the influence of the court lineages such as the Soga from the succession.

The *Nihon shoki* account of the Jinshin Rebellion is of course far more extended and detailed than the brief account in the *Kojiki* preface, and also much more complex. The four last volumes of the *Nihon shoki* (those dedicated to Tenchi, Tenmu, and Jitō) present several different views of the Jinshin conflict and Tenmu's legitimacy. A good point of entry into these different perspectives is the contrast between the two accounts of Tenmu's departure from the Ōmi capital to Yoshino. In the first version of the story, which occurs in the Tenchi volume, Tenmu is summoned to Tenchi's deathbed and offered the throne. Citing ill health, he declines, advises Tenchi to give the throne to his consort and hand over the administration

36. The *Nihon shoki* lists Yakako last of Tenchi's eleven wives, after his main consort (daughter of his elder half-brother), four "wives" 嬪 (daughters of high-ranking lineage leaders), four "palace women" (宮人), and two women who appear to be the daughters of provincial chieftains. Yakako's son's name was initially "Prince Iga" (not exactly a flattering name) and was later changed to "Prince Ōtomo." This name is often confused (at least in English-language scholarship) with that of the famous Ōtomo lineage (大伴) that fought on Tenmu's side in the Jinshin conflict, but in fact Prince Ōtomo's name derives from that of a lesser lineage which is written with different graphs (大友).

of the realm to his son Ōtomo, and asks leave to go to Yoshino so he can “practice the way of the Buddha.”

On the seventeenth day, the Heavenly Sovereign’s illness took a turn for the worse. He ordered to send for the Eastern Prince, called him into his sick-chamber, and spoke to him, saying: “My disease is grave. I entrust all thereafter to you,” and so on. But [the Eastern Prince], bowing repeatedly and citing [his own] ill-health, declined firmly and would not accept. He said, “I request you take the great duty and entrust it to the Great Consort, and let Lord Ōtomo undertake the administration of the various affairs of government. Your subject requests, for the Heavenly Sovereign’s sake, to renounce the world and practice the way.” The Heavenly Sovereign gave his consent, and the Eastern Prince arose, bowed repeatedly, straight away proceeded to the south of the Buddhist Hall in the inner palace, sat down upon a chair, shaved off his hair and became a priest. The Heavenly Sovereign then sent Sukita no Oiwa to him with a gift of a Buddhist robe.

On the nineteenth day, the Eastern Prince visited the Heavenly Sovereign and asked leave to go to Yoshino and practice the way of Buddha. The Heavenly Sovereign granted him permission. The Eastern Prince accordingly went to Yoshino. The Great Ministers escorted him as far as Uji and then returned to the capital.

庚辰、天皇疾病彌留。勅喚東宮、引入臥內、詔曰、朕疾甚。以後事屬汝、云云。於是再拜稱疾固辭、不受曰、請奉洪業、付屬太后、令大友王、奉宣諸政。臣請願、奉為天皇、出家修道。天皇許焉。東宮起而再拜、便向於內裏佛殿之南、踞坐胡床、剃除鬢髮、為沙門。於是天皇遣次田生磐、送袈裟。

壬午、東宮見天皇、請之吉野修行佛道。天皇許焉。東宮即入於吉野。大臣等待送、至菟道而還。<sup>37</sup>

This story portrays Tenchi and Tenmu as allies, and suggests that the conflict only arises later, after Tenchi’s death, between Tenmu and Tenchi’s son Ōtomo. However, in the first Tenmu volume, the same story is retold with some key differences.

In the fourth year [of Tenchi’s reign], winter, in the tenth month on the seventeenth day, the Heavenly Sovereign took to his sick-bed in extreme pain. He sent Soga no Omi Yasumaro to summon the Eastern Prince and bring him into the Great Hall. At this time, Yasumaro, who had always been favored by the Eastern Prince, discreetly turned to him and said, “Think carefully before you speak.” The Eastern Prince suspected a secret plot and was therefore cautious. When the Heavenly Sovereign spoke to him and entrusted him with the great duty, he declined, saying, “Your subject has unfortunately always been afflicted by many illnesses. How could he protect the state? I request Your Majesty bestow all under heaven to the Great Consort, and raise Prince Ōtomo as the crown prince. Your subject will today renounce the world, and wishes to perform acts of merit for Your Majesty’s sake.” The Heavenly Sovereign gave his consent. On the same day, he renounced the world and put on priestly robes. He accordingly collected his private weapons and deposited every one of them in the court offices.

On the nineteenth day, he went to the Yoshino Palace. At this time, Minister of the Left Soga no Akae no Omi, Minister of the Right Nakatomi no Kane no Muraji, the Great Counselor Soga no Hatayasu no Omi, and the rest escorted him until Uji and then returned. Someone said, “Give a tiger wings and let him go.” That night he lodged at the Shima Palace.

On the twentieth day he arrived at Yoshino and settled there.

四年冬十月庚辰、天皇臥病、以痛之甚矣。於是遣蘇賀臣安麻侶、召東宮引入大殿。時安摩侶素東宮所好。密顧東宮曰、有意而言矣。東宮於茲疑有隱謀而慎之。天皇勅東宮、授鴻業。乃辭讓之曰、臣之不幸、元多病。何能保社稷。願陛下舉天下附皇后。仍

37. SNKZ *Nihon shoki* 3 (Shōgakukan, 1998), 292–93.

立大友皇子宜爲儲君。臣今日出家、爲陛下欲修功德。天皇聽之。即日、出家法服。因以收私兵器、悉納於司。

壬午、入吉野宮。時左大臣蘇賀赤兄臣、右大臣中臣金連、及大納言蘇賀果安臣等送之、自菟道返焉。或曰、虎著翼放之。是夕、御嶋宮。

癸未、至吉野而居之。<sup>38</sup>

According to this version, before Tenmu enters Tenchi's chamber he is advised by Soga no Yasumaro to "consider carefully before you speak" (有意而言矣), and thus declines the throne because he suspects that Tenchi's offer is part of a "secret plot" (隱謀) against him. In other words, while the Tenchi volume version presents Tenmu as Tenchi's legitimate but reluctant successor, the Tenmu volume version suggests that Tenchi and Tenmu had become enemies, and that the offer of the throne was in fact a trap. In the context of this second story, Tenmu is a rebel, albeit one who will be legitimated by heaven.<sup>39</sup>

The Tenmu court's attitude toward the previous reign is suggested in a series of *Nihon shoki* entries in the second year of Tenmu's reign (673), in which embassies from various Korean kingdoms arrive in Tsukushi. Two of these are tribute envoys from Tamna 耽羅 and Koguryō 高句麗,<sup>40</sup> and another two are from Silla 新羅—one to offer condolences for Tenchi's death, the other to offer congratulations of Tenmu's accession.

On the twenty-fifth day, the envoys sent to congratulate the imperial accession, Kim Sūngwōn and the others, more than twenty-seven visitors of the middle ranks and higher, were summoned to the capital. The Sovereign instructed the Governor to speak to the Tamna envoys, saying: "The Heavenly Sovereign has newly pacified all under heaven, and is the first to assume the throne. For this reason he summons no envoys to court except those who bring congratulations." 戊申、喚賀騰極使金承元等中客以上二十七人於京。因命大宰、詔耽羅使人曰、天皇新平天下、初之即位。由是唯除賀使。以外不召。<sup>41</sup>

38. Ibid., 300–303. The first Tenmu volume dates this event to the "fourth year, tenth month, seventeenth day." It would seem that whereas the Tenchi volume counted Tenchi's reign from Saimei's death in 661, the Tenmu volume counted it from the year after his official accession in 668. The Tenchi volume's stance is somewhat contradictory, however, since it refers to Tenchi as "the Crown Prince" until his official accession in 668. Some have speculated that Tenchi's sister Hashihito, who was the previous sovereign Kōtoku's consort, may have reigned as an interim sovereign between Saimei and Tenchi. See, for instance, Kobayashi Toshio, "Nakatsu sumeramikoto ni tsuite," in *Kodai jotei no jidai* (Azekura shobō, 1987), 212–49. The *Nihon shoki* provides no indication of this, but the date of Hashihito's death in 665, her joint burial together with Saimei one month before the move of the capital to Ōmi in 667, and her identification with a person called "The Intermediate Sovereign" 中皇命 (*Nakatsu sumeramikoto*) in the *Man'yōshū* do indeed suggest this.

39. Kuramoto Kazuhiro argues that the account in the Tenchi volume was probably closer to historical reality. His evidence for this is that in the Tenchi volume, Tenchi's main wife and his son Ōtomo are referred to as "the Great Consort" (太后) and "Lord Prince" (王), whereas in the Tenmu volume they are described as "the Imperial Consort" (皇后) and "the Imperial Prince" (皇子). This suggests that the Tenmu account was written after the establishment of the title of "Heavenly Sovereign" (天皇) in Tenmu's reign and its institutionalization together with other imperial titles in Jitō's reign, whereas the Tenchi account preserves "pre-imperial" titles. As a reference in the Yūryaku volume of the *Nihon shoki* to the "King, Great Consort, and Lord Prince" of Paekche indicates, "Great Consort" (太后) and "Lord Prince" (王) are titles that would have corresponded to the main wife and son of a "King" (王) not an imperial "Heavenly Sovereign." I certainly agree with Kuramoto that this seems to be an instance where the *Nihon shoki* compilers of the Tenchi volume "slipped" and did not convert the titles into imperial ones, thus leaving traces of an older account. What I disagree with is his assumption that the "older" account is more likely to be based in historical fact. See Kuramoto, *Jinshin no ran* (Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2007), 32–33.

40. Koguryō had been destroyed by Silla and the Tang in 668. These envoys are from the puppet state of Koguryō that Silla had established in the old territory of Paekche.

41. The entries occur in the intercalary sixth month and in the eighth month of the second year. See SNKZ *Nihon shoki* 3 (Shōgakusan, 1998), 352–55.

While the *Nihon shoki* only records Tenmu's communication with the Tamna envoys, a subsequent entry in the *Nihon shoki* makes clear that the two tribute embassies and the condolence embassy are all entertained in Tsukushi and sent home without being allowed to proceed to the capital. As Kōnoshi Takamitsu and others have argued, the phrase "the Heavenly Sovereign has newly pacified all under heaven, and is the first to assume the throne" (天皇新平天下、初之即位), together with the refusal of condolences and tribute for the previous ruler, is an unequivocal declaration of dynastic change.<sup>42</sup> Tenmu is not defined as a legitimate successor of the previous sovereign, but as a military champion and dynastic founder with a new "Heavenly Mandate."

The theme of dynastic change is also present on the only occasion when Tenmu returned to Yoshino after the Jinshin Rebellion, in the eighth year of his reign (679), for a pledge in which he made his sons and nephews swear not to engage in a succession dispute after his death. It is worth quoting the *Nihon shoki* passage in full:

In the fifth month, fifth day, the Sovereign visited the Yoshino palace. On the sixth day, the Heavenly Sovereign spoke to the Sovereign Consort, Sovereign Prince Kusakabe, Prince Ōtsu, Prince Takechi, Prince Kawashima, Prince Osakabe, and Prince Shiki, saying: "Today I wish to pledge together with all of you in this palace, so that there be no incidents until one thousand years from now. What do you think of this?" The princes answered together: "The logic of this is clear." Then the Sovereign Prince Kusakabe stepped forward and pledged, saying, "Heavenly Gods, Earthly Gods, and Heavenly Sovereign, bear witness! We, elder and younger brothers, mature and children, more than ten lords in all, are born of different wombs. However, without distinction [of whether we are] of the same or different [womb], together in accordance with the Heavenly Sovereign's command, we will aid each other and will not come into conflict. If, from now onward, [one of us] were not to keep this pledge, may they lose their life and may their descendants die out: we will not forget, we will not fail." The five princes one after the other pledged in the same fashion. After this the Heavenly Sovereign said, "My sons, each of you was born from a different womb. And yet from now you shall be cherished as if you were all born from the same one mother." Then he opened his collar and embraced the six princes. Accordingly he pledged, saying, "If we contravene this pledge, may our bodies perish instantly!" The Sovereign Consort's pledge was the same as the Heavenly Sovereign's.

On the seventh day, the Imperial Carriage returned to the capital.

On the tenth day, all six princes paid their respects to the Heavenly Sovereign before the Great Hall.

五月庚辰朔甲申、幸于吉野宮。乙酉、天皇詔皇后及草壁皇子尊・大津皇子・高市皇子・河島皇子・忍壁皇子・芝基皇子曰、朕今日与汝等俱盟于庭、而千歳之後、欲無事。奈之何。皇子等共对曰、理实灼然。則草壁皇子尊先進盟曰、天神地祇及天皇証也。吾兄弟長幼并十餘王、各出于異腹。然不別同異、俱随天皇勅、而相扶無忤。若自今以後、不如此盟者、身命亡之、子孫絶之。非忘、非失矣。五皇子以次相盟、如先。然後天皇曰、朕男等各異腹而生。然今如一母同産慈之。則披襟抱其六皇子。因以盟曰、若違茲盟、忽亡朕身。皇后之盟、且如天皇。

丙戌、車駕還宮。

己丑、六皇子共拜天皇於大殿前。<sup>43</sup>

Except for the presence of the Sovereign Consort, the pledge is an all male affair: none of Tenmu or Tenchi's daughters is present. There are in fact two pledges: that of Kusakabe and the princes, and that of Tenmu and his consort. The main objective seems to be to establish Kusakabe as successor to the throne: he is listed first, with the other princes listed after him

42. See Kōnoshi, *Kakinomoto no Hitomaro kenkyū: kodai waka bungaku no seiritsu* (Hanawa shobō, 1992), 145–46.

43. SNKZ *Nihon shoki* 3 (Shōgakukan, 1998), 388–89.

in order of rank, is the first to make the pledge, which the other five princes repeat after him, and is distinguished by the title of “Sovereign” prince (皇子尊).<sup>44</sup> The pledge begins by acknowledging that the source of potential strife between the various princes is the fact that they “each are born of different wombs” (各出于異腹), and promises to remedy this by disregarding distinctions of maternal lineage (不別同異) and obeying the imperial command of the sovereign not to rebel. In other words, what the pledge promises is that Tenmu’s command will take precedence over the different political interests of their maternal lineages. What the pledge does not mention, however, is the fact that two of the princes (Kawashima and Shiki) also have a different father—the previous sovereign, Tenmu’s brother Tenchi. This is confirmed in Tenmu’s pledge in which he addresses all six princes as his own children (“my sons” 朕男等)—although in actual fact only four (Kusakabe, Ōtsu, Takechi, and Osakabe) were his biological offspring.<sup>45</sup> This “adoption” of Tenchi’s sons by Tenmu is significant, since it means that Tenchi’s lineage is not being recognized as a basis for legitimate claims to the throne, and Tenmu is representing himself as the single male imperial ancestor, as befits one who has “pacified all under heaven for the first time.”

Having implicitly adopted Tenchi’s sons, Tenmu then pledges that all six of the princes shall be cherished as if they were born from the same mother (一母同産), who is of course Tenmu’s sovereign consort (皇后) and Prince Kusakabe’s mother, Princess Uno 菟野皇女, later to become Sovereign Jitō (r. 687–696), and who herself co-recites this pledge of motherhood. Jitō’s symbolic adoption of the six princes elevates her to a position of great symbolic power as the single female imperial ancestor among Tenmu’s ten wives.<sup>46</sup> According to the pledge, no other paternal or maternal lines are to be recognized except those stemming from Tenmu and Jitō.<sup>47</sup> Thus the only possible successor—the only possible resolution to the imperial plotline—is Jitō’s son Kusakabe.

This tale of Tenmu’s new dynasty is one that has to be reconstructed from clues that remain in the Tenmu volumes: it is not the ultimate story of the *Nihon shoki*. In fact, the significance of the phrase “the Heavenly Sovereign has newly pacified all under heaven, and is the first to assume the throne” (天皇新平天下、初之即位) was only first pointed out by Akima Toshio in 1976.<sup>48</sup> Until then the phrase had been ignored or explained away<sup>49</sup> due to the assumption that the *Nihon shoki* was a unified account of succession. What ultimately

44. This was argued by Kitayama Shigeo, “Jitō tennō ron,” in *Nihon kodai seijishi no kenkyū* (Iwanami shoten, 1959), 121–233.

45. The pledge also makes reference to Tenmu’s other younger male children when Kusakabe says, “We, older and younger brothers, mature and young, more than ten lords in all.” The fact that Tenmu’s other sons Naga (d. 715), Yuge (d. 699), Hozumi, Shiki, Niitabe, and Toneri (the head compiler of the *Nihon shoki*) are not present to speak the pledge was probably due to their being too young at the time, but as Kusakabe’s words indicate, the content of the pledge was clearly meant to apply to them too.

46. Teranishi Sadahiro argues that this was in fact the main objective of the pledge. See “Uno no himemiko to Yoshino no meiyaku” in *Kodai tennōsei shiron: kōi keishō to Tenmu chō no kōshitsu* (Ōsaka: Sōgensha, 1988), 113–32.

47. Tenmu had nine other wives, of whom three were, like Jitō, Tenchi’s daughters. Tenmu may have been able to leave the other mothers out because they were either deceased (the mother of Prince Ōtsu 大津皇子, Jitō’s elder sister Princess Ōta 大田皇女, had died in 667 during Tenchi’s reign), or were of low rank (the mothers of Tenmu’s two sons Prince Takechi 高市皇子 and Prince Osakabe 忍壁皇子, and Tenchi’s sons Prince Kawashima 河島皇子 and Prince Shiki 芝基皇子). On the other hand, the mothers of the younger princes were of high rank: Naga and Yuge’s mother was a princess (Tenchi’s daughter Ōe) and Niitabe’s mother was Kamatari’s daughter Ioe), but this may not have been a factor since the princes themselves were too young to participate in the pledge.

48. Akima, “Hitomaro to Ōmi,” *Bungaku* 44 (Oct. 1976), 1307–23.

49. The phrase I translate as “is the first to assume the throne” (初之即位) can also be interpreted as “has recently assumed the throne” in order to avoid the connotations of dynastic change. However, there is no mistaking

shapes the *Nihon shoki* main version of events and plot of imperial succession is the perspective of the Jitō and post-Jitō courts, which is reflected in the first story of Tenmu's departure to Yoshino in the Tenchi volume. This reflects the Jitō court's interest in re-establishing a narrative of continuity between the reigns of her father (Tenchi) and husband (Tenmu), and more broadly a continuity of the imperial line since Jinmu.<sup>50</sup> The Jitō court transforms the Tenmu court narrative of a new dynastic order so as to reflect its own interests. This is evident in the very opening of the Jitō volume:

The Heavenly Sovereign Takama no Hara Hirono Hime's [Jitō] name as a child was Princess Uno no Sarara, and she was the second daughter of the Heavenly Sovereign Ame Mikoto Hirakasu Wake [Tenchi]. Her mother's name was Lady Wochi (also called Lady Minotsuko). The Heavenly Sovereign was of a calm and magnanimous disposition. In the third year of the Heavenly Sovereign Ame Toyo Takara Ikashihi Tarashi Hime [Saimei], she was married to the Heavenly Sovereign Ama no Nunahara Oki no Mahito [Tenmu] as his consort. Though she was the daughter of an emperor, she valued propriety and modesty, and was possessed of motherly virtue. In the first year of the Heavenly Sovereign Ame Mikoto Hirakasu Wake [Tenchi], she gave birth to the Sovereign Prince Kusakabe in the palace of Ōtsu. In the tenth year, tenth month, she accompanied the Priest Heavenly Sovereign Ama no Nunahara Oki no Mahito and went to Yoshino in order to avoid the suspicions of the court. This account is in the chronicle of the Heavenly Sovereign Ame Mikoto no Hirakasu Wake [Tenchi]. In the first year of the reign of the Heavenly Sovereign Ama no Nunahara Oki no Mahito [Tenmu], in summer, the sixth month, she followed the Heavenly Sovereign when he escaped the danger in the eastern provinces, addressed the troops and gathered them, and then together formed a plan, in which they divided and commanded the many myriads of fearless men to take up their various defensive posts. In autumn, the seventh month, the Mino generals together with the Yamato heroes executed the Prince Ōtomo and sent his head to the Fuha Palace. In the second year she was raised to the rank of Sovereign Consort.

The Sovereign Consort from the beginning until now had assisted the Heavenly Sovereign in pacifying all under heaven. She constantly served the Sovereign in the performance of his duties by giving advice on government affairs and being of the greatest assistance.

高天原廣野姬天皇、少名鸕野讚良皇女、天命開別天皇第二女也。母曰遠智娘。更名。美濃津子娘。天皇深沈有大度。天豐財重日足姬天皇三年、適天淳中原瀛真人天皇爲妃。雖帝王女、而好禮節檢、有母儀德。天命開別天皇元年、生草壁皇子尊於大津宮。十年十月、從沙門天淳中原瀛真人天皇、入於吉野、避朝猜忌。語在天命開別天皇紀。天淳中原瀛真人天皇元年夏六月、從天淳中原瀛真人天皇、避難東國、鞠旅會衆、遂與定謀。廼分命敢死者數萬、置諸要害之地。秋七月、美濃軍將等與大倭桀豪、共誅大友皇子、傳首詣不破宮。二年、立爲皇后。皇后從始迄今、佐天皇定天下。每於侍執之際、輒言及政事、多所毘補。<sup>51</sup>

Jitō “values modesty and propriety” (好禮節檢) as the daughter of an emperor (Tenchi) and she is “possessed of motherly virtue” (有母儀德) as the mother of a crown prince (Kusakabe). But it is her status as Tenmu's wife and sovereign consort (皇后) that is pre-

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the sense of “has newly pacified all under heaven,” and from a stylistic perspective, “first” parallels “new” much better than “recently.”

50. This is not to say that the motif of Tenmu as a dynastic founder is completely absent from the overall plot of the *Nihon shoki*. One striking reminder of Tenmu's special status is the division of his reign into two volumes, the first an account of how he came to power and the second a chronicle of his actual reign. This follows the model of the *Han shu* 漢書 (J. Kanjo, *Documents of the Han*, c. 92 C.E.), which assigns two volumes to the founder of the Han dynasty Gaozu 高祖 (r. 202–195 B.C.E.), and the *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 (J. Gokanjo, *Documents of the Later Han*, c. 432 C.E.), which gives two volumes to the founder of the Later Han dynasty, the Guangwu 光武 emperor (r. 5–57 C.E.).

51. SNKZ *Nihon shoki* 3 (Shōgakukan, 1998), 472–75.

sented as the main source of her legitimacy as successor to the throne. She is portrayed as having been co-ruler with her husband both in his military (武) victory and in his subsequent civil (文) administration, since the very first days of the escape from Ōmi to Yoshino “from the beginning until now assisting the Heavenly Sovereign in pacifying all under heaven” (皇后從始迄今、佐天皇定天下). The argument is that her own reign is simply a continuation of Tenmu’s, since she has in fact already been ruling with him throughout his reign from the “beginning” (始) at Yoshino.

The Jitō volume thus adopts the main features of the Tenmu volume narrative, but it changes some key details. Note that when referring to the account of Tenmu and Jitō’s departure to Yoshino, the passage refers the reader specifically to the account in the “chronicle of the Heavenly Sovereign Ame Mikoto no Hirakasu Wake” (語在天命開別天皇紀), i.e., the Tenchi volume of the *Nihon shoki*.<sup>52</sup> This is the version of the story in which her father and her husband were allies, and Ōtomo and the Ōmi ministers were the enemies. The “suspicions” that are given as their reason for escaping to Yoshino are not those of her father Tenchi, but of Prince Ōtomo and his ministers. This is not the Tenmu volume version in which Tenmu “considers before speaking” to Tenchi, or the Ōmi perspective in which he is called a “tiger with wings.” The Jitō volume’s version of the past maintains the Tenmu volume’s articulation of a new political order after the Jinshin Rebellion, but is careful to de-emphasize any suggestion of conflict between Tenmu and his predecessor. In this way, the basis of Jitō’s legitimacy is constructed around two conflicting arguments: first, around Tenmu’s foundation of a new order (which Jitō had inherited), and second, around the genealogical connection to her father Tenchi and the genealogy of rulers since Jinmu which is outlined in the *Nihon shoki*. By maintaining both stories, the Jitō volume manages to have it both ways: Jitō is the successor both to the “new realm” founded by her husband’s “pacifying of all under heaven” and to the long lineage of emperors (including her father) that began with Jinmu.

This position is also reflected in Jitō’s declaration to the Silla embassy that comes to offer condolences for Tenmu’s death, in which there is no reference to Tenmu having “newly pacified all under heaven.”<sup>53</sup> In fact, in the midst of admonishing Silla for having sent an envoy of lower rank than was customary, Jitō specifically mentions the precedents of the death of Kōtoku (r. 645–654) and her father Tenchi (r. 662–671).

Now if former matters are gone into, long ago there was the case of the time when the Heavenly Sovereign who ruled all under heaven from the Palace of Naniwa [Kōtoku] passed away, when Kose no Inamochi and others were sent to announce the imperial decease, and Kim Ch’unch’u, of Yech’on [second] rank, received the imperial message. Thus if it is said that it is those of Sop’an [third] rank who should receive imperial commands, this would be contrary to former precedent. Again, when the Heavenly Sovereign who ruled all under heaven from the Ōmi Palace [Tenchi] passed away, Kim Salyu, of Il Gilch’on [seventh] rank, was sent to offer condolences. And now it is an official of Kūpch’on [ninth] rank that offers condolences, which once more is contrary to precedent.

若言前事者、在昔難波宮治天下天皇崩時、遣巨勢稻持等、告喪之日、鬻滄金春秋奉勅。而言用蘇判奉勅、即違前事也。又於近江宮治天下天皇崩時、遣一吉滄金薩儒等奉弔。而今以級滄奉弔、亦違前事。<sup>54</sup>

52. Aston’s translation mistakenly has it referring to the Tenmu volume. See W. G. Aston, *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697* (Boston: Tuttle, 1972), vol. 2, 382.

53. See Torquil Duthie, “Ōmikōtoku no sakuchū shutai no nimensei,” *Jōdai bungaku* (Nov. 2003), 27–41.

54. SNKZ *Nihon shoki* 3 (Shōgakukan, 1998), 492–95.

In Jitō's mention of Kim Salyu's condolences for Tenchi there is no reference to the fact that these condolences were, according to the Tenmu volume, turned away and refused—in other words, not recognized—by the Tenmu court. Jitō's rule over the realm of “all under heaven” that includes Silla as a tributary kingdom depends here on rules of precedent established throughout the succession of past reigns—those of Kōtoku, her father Tenchi, and her husband Tenmu—and on Jitō's position as inheritor of that succession.

#### THE THIRD NARRATIVE

There is a third story about Tenmu in the *Nihon shoki*, which appears only in muted form, according to which Tenmu was not a heavenly legitimized rebel who pacified the realm but a usurper and bringer of chaos. The clearest evidence of this version of events is a well-known variant text cited in the Tenchi volume of the *Nihon shoki*:

On the sixth day, the Eastern Prince, the Mighty Sovereign's Younger Brother, made a proclamation (one book says, “Prince Ōtomo proclaimed”) announcing the implementation of cap-ranks and laws. There was a great amnesty throughout all under heaven. (The names of the laws and cap-ranks are described in detail in the New Ritsuryō codes.)

甲辰、東宮太皇弟奉宣、(或本云、大友皇子宣命。)施行冠位・法度之事。大赦天下。(法度・冠位之名、具載於新律令也。)<sup>55</sup>

While the main text portrays Tenchi's brother Tenmu as the legitimate successor (the Eastern Prince) who implements the cap-ranks and laws, a variant book (或本) attributes this act to Tenchi's son Prince Ōtomo, thereby suggesting that it was Ōtomo, not Tenmu, who was the appointed crown prince. This is an entirely plausible suggestion given that immediately before this there is another entry describing Prince Ōtomo's appointment as “Great Minister of Government” (太政大臣). This points to the possibility of a different story of political succession that would contradict the other two stories of Tenmu as the legitimate successor who declines Tenchi's throne.<sup>56</sup> Another portrayal of Tenmu as a rebel is one that has been largely overlooked: the famous phrase that one of Ōtomo's ministers utters when Tenmu leaves for Yoshino: “someone said: give a tiger wings and let him go” (或曰、虎着翼放之).<sup>57</sup> The figure of the tiger can have a positive sense of awesome military prowess, as it does in the *Kojiki* preface, where the comparison of Tenmu to a tiger occurs in the context of portraying him as a “submerged” dragon—one who has the potential or right to become emperor.<sup>58</sup> But the usual connotations of the specific phrase “give a tiger wings” are clearly negative, as the following examples from the *Han Feizi* and the *Huainanzi* illustrate:

... Thus those who use their power to bring chaos to all under heaven are many and those who use their power to bring rule to all under heaven are few. Indeed, power can serve to facilitate rule or to precipitate chaos. Hence the *Documents of Zhou* says, “Do not give wings to tigers. Otherwise, they will fly into the cities, take the people, and devour them.” To give power to an unworthy man is the same as giving wings to a tiger.

55. SNKZ *Nihon shoki* 3 (Shōgakukan, 1998), 286–88.

56. I should make clear that the above variant is somewhat suspect, particularly since it appears in close proximity to the note immediately following the passage concerning the detailed description of the cap-rank regulations in “the New Ritsuryō codes” (新律令也), which is believed by many to be a later interpolation. But whether the variant attributing the act of promulgating the codes to Prince Ōtomo was in the original *Nihon shoki* text or was a later addition, it still represents an alternative narrative.

57. SNKZ *Nihon shoki* 3 (Shōgakukan, 1998), 302–3.

58. Saigō Nobutsuna notes that the tiger is a figure of awesome might, but does not comment on its negative connotations. See *Jinshinki o yomu: Rekishi to bunka to gengo* (Heibonsha sensho, 1993), 32–33.

...則是以勢亂天下者多矣、以勢治天下者寡矣。夫勢者便治而利亂者也。故周書曰、毋為虎傅翼、將飛入邑、擇人而食之。夫乘不肖人於勢、是為虎傅翼也。<sup>59</sup>

The reason for the establishment of rulers is to forbid violence and control chaos. But when they ride on the power of their myriad subjects and commit atrocities, they are like tigers that have been given wings—why should they be spared?

所為立君者、以禁暴討亂也。今乘萬民之力、而反為殘賊、是為虎傅翼。曷為弗除。<sup>60</sup>

In these contexts, a “tiger with wings” refers to someone wicked who has been placed in a position of power. A more specific source for the *Nihon shoki* phrase is the opening of Zhang Heng’s 張衡 (78–139 C.E.) “Eastern Metropolis Rhapsody” (東京賦) in the *Wen xuan*:

The last of the Zhou Ji were unable to govern. Their government was filled with iniquity, beginning with those close to the palace, and ending with the metal tiger. The Ying clan gave itself wings<sup>61</sup> and took the western cities as its meat.

周姬之末、不能厥政。政用多僻、始於宮鄰、卒於金虎。嬴氏搏翼、擇肉西邑。<sup>62</sup>

The “metal tiger” refers to the state of Qin, whose king Ying Zheng 嬴政 conquered the six warring states and proclaimed himself “First Emperor” 始皇帝. Here Qin is portrayed as the “tiger with wings” that devours the people. The anonymous “someone” who says the words “give a tiger wings and let him go” in the *Nihon shoki*—someone who as one of Ōtomo’s ministers was either executed or banished after Tenmu’s victory—is thus criticizing the wisdom of Tenchi’s decision in letting a potential rebel such as Tenmu leave the capital. From the perspective of those who lament the destruction of the Ōmi Court, Tenmu is the savage tiger with wings that will bring calamity and disorder to the realm. Although this story of Tenmu as rebel and bringer of chaos appears only in muted form and is barely perceptible in the *Nihon shoki*, it resurfaces thirty years later in the *Kaifūsō* preface’s description of the cultural glory of the Ōmi capital and its subsequent destruction:

When the Ōmi Emperor received the command [of heaven], he broadened the imperial task and widened the sovereign policies. His Way reached all of heaven and earth and his merits illuminated the universe. He then thought that to regulate customs and transform the people there was nothing that surpassed writing, and to provide luster to virtue and polish oneself, what could be better than learning? He thus founded a school, summoned abundant talent, established the five rites, and settled the hundred regulations. From ancient times to the present never before had the codes, laws, and norms spread so far and wide. Peace shone throughout the [palace’s] three stories and prosperity flourished in the four seas. The sovereign thus ruled through inaction, and in his lofty halls there was much time for leisure. Sometimes he would summon men of learning; other times he would hold banquets for his pleasure. On these occasions, his majesty himself would write compositions and his sage ministers would offer their praise. Such well-wrought compositions and beautiful brushwork numbered well over one hundred. But time passed and there was disorder and chaos, and everything was burnt to ashes. Thinking of all that destruction grieves and pains the heart.

及至淡海先帝之受命也、恢開帝業、弘闡皇猷。道格乾坤、功光宇宙。既而以為、調風化俗、莫尚於文、潤德光身、孰先於學。爰則建庠序、徵茂才、定五禮、興百度。憲章

59. *Hanfeizi jijie* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006), 389–40; *Kanpishi* 40 in *Shinshaku kanbun taikei*, vol. 12 (Meiji shoin, 1964), 709.

60. *Huainan honglie jijie* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989), 490; *Enanji* 15 in *Shinshaku kanbun taikei*, vol. 62 (Meiji shoin, 1982), 820.

61. Or “beat its wings.” I am interpreting 搏 as 傅, in light of the *Han Feizi* and the *Huainanzi* examples. The point, in any case, is that it is a tiger with wings.

62. See *Monzen: juhen* 1, *Shinshaku kanbun taikei* 79 (Izumi shoin), 136.

法則、規模弘遠、復古以來、未之有也。於是、三階平煥、四海殷昌。旒纒無為、巖廊多暇。旋招文學之士、時開置體之遊。當此之際、宸瀚垂文、賢巨獻頌。雕章麗筆、非唯百篇。但時經亂離、悉從煨燼。言念湮滅、軫悼傷懷。<sup>63</sup>

The events of the Jinshin Rebellion that the pro-Tenmu *Kojiki* preface described as Tenmu's "purifying of foul vapors" are described here in the pro-Ōtomo (大友) *Kaifūsō* preface as a tragic event of "disorder and chaos" (亂離). Whereas the *Kojiki* preface compared Tenmu's victory to that of the first Zhou ruler over the Shang, in the *Kaifūsō* preface it is the Ōmi court's cultural achievements that are likened to the Zhou. Tenmu's destruction of the Ōmi capital is then implicitly compared to the Qin First Emperor's infamous "burning of the books" when the *Kaifūsō* preface writer later notes that he has "collected these worm-eaten remainders from the walls of Lu, gathered leftover writings from the ashes of Qin" (收魯壁之餘磊、綜秦灰之逸文).<sup>64</sup> The negative depiction of Tenmu is further elaborated in the *Kaifūsō* preface to Prince Ōtomo's poems, where Prince Ōtomo tells Fujiwara no Kamatari about a dream in which an old man wearing crimson robes appears out of a cave in the sky holding the sun and is offering it to him, when suddenly another man emerges from the lower corner of the sky, snatches the sun and disappears. Kamatari interprets this as:

Perhaps [it means that] after the myriad years of the Sage Court [Tenchi's reign], a cunning giant will seize an opening.

恐聖朝萬歲之後、有巨猾間鬻。<sup>65</sup>

The phrase "a cunning giant will seize the opening" (有巨猾間鬻) appears in almost identical form in, once again, Zhang Heng's "Eastern Metropolis Rhapsody" (東京賦) in the *Wen xuan*, referring to the usurper of the Han throne, Wang Mang 王莽 (45 B.C.E.–23 C.E.), whose courtesy name (字) was Jujun 巨君 or "Giant Lord."<sup>66</sup> The graph *katsu* 猾 has the sense of "cunning like a beast," but it is also synonymous with the graph 亂 and can be read as *midasu*, "to rebel."<sup>67</sup> "Cunning giant" in fact suggests something like "that rebel [known as] the *Giant*." This is, in other words, an overt comparison of Tenmu with a famous usurper. The Ōtomo preface concludes by lamenting that Prince Ōtomo died in the "Rebellion in the Jinshin Year" (壬申年亂), "before he could fulfill the command of heaven" (天命不遂), thus clearly portraying Ōtomo as the legitimate successor and Tenmu as the rapacious rebel representing disorder and chaos.

#### HISTORIOGRAPHICAL POLITICS

The mainstream narrative of the Jinshin Rebellion within the *Nihon shoki* is the one that accords with the overall plot of the *Nihon shoki* itself. It is the story in which Tenmu is a remarkable sovereign who inherits the throne as Tenchi's rightful successor after defeating Ōtomo and founds a new imperial era that is continued by his wife and successor Jitō. This

63. *Kaifūsō*, *Bunka shūreishū*, *Honchō monzui*, NKBT vol. 69 (Iwanami shoten, 1964), 59-60.

64. *Ibid.*, 62. The English translation of this phrase is from Wiebke Denecke, "Chinese Antiquity and Court Spectacle in Early *Kanshi*," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 30:1 (2004), 105.

65. *Ibid.*, 68-71.

66. 巨猾間鬻. See *Monzen: fuhen* 1, 145. This rhapsody is also in *Yiwen leiju*, 61.1. See *Yiwen leiju*, vol. 2, 1100-1102. Of twelve instances of the character 猾 in the *Yiwen leiju*, five occur in the expression "cunning giant" 巨猾, referring to Wang Mang, thus suggesting that the reference was a well-known one.

67. This is its sense in the classical phrase 蠻夷猾夏, "the barbarian tribes rebel against our court," which appears in the *Shang shu* and is quoted in countless other texts, including the *Shiji*, *Han shu*, *Hou Han shu*, etc., as well as in *Yiwen leiju* 49-4 (廷尉). See *Shangshu zhengyi*, in *Shisanjing zhushu*, vol. 2, 89, and *Yiwen leiju*, vol. 2, 882. The third-century C.E. dictionary *Guangya* 廣雅 also gives *katsu* 猾 as a synonym for 亂. See *Guang ya shu zheng* (Nanjing: Jiangsu gu ji chu ban she, 2000), 79.

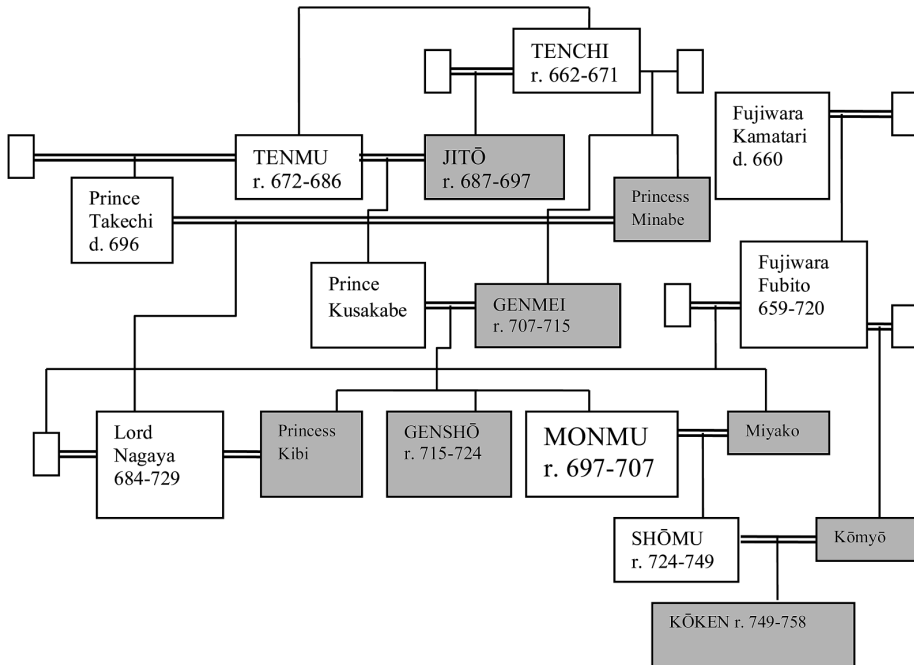


Fig. 3. The genealogical configuration behind the organization of imperial historiography in the early eighth century (women are shaded in grey, sovereigns are in upper case).

account deemphasizes any suggestion of conflict between Tenmu and his predecessor, and recasts Ōtomo as the sole villain. In addition to this main story, the *Nihon shoki* preserves another narrative of Tenmu as dynastic founder. In this account, which appears primarily in the two Tenmu volumes, there is the clear suggestion that Tenmu's enemies were both Tenchi and Ōtomo. Tenmu is portrayed as a righteous rebel who is legitimized by heaven and “newly pacifies all under heaven” to “be the first to ascend the throne” and found a new dynastic line. In addition to these two versions, the *Nihon shoki* also contains faint traces of a third story, that of Tenmu as an illegitimate usurper, in which Ōtomo is the rightful successor. Evidence that such a pro-Ōmi/Ōtomo account was developed outside the *Nihon shoki* is provided by the *Kaifūsō* prefaces.

The reason that the second and third accounts remain in the *Nihon shoki* is probably the result of the different political interests of competing factions at court at the time that the *Nihon shoki* was compiled. While the Tenmu court story of a new dynasty probably originated as the Tenmu court's account of itself, its presence in the final *Nihon shoki* text and the powerful supporting role Tenmu's son Prince Takechi has in the narrative of the Jinshin war are unlikely to be unrelated to the fact that Takechi's son Nagaya was a high-ranking minister at the time of the *Nihon shoki*'s compilation. Similarly, while the hint of a pro-Ōtomo anti-Tenmu account that is later developed in the *Kaifūsō* may in part be attributed to the interests of its probable compiler, Ōtomo's great grandson Ōmi no Mifune 淡海三船 (or 御船) (722–785), it is also likely to have some relation to the Fujiwara narrative of the origins of their own authority and legitimacy at the Ōmi Court, and to political tensions in the first half of the eighth century between Tenmu's grandson Lord Nagaya 長屋王

(684–729) and Fujiwara no Fubito 藤原不比等 (659–720) and his sons. This is not to say that the Fujiwara perspective is necessarily “anti-Tenmu.” For instance, in the *Tōshikaden* 藤氏家伝 (*Traditions of the Fujiwara Lineage*, 762) there is an episode in which Tenmu is said to have plunged a spear into the floor in front of Tenchi at his succession ceremony in 668. Tenchi is enraged but Kamatari succeeds in persuading him not to retaliate. The text notes that up to this time Tenmu had never liked Kamatari but that after this they became close; later, when Tenmu was about to leave Yoshino on his Eastern campaign in the Jinshin year, he lamented that the entire conflict could have been avoided if Kamatari had been alive. In other words, the main point of this episode in its context within the biography of the founder of the Fujiwara lineage is to portray Kamatari as the skillful Fujiwara minister who manages to negotiate peaceful successions. A less obvious implication of this episode is that it was Kamatari who shaped the historical process of imperial succession from Kōgyoku’s reign (r. 642–645) and the Isshi Incident (645) onwards, and would have continued to do so had he not died before the Jinshin conflict.<sup>68</sup>

These various narratives and their intersections are the product of the web of genealogical interests that both formed and informed narratives of imperial succession as the *Nihon shoki* was being compiled in the first two decades of the eighth century. As Fig. 3 illustrates, each of the three Jinshin Rebellion narratives that I have outlined corresponds to a different version and style of genealogical legitimacy. For both the “heavenly mandate” story of Tenmu as dynastic founder (in which his enemies are Tenchi and Ōtomo), and the narrative of Tenmu as rightful successor of Tenchi according to the prestige of his matrilineal lineage (in which the villain is Ōtomo alone), rightful succession goes from Tenmu to Kusakabe, through Jitō, and then to Tenmu’s grandson Monmu. In the story of Tenmu the usurper, legitimate succession according to the Sinic ideal of male primogeniture is broken after Tenchi but then undergoes a (somewhat tortuous) restoration through his daughter Jitō and then through Kusakabe and Genmei (also Tenchi’s daughter) once again to Monmu, whose consort is Fujiwara no Fubito’s daughter. Thus while each of the three narratives diverge insofar as they are invested in different versions of the past, they also intersect because they are all invested, for different reasons, in the same conclusion to the *Nihon shoki* chronicle: Jitō’s abdication in Monmu’s favor. As the teleological endpoint of all these historical narratives, Monmu is thus the central figure of agreement on which these multiple narratives representing different political interests converge.

#### PRINCE ŌTSU AND THE ŌMI COURT

As we have seen, the discursive space of imperial historiography in the *Nihon shoki* is organized around the central figure of the sovereign and the main plotline of imperial succession. Within this ideal framework, the genealogical complexities of succession politics are expressed in the form of a narrative politics within the text itself. To conclude, I would like to remark upon the interesting case of how the figure of Prince Ōtsu, a “might-have-been” sovereign who is the loser of the last political struggle in the *Nihon shoki*, is appropriated to play a role in the revisionist imperial history suggested in the various *Kaifūsō* prefaces.

Ōtsu appears for the first time in the Tenmu volumes in a minor role as joining Tenmu’s “original followers” on the second day of the Jinshin campaign and as second-in-line to the throne after Kusakabe in the Yoshino pledge. Like his older brother Takechi, he leaves Ōmi to join his father’s campaign in Yamato, but unlike Takechi, given that he was a young child

68. *Tōshikaden: Kamatari, Jōe, Muchimaro den chūshaku to kenkyū*, ed. Okimori Takuya et al. (Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1999), 221–22.

at the time,<sup>69</sup> he is very much a secondary character on the “Yoshino” and “Yamato” side of the conflict. Later, in the Yoshino pledge, he continues to represent a secondary role as a potential second-in-line to continue Tenmu’s “new dynasty.” It is only when he reaches adulthood and with a change in the plot of succession after Tenmu’s death that he comes to represent the protagonist role of potential threat to Crown Prince Kusakabe’s succession.

According to the second Tenmu volume of the *Nihon shoki*, Ōtsu began to plot rebellion against Kusakabe (大津皇子、謀反於皇太子) after Tenmu’s death as soon as mourning began on the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month of 686. The Jitō volume notes that on the second day of the tenth month Ōtsu’s plot was discovered, he was captured with over thirty of his followers, and put to death the following day. His wife Princess Yamabe (one of Tenchi’s daughters) followed him in death (apparently voluntarily) but most of his co-conspirators were pardoned. This is the *Nihon shoki*’s last succession struggle, and it describes the Jitō court witnessing Ōtsu’s death with great sadness:

Prince Ōtsu was the third child of the Heavenly Sovereign Ama no Nunahara Oki no Mahito [Tenmu]. He had a tall and noble demeanor and his language was eloquent and refined. He was much beloved by the Heavenly Sovereign Ame Mikoto Hirakasu Wake [Tenchi]. When he grew to adulthood he showed discernment and a talent for learning, and was very fond of writing. The practice of composing odes and rhapsodies began with Ōtsu.

皇子大津、天渟中原瀛真人天皇第三子也。容止墻岸、音辭俊朗。爲天命開別天皇所愛。及長辨有才學、尤愛文筆。詩賦之興、自大津始也。<sup>70</sup>

This is quite a remarkable eulogy for someone who never became sovereign. None of the protagonists of previous rebellion plots—Prince Furuhi no Ōe in Kōtoku’s reign and Prince Arima in Saimei’s reign—receives such treatment, nor do Princes Kusakabe or Takechi, both of whom died as crown princes. Perhaps most surprising is the statement that, while Ōtsu’s rank and status at court derived from his being Tenmu’s son and second in line to the throne after Kusakabe, he was “much beloved” by Tenchi. This provides an interesting contrast to Tenmu’s Yoshino pledge, in which Tenchi is not mentioned and his sons Kawashima and Shiki are “adopted” by Tenmu. Since Ōtsu’s mother Princess Ōta (Jitō’s older sister) had died when he was a child, it is likely that Ōtsu would indeed have been close to his maternal grandfather. But a different kind of link between Ōtsu and Tenchi seems to be facilitated by the fact that “Ōtsu” was also the name of the Ōmi palace. This ambiguity between Ōtsu the prince and Ōtsu the palace is illustrated in the phrase “the practice of composing odes and rhapsodies (i.e., Sinic-style poetry) began with Ōtsu” (詩賦之興、自大津始也), which, given the omission of the “prince” title, suggests that the “Ōtsu” in this phrase might refer in another context to Tenchi’s Ōtsu palace.<sup>71</sup> The Jitō volume thus portrays Ōtsu as a highly accomplished prince and would-be usurper who leads his followers astray. We do not and cannot know whether he in fact intended to usurp the succession or whether it was Jitō who moved to eliminate him first. But as a talented young man in his twenties when Tenmu died, the threat that the figure of Ōtsu represents in this narrative was probably a close reflection of reality.

The mid-eighth century *Kaifūsō* portrayal of the Ōmi court as the foundational source of imperial legitimacy elaborates on the Jitō volume description of Ōtsu as a highly

69. Ōtsu was born in 663 and Tenchi died in 671.

70. *SNKZ Nihon shoki* 3 (Shōgakukan, 1998), 474–77.

71. In every other occasion in the *Nihon shoki* the prince is referred to as “the Ōtsu prince” 皇子大津 or “Prince Ōtsu” 大津皇子. The Prince’s name originally derives from another Ōtsu palace in Kyūshū, where he was born in 663.

accomplished prince and associates him fully with the Ōmi court by placing him in the anthology after Tenchi's sons Ōtomo and Kawashima. Unlike the Jitō volume in the *Nihon shoki*, in which Ōtsu is condemned to death for having inspired his followers to commit treason, the *Kaifūsō* recasts him as a tragic figure who is led astray by others. Like Prince Ōtomo, Ōtsu is portrayed as a talented but politically naïve prince who was destined for great things until he met with misfortune. In fact, the *Kaifūsō* draws multiple parallels between Ōtomo and Ōtsu. Just as Ōtomo was Tenchi's eldest son, Ōtsu is described as Tenmu's "eldest son" (even though according to the *Nihon shoki*, he was the fourth son). Both Ōtomo and Ōtsu are described as being of such uncommonly distinguished appearance that diviners prophesize that they will rule the realm (a priest from Tang in Ōtomo's case, a priest from Silla in Ōtsu's), and they both are said to have the ideal combination of a love of learning (學) and literary (文) pursuits with uncanny martial skills (武) that would make them ideal rulers. The character of Prince Ōtsu thus shifts from playing a secondary character as a loyal follower on the "Yoshino" side of the Jinshin conflict in the Tenmu volumes of the *Nihon shoki*, to a protagonist as a would-be usurper in the struggle for succession in the Jitō volume, where he is first associated with Tenchi and the Ōmi court, to the *Kaifūsō* narrative in which he is eulogized as a "submerged dragon" (someone with the virtue and potential to become emperor) and fully identified with the political and cultural legacy of the Ōmi court—in other words, with the losers of the Jinshin conflict. In effect, the figure of Prince Ōtsu is appropriated by the Ōmi-centered *Kaifūsō* narrative in part for his association with Sinic-style poetry (which serves to lend some credibility to the *Kaifūsō*'s claim that the Ōmi court was the origin of imperial literary culture) and in part as a kind of proxy for Ōtomo. Just as the figure of Monmu was the crucible around which all political interests and narratives of imperial history converged, the narrativized figure of Prince Ōtsu as an alternative "might-have-been" sovereign also became central to the politics of imperial historiography.

#### CONCLUSION

In this article I have discussed the ways in which the Jinshin Rebellion was historicized as a foundational event in eighth-century narratives of the Yamato imperial state. Most of these are stories that allude to the classical models of imperial authority of Sinic historiography in order to portray Tenmu and Jitō's reigns as the beginning of a new political order. For instance, the *Kojiki* preface compares Tenmu's victory to the Zhou conquest of the Shang, and the *Nihon shoki* compares Tenmu with two righteous dynastic founders: Gaozu 高祖 (r. 202–195 B.C.E.), the first emperor of the Han, and Guangwu 光武 (r. 5–57 C.E.), the first emperor of the Later Han. However, as we have seen, the Jinshin Rebellion also became the source of a different narrative that legitimized Tenchi as the original founder of the new imperial state. In the *Nihon shoki*, this is hinted at in variant texts that refer to Ōtomo as Tenchi's chosen successor and indicate that he promulgated *ritsuryō* codes for the first time at the Ōmi court, and in a veiled description of Tenmu by Ōtomo's ministers as a usurping "tiger with wings." In the *Kaifūsō* preface this narrative is fully developed as a narrative of loss—in which Tenchi's reign is compared to the Zhou dynasty and the destruction of the cultural legacy of the Ōmi capital to the Qin "burning of the books," which suggests a parallel between Tenmu and the infamous Qin First Emperor (r. 221–210 B.C.E.). In the *Kaifūsō*'s preface to Prince Ōtomo's poems Tenmu is compared to another negative model, the usurper and "cunning giant" Wang Mang (r. 9–23 A.D.).

As I noted at the beginning, the traces of a complex politics of historiography preserved within the *Nihon shoki* are evidence not simply that there is a lot more to the historical

facts than the *Kojiki* preface's triumphant story of Tenmu's Jinshin victory, but also that there is a lot more to the politics of historiography than what is suggested by the *Kojiki* preface's quotation of Tenmu's command to "erase falsehoods and establish the truth" 削偽定實. The clearest evidence for the fact that the historical narrative at the Yamato court was never monopolized by the winners comes from the preface to the *Kaifūsō*, which provides an account of the Jinshin Rebellion that is almost diametrically opposed to the *Kojiki* preface version. Whereas in the triumphant story of the *Kojiki* preface, the Jinshin conflict is described as a "purifying" (清) and its conclusion as an occasion for "peaceful rejoicing" (愷悌), the *Kaifūsō* preface refers to the Jinshin Rebellion as a time of "disorder and chaos" (亂離) that led to the "complete destruction" (湮滅) of the Ōmi court's cultural legacy and as the source of "grief and sorrow" (軫悼傷懷). But what the *Kojiki* and *Kaifūsō* prefaces do agree on is that the Jinshin Rebellion was an event that should provoke deep emotions in its retelling: a triumphant and elated pride in the new imperial age after Tenmu's victory, and a sense of the tragic loss of the ideal political and cultural order of the Ōmi capital. While Ōtomo and Ōtsu may have failed in their political ambitions, their characters lived on to serve as appealing historical protagonists and tragic might-have-been sovereigns whose stories could be as moving as—if not more than—the narratives of those who were successful.

The relationship between the stories of these protagonists of imperial history and the political fortunes of their descendants illustrates what the late Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1949–2012) refers to, in a different context, as "the power in the story,"<sup>72</sup> that is, the question of what makes some historical narratives more powerful or compelling than others, and why certain stories matter to particular groups of people. In the context of the early eighth-century Yamato imperial court, in which genealogical proximity to the sovereign defined both access to political power and inclusion in the discursive space of historiography, the overlapping relationship between the historical process and the historiographical record is particularly treacherous, not only for those who will always insist on making a positivist distinction between the two, but also for those who maintain that the historical process can only be accessed through and is always subject to its representation. The different accounts of the Jinshin Rebellion indicate that historical representation was the object of political dispute, i.e., that historiography was also subject to the historical process, and that it is sometimes possible to catch a glimpse of this historical process through the gaps between the different accounts in the historiographical record.

72. See Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "The Power in the Story," in *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon, 1995), 1–30.