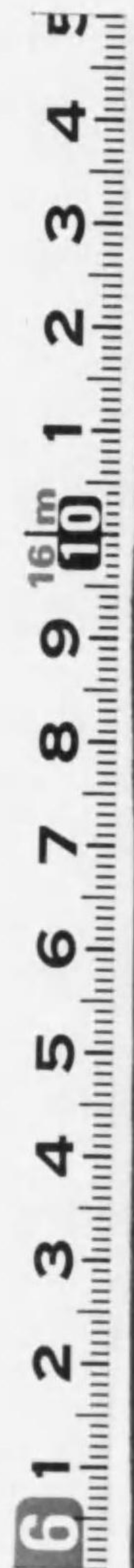


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ON THE THREE IMPERIAL  
TREASURES

By IRITA-SEIZŌ  
入田 整三

NIPPON BUNKA CHUO RENMEI  
(Central Federation of Nippon Culture)  
Tokyo, Japan  
1941

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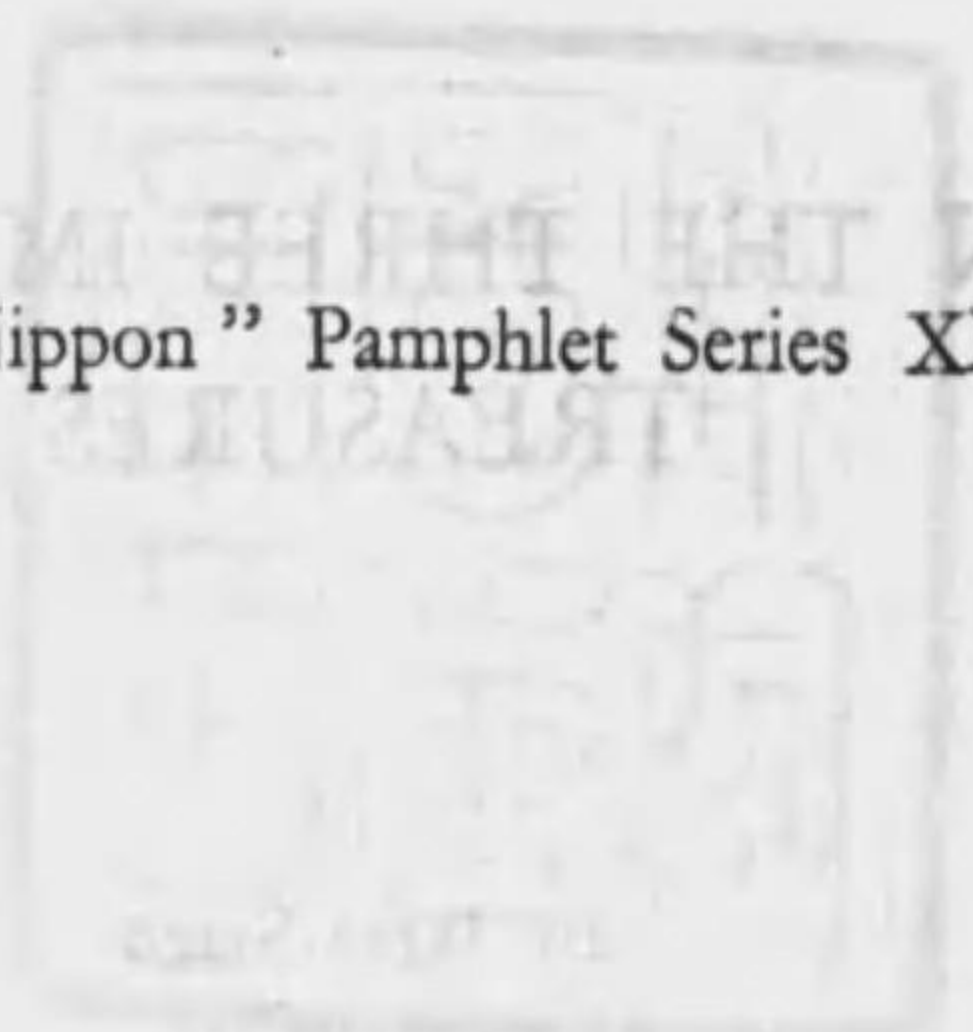
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ON THE THREE IMPERIAL TREASURES  
"Cultural Nippon" Pamphlet Series XXXIV



## ON THE THREE IMPERIAL TREASURES

By IRITA-SEIZŌ

入田 整三

### I. The *Yata-no-Kagami* or the Divine Mirror

It is grievous to note that people in general should have a vague idea, oftentimes verging on misunderstanding, concerning the Three Imperial Treasures, the August Heirloom of the Japanese Imperial Throne, especially when they must be well-known as telling the glorious history of the special characteristics of "the Empire coeval with heaven and earth." Therefore it is that I venture, in this article, to give the origin and history of the Three Imperial Treasures.

By the Three Imperial Treasures are meant, needless to say, the *Yata-no-Kagami* 八咫鏡, the *Ame-no-Murakumo-no-Tsurugi* 天叢雲劍 and the *Yasakani-no-Magatama* 八坂瓊勾玉,<sup>1</sup> which have been handed down generation after generation since the *Jindai*, or Gods' Dynasty, as the Heirloom of the Imperial Throne unbroken for ages eternal.

The *Yata-no-Kagami* represents the Spirit of Amaterasu-Ōmikami,<sup>2</sup> the first Ancestress of the Imperial family, and I shall first relate its graces or significance before I come to its history.

A mirror, as everybody knows, is clear and blurless, and reflecting as it does the shape of anything and everything exactly as it looks, is just and impartial. Hence Kitabatake-Chikafusa 北畠親房 (1293-1354)

<sup>1</sup> The meaning of these names will be given later on in the article. Suffice to say here that the first is a mirror, the second a sword and the third a string of beads.

<sup>2</sup> *Amaterasu-Ōmikami* 天照大御神 (lit. Heaven's-Shining-Great-August-Kami) is the Ancestral Goddess of the Imperial family. *Kami* is conventionally translated into English as "god" or "deity."



says with justice in his "The Jinnō-Shōtō-ki 神皇正統記."<sup>1</sup>

"The mirror stores nothing, and is so unselfish that it shows everything, good, or bad, just as it looks. The mirror, therefore, reflects nature. So it has the virtue of being impressed with the true form of anything. Herein indeed lies the real source of fairness and justice."

So a mirror reflects everything in full and omits nothing that throws its shadow on it. It is, therefore, quite worthy of such names as *Masumi-no-kagami* 眞澄鏡 (lit. mirror of true clearness) and *Mizu-kagami* 水鏡 (lit. water-mirror), as a clear mirror is sometimes called. The Japanese word *Kagami*, for "mirror," is often used in the sense of a model or paragon, and accordingly we have the *Mizu-kagami* 水鏡, the *Ō-kagami* 大鏡,<sup>2</sup> the *Azuma-Kagami* 吾妻鏡<sup>3</sup> and *Shiji-Tsugan* 資治通鑑,<sup>4</sup> which are books of history so titled because models of virtuous deeds in history are reflected in them. The *Te-kagami* 手鑑<sup>5</sup> (lit. Hand-Kagami) is a collection of exemplary instances sorted out of olden times. All these books are written reflecting the virtues or graces of the mirror, which is made use of in diverse ways as enumerated below:

- (1) A mirror is venerated as the Divine Spirit of a *Kami* in many cases, among which at such Shinto shrines as the Imperial Shrines 皇大神宮 of Ise Province, the Kashima Shrine 鹿島神宮 of Hitachi Province, the Iwashimizu-Hachiman Shrine 石清水八幡宮 of Yamashiro Province, the Hinokuma Shrine 日向宮 of Kii Province, the Kasuga Shrine 春日神社 of Yamato Province, etc.
- (2) The divine shape or name of *Kami* is engraven, or written in ink, on the face of a mirror, which is then worshipped as a

1 The *Jinnō-Shōtō-ki* 神皇正統記 (lit. The Records of the Legitimate Imperial Line).

2 *Ō-kagami* 大鏡 literally means Great-Mirror.

3 The *Azuma-Kagami* 吾妻鏡 (lit. Azuma-Province-Record) is also written as 東鑑 (lit. East-Model).

4 The ideograph 鑑 (pronounced *Kan* or *gan*) of the *Shiji-Tsugan* 資治通鑑 is read *Kagami*.

5 Hand-Model.

*Kami*. A mirror used in this way is called the August Divine Image 御正體 or the Hanging-Mirror 掛鏡.

- (3) A mirror is enshrined in the *Mikosbi* 神輿<sup>1</sup> or the *Michōdai* 御帳臺.<sup>2</sup> It may be included in the decorations used on the four sides of the *Mikosbi* or around its roof, as we see in the *Michō* of the Seiryō-Den Palace 清涼殿 and the Kamo Shrine.
- (4) A mirror is considered to be sacred and used as a charm<sup>3</sup> as for instance at the Fuji-Sengen Shrine 富士淺間神社 of Suruga Province.
- (5) A mirror is dedicated to a Shinto shrine. It has usually an inscription, such as *Bun-chōkyū* 武運長久<sup>4</sup> implying a prayer or words of veneration.
- (6) A mirror is used at a funeral and other religious Shinto services, when, as we find in ancient history, it is put on the branches of the *sakaki-tree*.<sup>5</sup>
- (7) A mirror, with an image of the Lord Buddha represented on it, is used as his Sacred Image. It is then called the *Hanging-Buddha* 懸佛. The Sambutsu-ji Temple 三佛寺 of Hōki Province has a mirror of this kind. It is dated the third year (997 A.D.) of the Chōtoku era 長徳.
- (8) A mirror is dedicated at a requiem service of the Lord Buddha or offered as copper-material 料銅 for casting a temple-bell or gong.
- (9) Many mirrors have been brought to light with the excavation of Sutra-Mounds 經塚<sup>1</sup> in different localities. They are used at the bottom of the Sutra-Tubes 經筒 which were buried in the

1 The *Mikosbi* 神輿 is a portable shrine representing a *Kami*.

2 The *Michōdai* 御帳臺 (lit. August-curtain-stand) is the throne meant for a *Kami*.

3 *Charm* is a common translation of *Omamori* (lit. August Protector), which is a kind of amulet issued by a Shinto shrine.

4 *Bun-chōkyū* 武運長久 literally means "military-prosperity long and eternal."

5 *Sakaki-tree* 榊 (*Cleyera ochracea*) is a kind of tree specially used at a Shinto service, as we can see from the character 榊, which consists of 木 (tree) and 神 (*Kami* or a Shinto deity).

Sutra-Mounds.

- (10) A mirror is used in the nimbus, crown, or canopy of a Buddhist image or on a Buddhist banner.
- (11) A mirror is used as a sign of allegiance. When, for instance, the Emperor Keikō 景行天皇 (the 12th Emperor) led a punitive army against the Kumaso tribe 熊襲 (in present Kyūshū), Itote 五十迹手, its chief, received him with a *sakaki-tree* of 500 branches, on which he hung a mirror, a sword and a string of jewels.
- (12) It was an ancient custom to bury a mirror with a dead body, as the excavation of many an ancient tomb has revealed.

The mirror was in this way prized and even adored by the Japanese ancients for its diverse virtues or graces and it was utilized in many different ways as summarized above. Now we come to the Imperial Treasure or the *Yata-no-Kagami*.

As regards the origin of this Imperial Mirror, we quote the following from the *Kojiki* 古事記, one of the oldest annals of Japan :

“Thereupon the Heaven-Shining-Great-August-Deity [Amaterasu-Ōmikami]<sup>2</sup> terrified at the sight, closed [behind her] the door of the Heavenly Rock-Dwelling 天岩屋戸, made it fast, and retired. Then the whole Plain of High Heaven 高天原 was obscured and all the Central Land of Reed-Plains darkened. Owing to this, eternal night prevailed. . . . Therefore did the eight hundred myriad Deities assemble in a divine assembly in the bed of the Tranquil River of Heaven 天安之河原, and bid the Deity Thought-Includer 思兼命,<sup>3</sup> child of the High-August-Producing-Wondrous-Deity 高皇產巢日神<sup>4</sup> think of a plan, assembling the long-singing birds of eternal night and making them

1 A sutra was copied, put in a sutra-tube and buried in a sutra-mound with a prayer. Such sutra-mounds are found all over the country.

2 The *Heaven-Shining-Great-August-Deity* is Chamberlain's translation of Amaterasu-Ōmikami 天照大御神.

3 *Deity Thought-Includer* is Chamberlain's translation of Omoi-kane-no-Mikoto 思兼命.

4 The original name of this *Kami* is *Takami-Musubi-no-Kami*.

sing, taking the hard rocks of Heaven from the river-bed of the Tranquil River of Heaven, and taking the iron from the Heavenly Metal-Mountains,<sup>1</sup> calling in the smith Amatsumara 天津麻羅, charging August Ishikori-Dome-no-Mikoto 伊斯許理度賣命<sup>2</sup> to make a mirror. . . .; and tying to the middle branches [*Yata-no-Kagami*] the mirror eight feet long<sup>3</sup> 八咫鏡, etc.”

—B. H. Chamberlain

Then the following is taken from the *Nihonshoki* 日本書紀, which quoted it from some other book :

“Now there was Omoi-Kane-no-Kami 思兼神, son of Takami-Musubi-no-Mikoto 高皇產靈尊,<sup>4</sup> who had a talent for devising plans. He accordingly considered the matter, and spoke, saying : ‘Let there be made an image of this Goddess, and let prayer be addressed to it. They therefore proceeded to appoint Ishikori-Dome 石凝姥<sup>5</sup> as artisan, who, taking copper of the Mt. Kagu of Heaven,<sup>6</sup> made therefrom a Sun-spear. Moreover, he<sup>7</sup> stripped off in one piece the hide of a true stag, and made of it Heavenly bellows. The Goddess which he fashioned by this means is the Goddess Hi-no-Mahe-no-Kami 日前神,<sup>8</sup> who dwells in the province of Kii.”—Aston

Again, the following is quoted by the *Nihonshoki* from another book :

“A mirror of eight hands,<sup>9</sup> made by the ancestor of the mirror-

1 Translation of *Ami-no-Kanayama*.

2 The translation of this name is *Stone-coagulating-old-woman* (Chamberlain).

3 *Mirror eight feet long* is Chamberlain's translation of *Yata-no-Kagami*.

4 The ideographs 高皇產靈尊 (*Takami-Musubi-no-Mikoto*) designate the same *Kami* as 高皇產巢日神.

5 The ideographs 石凝姥 designate the same *Kami* as 伊斯許理度賣命.

6 Mt. Kagu of Heaven is the same as the Heavenly Metal Mountains.

7 Ishikori-Dome, as Chamberlain translated the name, is usually considered to be a woman.

8 The ideographs 日前神 are correctly read Hi-no-Kuma-no-Kami.

9 This is Aston's translation of *Yata-no-Kagami* 八咫鏡.

makers, Ono-kori-dome 已瀬戸邊,<sup>1</sup> a child of Ama-no-Nukado 天拔戸, etc.”—Aston

And also:

“Then the Sun Goddess<sup>2</sup> opened the Rock-door and came out. At this time, it [the Mirror] struck against the door and received a slight flaw, which remains until this day. This is the Great Deity worshipped at Ise.”—Aston

So we understand that the Imperial Mirror was then enshrined at the Imperial Shrine of the Sun Goddess. Later, when the Imperial Grandchild, Ninigi-no-Mikoto 瓊瓊杵尊 made his descent from Heaven to the land below, the Great *Kami*<sup>3</sup> handed the mirror to him, with her own hands, as an Imperial Treasure, about which we find the following description, quoted from some other book, in the *Nihonshoki*, *Gods' Dynasty*:

“Amaterasu-no-Ōkami gave to Amatsu-Hiko-Hoho-Ninigi-no-Mikoto 天津彥火瓊瓊杵尊 the Three Treasures; viz. the Curved Jewel of Yasaka Gem 八坂瓊曲玉, the Eight-hand Mirror 八咫鏡, and the Sword Kusanagi 草薙劍. . . . Then she commanded her August Grandchild, saying:

‘This Reed-plain-1500-Autumn-Fair-Rice-ear Land<sup>4</sup> is the region which my descendants shall be lord of. Do thou, my August Grandchild, proceed thither and govern it. Go! and may prosperity attend thy dynasty, and may it, like Heaven and Earth, endure forever.’—Aston

The *Nihonshoki* quotes from still another book, in support of the above quotation, as follows:

“Amaterasu-no-Ōkami took in her hand the Precious Mirror, and giving it to Ame-no-Oshiho-Mimi-no-Mikoto 天忍穗耳尊, uttered a prayer, saying:—‘My Child, when thou lookst upon

<sup>1</sup> Ono-kori-dome, or Ono-kori-dobe, is another reading of Ishikori-dome.

<sup>2</sup> The Sun Goddess is another translation of Amaterasu-Ōmikami.

<sup>3</sup> Amaterasu-Ōmikami or the Sun Goddess.

<sup>4</sup> Aston's translation of *Toyo-Ashihara-no-Chiibo-Aki-no-Mizubo-no-Kumi* 豐葦原千五百秋之瑞穗國 meaning “Japan.”

this Mirror, let it be as if thou wert looking on me. Let it be with thee on thy couch and in thy hall and let it be to thee a Holy Mirror.’ Moreover, she gave command to Ame-no-Koyane-no-Mikoto 天兒屋根命 and to Futodama-no-Mikoto 太玉命, saying: ‘Attend to me, ye two Gods! Do ye also remain together in attendance and guard it well.’ She further gave command, saying: ‘I will give over to my child the rice-ears of the sacred garden, of which I partake in the Plain of High Heaven!’”

So the Treasure-Mirror was kept in compliance with the Imperial command on the same “couch” and in the same “hall” with Hiko-Hoho-Demi-no-Mikoto 彥火出見尊 and Ugaya-Fuki-Ayezu-no-Mikoto 鵜鷺葺不合尊, who reigned after Ninigi-no-Mikoto 瓊瓊杵尊. The Divine Mirror and the Divine Sword were enshrined in the Main Hall 正殿 when the Emperor Jimmu 神武天皇, the first of the Imperial line, established the Capital at Kashiwara 橿原 in Yamato Province 大和, for the *Kogo-Shūi* 古語拾遺<sup>1</sup> says:

“Ame-no-Tomi-no-Mikoto 天富命, leading the various Imbe 齋部,<sup>2</sup> held the Heavenly Heirloom of the Mirror and the Sword and enshrined them safely in the Main Hall.”

They were enshrined on the same “couch” and in the same “hall” with the Emperor during the reigns of the Emperors Suizei 綏靖天皇 (2nd Emperor: 581-549 B.C.), Annei 安寧天皇 (3rd Emperor: 548-511 B.C.), Itoku 懿德天皇 (4th Emperor: 510-476 B.C.), Kōshō 孝昭天皇 (5th Emperor: 475-393 B.C.), Kōan 孝安天皇 (6th Emperor: 392-291 B.C.), Kōrei 孝靈天皇 (7th Emperor: 290-215 B.C.), Kōgen 孝元天皇 (8th Emperor: 214-158 B.C.) and Kaika 開化天皇 (9th Emperor: 157-98 B.C.) or for nine generations inclusive of the Emperor Jimmu 神武天皇. But we find the following passage in the *Nihonshoki* under date of the 6th year (92 B.C.) of the reign of the Emperor Sujin 崇神天皇 (10th Emperor: 97-30 B.C.):

<sup>1</sup> The *Kogo-Shūi* 古語拾遺 or *The Gleanings of Ancient Words*.

<sup>2</sup> Imbe 齋部 was a court abstainer or purifier.

“The two Gods Amaterasu-Ōmikami 天照大御神 and Yamato-no-Ōkuni-Tama 和大國魂 were worshipped together within the Emperor's Great Hall. He dreaded, however, the power of these Gods, and did not feel secure in their dwelling together. Therefore he entrusted Amaterasu-Ōmikami to Toyosuki-Iri-Hime-no-Mikoto 豐鍬入姫命 to be worshipped at the village of Kasanui 笠縫邑 of Yamato Province, where he established the sacred enclosure of *Shiki*.”<sup>1</sup>—Aston

And in the *Kogo-Shūi* 古語拾遺, we find:

“The power of the *Kami* began to be dreaded in the reign of the Shiki-no-Mizugaki Court 磯城瑞垣朝<sup>2</sup> and it was felt uneasy to dwell together, so that Imbe was ordered to instruct the descendant of Ishikori-Dome-no-Kami 石凝姥神 and the descendant of Ame-no-Mahitotsu-no-Kami 天目一箇神 to cast another mirror and to make another sword as the August Signets of Body-Protection. These are the mirror and the sword, the Divine Seals that are now presented [to the Emperor] on the day of Accession. So the Divine Fence of *Shiki* was established at the village of Kasanui in Yamato, where Amaterasu-Ōmikami and the Kusanagi-no-Tsurugi 草薙劍<sup>3</sup> were venerated and Toyosuki-Iri-Hime-no-Mikoto 豐鍬入姫命, the Imperial Princess, was appointed to attend on them.”

It was during the reign of this Emperor, therefore, that the Imperial Mirror, thus handed down from Amaterasu-Ōmikami, was for the first time enshrined outside the Imperial Palace, where, in its stead, its replica came to be venerated. In the *Book of the Emperor Suinin* 垂仁天皇, *Nihonshoki*, under date of the zodiac Horse-senior-Monkey day (10th) of the third month in the 25th year (5 B.C.) of his reign, we find:

“Amaterasu-no-Oh-kami was taken from Toyosuki-Hime-no-Mikoto 豐耜姫命 and entrusted to Yamato-Hime-no-Mikoto

<sup>1</sup> *Shiki* (Sacred enclosure or Divine Fence) is a place where a *Kami* was worshipped.

<sup>2</sup> The Emperor Sujin 崇神天皇, who reigned at this Palace.

<sup>3</sup> The *Kusanagi-no-Tsurugi* 草薙劍 is the Imperial Sword, and one of the Three Treasures.

倭姫命. Now Yamato-Hime-no-Mikoto sought for a place where she might enshrine the Great Goddess. So she proceeded to Sasahata 筱幡 of Uda 菟田. Then turning back from thence, she entered the land of Ohomi 近江 and went round eastwards to Mino 美濃, whence she arrived in the province of Ise 伊勢.

“Now Amaterasu-no-Oh-Kami instructed Yamato-Hime-no-Mikoto, saying: ‘The province of Ise, of the divine wind,<sup>1</sup> is the land whither repair the waves from the eternal world, the successive waves. It is a secluded and pleasant land. In this land I wish to dwell.’ In compliance, therefore, with the instruction of the Great Goddess, a shrine was erected to her in the province of Ise. Accordingly an Abstinence Palace was built at Kawakami 川上 in Isuzu 五十鈴. This was called the Palace of Iso 磯宮. It was there that Amaterasu-no-Oh-Kami first descended from Heaven.”—Aston

Thus was the Ise Shrine dedicated to the Great Goddess and the Divine Mirror, and the replica that was made in the 6th year (92 B.C.) of the reign of the Emperor Sujin was enshrined in the *Kashiko-Dokoro* 賢所 or the Imperial Sanctuary, which is now situated in the Imperial Palace.

We will now take up the word *Yata* of the *Yata-no-Kagami* 八咫鏡 (lit. The Mirror of *Yata*), concerning the meaning of which there are diverse opinions.

(1) A theory that the word *Yata* (lit. Eight-*ta*) expresses the shape of the Divine Mirror was maintained by Motoori-Norinaga 本居宣長 (1763-1828). In his *Kojiki-den* 古事記傳 he quotes, from the *Yamato-Hime-no-Mikoto-seiki* 倭姫命世紀, to the following effect: “By *Yata* 八咫 are meant eight heads 八頭,” and from the *Gochinza-denki* 御座傳記: “The eight heads 八頭 are eight petal-points 花埼八葉 in shape,” and the ideograph 頭 (head), according to him, should be read

<sup>1</sup> The phrase “*Divine wind*” is an epithetic prefix for the province of Ise.



*bata*. He refers further to the *Shaku-Nihongi* 釋日本紀, which quotes a record from the *Tentoku-Gyoki* 天德御記 concerning a fire that broke out in the Imperial Palace on the 23rd of the ninth month in the 4th year (960 A.D.) of the Tentoku era 天德; i. e., "The Divine Mirror enshrined at the *Naishi-Dokoro* 内侍所<sup>1</sup> was not damaged by the fire. This Mirror is about 8 *sun*<sup>2</sup> in diameter. It has a flaw on the head 頭, but otherwise no damage." He goes on to say that the ideograph 頭 should be read *bata* and that *Yata* 八咫<sup>3</sup> means eight heads, for the ideograph 頭 cannot be used for a round mirror. So his theory is that the Divine Mirror is eight-headed or cornered or pointed "like the fins<sup>4</sup> of a fish." But supposing that his assertion is correct, I wonder how he will explain the "ta" in "the nose 7 ta long 鼻長七咫," which we find in the *Book of the Jindai*, *Nihonshoki*, and also the "Yata" of the *Yata-Garasu* 八咫鳥 (lit. Eight-ta-Crow) mentioned in the *Book of the Emperor Jimmu*. Nor is his theory archaeologically acceptable because a lobed mirror is of much later invention than a round one in the development of mirrors. Moreover, the *Tentoku-Gyoki* 天德御記 says that "the round shape or disk 圓規, and knob 帶 of the Mirror are unhurt and clear;" the knob being a boss to which a cord is tied on the back of a mirror. It is clear, therefore, that the Divine Mirror is round in shape, and the word *Yata* does not signify its shape.

(2) According to the theory that the word *Yata* indicates the size of the Divine Mirror, a *ta* 咫 is 8 *sun* (Japanese inches) and *Yata* 八咫 or 8 *ta* is  $8 \times 8 = 64$  *sun*, the Divine Mirror being a round one 6.4 Jap. ft. in circumference, or 2.1 Jap. ft. in diameter. The *Shaku-Nihongi* 釋日本紀 holds that the Divine Mirror is 8 *sun* large and supports this theory by the *Kōbō-Shiki* 公望私記, which says: "A hand is 4 *sun* wide, and two hands joined together make just 8 *sun*." But Kamo-no-

<sup>1</sup> The *Naishi-dokoro* 内侍所, also called the *Kashiko-dokoro* 賢所, is a place where the Divine Mirror is enshrined in the Imperial Palace.

<sup>2</sup> *Sun* 寸 is a unit for measuring length. It is one tenth of *Shaku* 尺, the Japanese foot, or 1.19 inches.

<sup>3</sup> According to Motoori, the ideographs 八咫 are read *Ya-ba-ta* from which *Yata* has come.

<sup>4</sup> "Fin" is *bata* in the classical Japanese.

Mabuchi 賀茂眞淵 (1697-1769), who thinks that the word 咫 is the length or span between the stretched thumb and the middle finger, end to end, says, as we find in the *Kokusbi-Sōrankō* 國史綜攷稿, that the unit *ta* 咫 measures a little over 4.8 *sun* of the Japanese measurement, though, according to the Chinese lexicon *Chuo-wen-hieh-tzū* 說文解字, written by Hsu-shên 許慎, "the word 咫 means the length of the hand of an average woman; 8 *ts'un* 寸 (*sun* in Japanese) being called *chih* 咫 (*ta* in Japanese) or a foot of the Chou dynasty."<sup>1</sup> Kamo deducts the size of the Divine Mirror from the *Engi-shiki* 延喜式 and the *Gishiki-chō* 儀式帳, according to which the *Mi-Hishiro* 御穗代<sup>2</sup> measures 1.63 Jap. ft. in inside diameter, though the *Mi-Hishiro* of the Bun'ei era 文永 (1264-1274) had the inside diameter of 7.6 *sun*. Kamo goes on to say:

"*Ya-a-ta* is the length of several hands put together. *Ya*, showing a plurality of things, may mean two, three or more, while *A-ta*, as I said above, is the length of a woman's palm or a little less than 5 *sun* according to our metal-yard-stick 曲尺. So a mirror 1 ft. in diameter is a 1-foot mirror, but still it can be called a *Yata-Kagami*.<sup>3</sup> Such a controversy is all due to the ambiguity or ignorance about the real length meant by the ideographs 八咫寸."

(3) The late Dr. Takahashi-Kenji 高橋健自, who accepted the round-mirror theory, held that the ideograph 咫 of *Yata* 八咫, as Motoori read it, should be read *bata*, meaning "rim" (*bata* in Japanese) and concluded that the *Yata-no-Kagami* 八咫鏡 was a round one with many lobes or corners. This theory may hold good with the mirror, in which the ideograph 咫 may stand for *bata* 端 (rim or edge), but it cannot be applied to the "nose 7 ta long" or the "8 ta crow," to which we referred above. We still think that the word *ta* 咫 is a unit of length.

<sup>1</sup> The Chou dynasty of China adopted a system of measurement, according to which the ideograph 咫 measures 8 *ts'un* 寸 or the size of a woman's hand.

<sup>2</sup> *Mi-Hishiro* 御穗代 is the container or casket in which the Divine Mirror is kept.

<sup>3</sup> According to Kamo-no-Mabuchi, *Yata-Kagami* is a corrupted form of *Ya-ata-Kagami*.

From what is said above, we may gather, on the authority of the *Tentoku-Gyoki* 天德御記, that the *Yata-no-Kagami* 八咫鏡 is round in shape and about 8 *sun* in diameter.

Then, there are two opinions concerning the metal of which the Divine Mirror is made: some scholars think that it is nickel, while others are in favour of iron. Motoori-Norinaga 本居宣長, who held the nickel theory, quotes in his *Kojiki-den* 古事記傳 from the *Book of Jindai*, of the *Kojiki*, as follows:

“...taking the iron 鐵 from the Heavenly Metal-Mountains, calling in the smith Ama-tsu-Mara 天津麻羅, charging August Ishikori-Dome-no-Mikoto 伊斯許理度賣命 to make a mirror...”

And he goes on to say:

“Iron 鐵 is a black metal also called simply *Kane*, a generic term for any kind of metal. But the word *iron* is specially used, in this record, to point out the material, in place of the simple *Kane*, which had been used in the ancient language.”

But other scholars prefer the copper theory, for in the *Kogo-Shūi* 古語拾遺, we have: “Ishikori-Dome-no-Kami 石凝姥神 was commanded to take copper from Mt. Ame-no-Kaguyama 天香山, and make the mirror of the Sun-image.”

The question was brought up, according to the *Shōyūki* 小右記 on the 17th day of the eleventh month in the 2nd year (1005 A.D.) of Kankō era 寬弘 during the reign of the Emperor Ichijō 一條天皇 as to whether or not the Divine Mirror should be repaired after it was damaged in the *Naisbi-Dokoro* when the Ommyō-Den Palace 溫明殿 was destroyed by fire two days before, namely on the 15th day of the same month. “If repairing is necessary,” the book reads in part, “no vulgar copper 俗銅 should be mixed up with the Divine Material,” and again, “new copper must be used in repairing.” Then the *Nihon-Kiryaku* 日本紀略 reports, under date of the third day of the seventh month in the following year, that the idea of repairing was abandoned.

The *Midō-Kampaku-ki* 御堂關白記 writes, under date of the Water-

junior Hare, third day of the seventh month in the 3rd year (1006 A.D.) of the Kankō era 寬弘, as follows:

“All the courtiers went to court and assembled at the time of the Horse (noon)...I was called at noon and granted various *Kamon* 勘文.<sup>1</sup> I was commanded to express my views like those of the other courtiers as to whether the Divine Mirror, which was damaged by fire in the *Naisbi-Dokoro* last year should be repaired or not, etc. The *Naidaijin* 內大臣, *Udaishō* 右大將, *In-Chūnagon* 尹中納言, *Gon-Chūnagon* 權中納言, *Shin-Chūnagon* 新中納言, *Kageyu-Chōkan* 勘解由長官, *Sadaiben* 左大弁<sup>2</sup> etc. addressed that [the Divine Mirror] should not be repaired on the ground that, imperfect though it is in shape, it is an article of the *Jindai* 神代 (Gods' Dynasty), and that it should be held in esteem and enshrined. Besides, its Spirit made itself manifest to the priest in charge, for when it was put into its casket, it shed a radiant ray, etc. I addressed, saying that I felt grieved over the matter. I fear that the original metal would be made impure if it should be repaired; what will become of its original metal if some other metal should be used in repairing it? Nor does it seem proper to have the damaged and perfect images enshrined together in the Palace. Will the original image only be repaired and enshrined if the two images cannot be enshrined together?”

It is evident from the above quotations that the Divine Mirror enshrined in the *Naisbi-Dokoro* is a copper one. But as I notice that some people still hold the iron-mirror theory, I have decided to add a few words to convince them of their mistake.

It was Hirata-Atsutane 平田篤胤 (1790-1843) who advocated the iron-mirror theory, for he says in effect:

“Even the late Suzunoya-Ushi 鈴屋大人,<sup>3</sup> in his explanation of

1 *Kamon* 勘文 are problems for consideration and investigation.

2 These are the names of some high officials of the Court.

3 Motoori-Norinaga.

the expression 'By taking iron from Heaven's Metal-Mountains,' which he quotes in his *Kojiki-den* 古事記傳, says that the ideograph 鐵 (iron) was used in the quotation because this was the material for manufacturing a spear, and the ideograph 鐵 would not have been used if the Mirror were made of copper (銅)."

Iida-Takesato 飯田武郷 (1827-1900) and the author of the *Kokusbi-Sōrankō* 國史綜攬稿 seem to be in favour of the iron-mirror theory, for they deny the existence in an early period of the alloy called *Hakudō* 白銅 (lit. white copper) as nickel was called. But we cannot accept their iron-mirror-theory because, as above mentioned, the evidence is clearly established for the copper-metal theory.

So the replica of the Divine Mirror that was manufactured during the reign of the Emperor Sujin 崇神天皇 has since been enshrined at the Imperial Palace. It was venerated at first on the same couch and in the same hall with the Emperor, but it was later installed separately in some other building of the Imperial Palace. It is plain, however, that the Divine Mirror was laid in state in a separate hall named the Ommyō-Den Palace 溫明殿 after the time of the Emperor Uda 宇多天皇 (59th Emperor: 889-897) and the Palace in which the Treasure-Mirror is now enshrined is called the *Kashiko-Dokoro* 賢所 or the Imperial Sanctuary, as it is usually translated into English. Now, the ideograph 賢 (pronounced *Kashiko*) means "awe," "fear," "dread," etc. as we find in the *Nihonshoki* which has 懼恐, 惶可畏之神 (the *Kami* who should be feared, dreaded and apprehended with great respect) and in the *Manyō-shū* 萬葉集, the oldest anthology of Japan, which has 恐海 (lit. dreadful sea) and 恐坂 (lit. dreadful ascent), while, according to the *Kakaisbō* 河海抄, the Japanese word "*Kashiko*" means both *sagacity* 賢 and *fear* 畏; the ideograph 所 (pronounced *tokoro* or *dokoro*) meaning *place*. As for the ideographs pronounced *Kashiko-Dokoro*, we have, besides 賢所, 恐所 in the *Shōyūki* 小右記, 畏所 in the *Chūyūki* 中右記, 威所 in the *Nihonkiryaku* 日本記略 and 尊所 in the *Michinagakō-Ki* 道長公記; all these sets pronounced *Kashiko-Dokoro* and meaning a place of fear or

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the *Naishi-Dokoro*” and the Emperor acted so discreetly as to take care not to lie down with his legs stretched in the direction of the Imperial Shrines at Ise and the *Naishi-Dokoro*. The Emperor Gofukakusa 後深草天皇 (the 89th) was so devout that, according to the *Masukagami* 増鏡, Book VI, he paid no less than 5,074 visits to the *Naishi-Dokoro* during his reign of fourteen years.

The Divine Mirror is worshipped regularly on the first day of each month with the most important Shinto ceremonies next only to those performed at the Ise Shrines, and the Emperor worships it in person at the *Genshi-Sai* (lit. Original-First-Services) held on the New Year's Day and *Kanname-Sai* (lit. God-Tasting-Ceremony) held on the 17th of October. Besides, a court ritualist worships the Divine Mirror every morning representing the Emperor and the Shinto music is performed before it on one of the second ten days of December, when the Emperor attends it in person.

The *Shaku-Nibongi* 釋日本紀 says :

“On the 24th day of the ninth month in the 4th year (960 A.D.) of the Tentoku era 天德, according to the *Tentoku-Gyoki* 天德御記, a search was made for the Divine Mirror, Sword and Imperial Signet, which were laid in state in the Ommyō-Den Palace. Shigematsu-Ason<sup>1</sup> came at the time of the Monkey<sup>2</sup> and said that a mirror is found on a tile. The mirror was about 8 *sun* in diameter. It had a small flaw on the head, but otherwise its disk or knob received no damage. It was so bright that everybody that looked at it was struck with surprise.

“On the 25th, a mirror damaged by fire was discovered. The *Geki* 外記 says there were three discoveries: one was a mirror (This August Mirror received no damage in the fierce flames. It is the August *Kami* of Ise); another was a fish-shape (No damage; about 6 *sun* large); and still another a mirror (Totally damaged; the August *Kami* of Kii Province).”

<sup>1</sup> *Ason* or more properly *Asomi* 朝臣 may be freely translated “courtier.”

<sup>2</sup> The zodiac time of the monkey is about 4 P.M.

The replica of the Divine Mirror that was made during the reign of the Emperor Sujin 崇神天皇 is a round mirror about 8 *sun* in diameter, but it had also a flaw similar to the one caused to the Original Mirror when it was knocked against the door of the Rock-Cave in which the Sun Goddess hid herself. But we understand, from the above passages, that the replica was kept intact in spite of the fire, its radiancy not at all impaired. A similar record is found both in the *Teiō-Hennenki* 帝王編年記 and the *Michinagakō-ki* 道長公記. Then another fire broke out at the Imperial Palace on the 15th day of the eleventh month in the 2nd year (1005 A.D.) of the Kankō era 寛弘 during the reign of the Emperor Ichijō 一條天皇 (the 66th), when the Divine Mirror, i. e. the replica, received damage, for the *Shōyūki* 小右記 says about the fire :

“The fire broke out at the Ommyō-Den Palace 溫明殿. The Divine Mirror (the so-called *Kashiko-Dokoro* 恐所), the Sword and the Imperial Signet could not be taken out.”

Then the courtiers sat in conference to discuss the advisability of repairing the Divine Mirror, which was thus damaged, for, under date of the 17th of the same month, we find :

“Whether or not the [Divine Mirror] should be repaired... If repairing is necessary, no vulgar copper 俗銅 should be mixed up with the Divine Material. Or, shall we enshrine the Divine Article, which is left unburned? Suppose we were to install the Mirror-Body and make a new one of copper for sub-installation?”

The *Kimpishō* 禁秘抄 writes about the Chōkyū fire as follows: “The Divine Mirror was damaged by fire in the Chōkyū era 長久, when Tsunenobu, the *Shōnagon* 少納言經信,<sup>1</sup> tried in vain to take it out of the raging flames.” And we find more detailed information of the fire in the *Hyakurenshō* 百鍊鈔, under date of the 9th of the ninth month in the

<sup>1</sup> *Shōnagon* 少納言 is a court rank.

first year (1040 A.D.) of the Chōkyū era 長久, which is as follows :

“The Divine Mirror of the *Naisbi-Dokoro* is in the debris of the fire. Sukefusa, the *Kurōdo-no-Kami*<sup>1</sup> and *Sa-Chūjō*<sup>1</sup> 藏人頭左中將資房 and Tsunesuye, the *Sa-Shōshō*<sup>2</sup> 左少將經季, were sent to look for it. They found only the Divine Body (5 or 6 *sun* remaining), which was put in a case. Again, they found a piece (about 2 or 3 *sun* large). The Divine Body was too much damaged for identification. . . . They found some more, each 2 or 3 *sun* large. A few gems were discovered, and [they] put them in caskets.”

Then, it quotes from the *Sukefusakyō-ki* 資房卿記<sup>3</sup> under date of the 10th day of the same month :

“Two ladies of the *Naisbi-Dokoro* had a dream. One saw in her dream that there was a small serpent on that spot. It was venomous. The other saw in her dream that there was on that spot a man who told her that he had been left there to himself, etc. The ladies went to that spot and searched, when they found two gems, which they put in (caskets). So surprising is the mysterious power they [Imperial Signets] have.”

It was Sukefusa 資房, the author of the diary, that looked for the Divine Mirror, and he was the eye-witness who saw that its disk was not perfect. Besides, the *Azuma-Kagami* 東鑑 writes, in support of this fact, under the heading of “The Taira family annihilated” under date of the 24th day of the third month in the 2nd year (1185 A.D.) of the Genreki era 元曆 :

“When a fire broke out in the Imperial Palace in the Chōreki era 長曆 (1037-1039) during the reign of the Emperor Gosuzaku 後朱雀天皇 (the 69th), the disk was broken, but [the Divine Mirror] was hidden in the sleeve of Lord Moronaka 師仲 at the civil

- 1 These two terms indicate Sukefusa's official ranks.
- 2 Tsunesuye's official rank.
- 3 The diary of Lord Sukefusa 資房卿.

war of the Heiji era 平治 (1159 A.D.). (Later it was put in a new casket. When Sukenaga, the *Mimbukyō* 民部卿資長<sup>1</sup> was appointed *Kurōdo-no-Kami* 藏人頭, this was reported.)”

Later, the Divine Mirror went west when the Emperor Antoku 安徳天皇<sup>2</sup> (the 81st) took refuge in Saikai or Kyūshū during the civil war of the Genreki era 元曆 (1185 A.D.). When the young Emperor was drowned in the sea on the 24th day of the third month in that year, the Divine Mirror remained on board his ship, as we find from the following passage in the *Azuma-Kagami* 東鑑 under date of the 24th day of the third month in the 2nd year (1185 A.D.) of the Genreki era 元曆 :

“Then the soldiers rushed on board the August Ship. Some of them attempted to open the *Kashiko-Dokoro* 賢所, when, their eyes dazzled, they fainted pitifully. Tokitada, the *Dainagon* 大納言時忠 stopped them and they scampered away. This is the August Separate Image, the protector of the Imperial Court. . . . Its disk was already damaged in the Chōreki era 長曆 during the reign of the Emperor Gosuzaku 後朱雀天皇 (the 69th). . . . yet its mysterious power is still manifested in these latter-days of corruption. It must be looked up to and relied on.”

A more detailed passage is found in the *Gempei-Seisui-ki* 源平盛衰記<sup>3</sup> to the following effect :

“The soldiers of the Minamoto family broke the chain of a case and cut the cord of the casket contained in it in order to open its cover. Suddenly their eyes were dazzled and blood ran out of their nostrils. Taira-no-Tokitada, the *Dainagon* 大納言時忠 saw with great dismay that the casket was the *Naisbi-Dokoro* 内侍所. Minamoto-no-Yoshitsune, seeing this, stopped them and told Taira-*Dainagon* 平大納言 to put it back into the

- 1 *Mimbukyō* 民部卿, one of the eight Government Ministers, corresponding to the Home Minister.
- 2 The Emperor Antoku was drowned in the sea at the age of eight years, in 1185.
- 3 The *Gempei-Seisui-ki* 源平盛衰記 (lit. The records of the rise and fall of the Minamoto and Taira families).

case.”

Thus did the Divine Mirror escape trouble, and it was taken back to the Imperial Capital on the 27th day of the fourth month in the same year. The Divine Mirror then retreated into the mountains of Yoshino in the Kemmu era 建武 (1334-1337), but returned to Kyōto, the Capital, again at the time of the Emperor Gokameyama 後龜山天皇 (the 99th). When the Imperial Capital was established at Tōkyō in the Meiji era (1868-1912), the Divine Mirror was also removed to Yamasato in the Imperial Gardens of the Palace. It was enshrined in the Akasaka Detached Palace when the Imperial Palace was destroyed by fire on May 5th, 1873, and removed back again into the Imperial Palace on Jan. 9, 1889, when the *Kashiko-Dokoro* 賢所 at the center, the *Kōrei-Den* 皇靈殿<sup>1</sup> on the west and the *Shinden* 神殿<sup>2</sup> on the east were completed on one section of the Fukiage Gardens in the Imperial Precincts.

As regards the removals of the Divine Mirror, the *Hokuzanshō* 北山抄 has “The *Imbe* 忌部 holding up the Mirror, Sword, and the Imperial Signet” in Section V or the *Daijōye* 大嘗會 (lit. Grand Ceremony of Enthronement), the custom of the Imbe’s holding up the Divine Treasure having been initiated by the Emperor Sujin 崇神天皇 after the manner in which the Sun Goddess handed the Imperial Signets in person to the Imperial Grandchild, Prince Ninigi-no-Mikoto 瓊瓊杵尊. “The practice of the Kamyō era,” the same book goes on to say, “was discontinued after the Tenchō era (824-833 A.D.), as we find in the *Seiryōshō* 清涼抄, which says that the Imperial Treasure is handed no more, but the *Norito* is addressed instead.” Thus the removal of the Divine Mirror was discontinued after the reign of the Emperor Junna 淳和天皇 (53rd Emperor: 824-833), but only a report was made to the Throne to the effect of its removal, though the Divine Mirror was removed when a fire broke out or when its Hall was repaired, or when the Ommyō-Den Palace 溫明殿 was reconstructed.

The *Tōkyoku-Rei* 登極令 or the regulations governing the Accession

<sup>1</sup> The Imperial Sanctuary dedicated to the Spirits of the Imperial Ancestors.

<sup>2</sup> The Imperial Sanctuary dedicated to the *Kami*.

to the Throne was enacted in the Meiji era and its Art. XI reads in translation as follows:

“Prior to the date set for the Enthronement Ceremony, the Emperor shall proceed to the Imperial Palace at Kyōto, with the Empress, escorting the Divine Articles 神器.”

So the *Kashiko-Dokoro* 賢所 makes its official removal only at the Grand Ceremony of Enthronement.

In the *Honchō-Matsurigoto-Hajime-jō* 本朝政事始上, we find a passage reading as follows:

“The name *Jingū* 神宮<sup>1</sup> (lit. *Kami*-Shrine) has its origin in the *Ise-no-Jingū* 伊勢之神宮 (lit. *Jingū* of Ise Province). It was after its installation that the name of *Jingū* was inaugurated.”

So we see that the state organization of Japan is founded on the Ise Great *Jingū* 伊勢大神宮. “The manners of the Imperial Court,” says the *Kimpishō* 禁秘抄, “give precedence to the Shinto affairs; all the others being performed after,” and it is our custom observed even today to perform some Shinto ceremony before important politics are discussed. On the 4th of January every year for instance, we have the ceremony of *Matsurigoto-Hajime* 政治始 (lit. Beginning of administration), when, prior to a report on the local conditions of political administration, the Minister of the Imperial Household makes a report to the Throne, on the basis of one made by the Shinto priests, to the effect that all the Shinto rituals were performed in the year just gone by. It is no wonder, therefore, that our country, where the Shinto rituals form the origin of its politics, should have been called *Shinkoku* 神國 or *Shinshū* 神洲 (both meaning the land of *Kami*) from time out of memory till now, with the state organization quite unique in the world. It is a great privilege to us Japanese to have been born in this glorious country of Japan, but at the same time we feel the great responsibility of keeping ourselves equal to this great privilege.

<sup>1</sup> The term *Jingū* 神宮 means a shrine dedicated to a *Kami*, but it is at the same time an official term for a certain class of Shinto shrines. In this respect, it cannot be applied to every *Shinto* shrine.

## II. The Ame-no-Murakumo-no-Tsurugi or the Divine Sword

The *Jinnō-Shōtōki* 神皇正統記 says that the sword has the graces of being "Firm, sharp, and quickly decisive, wherein lies the true origin of all wisdom." The sword is indeed sharp and stern, and it makes justice and righteousness what they are, admitting of no injustice or iniquity whatever. It is quick at decision, intrepid and resolute; wherever it wants to go it goes, and wherever it would proceed it proceeds, with no hesitation whatever. It is merciful withal, and is indeed typical of the fundamental spirit of *Bushido* or the way of the *samurai*. Following are the ways the sword was mainly used in Japan:

1. The sword as a divine object of worship: The *Kusanagi-no-Tsurugi* 草薙劍 (lit. Grass-mowing Sword) of the Atsuta Shrine of Owari Province and the *Futsu-Mitama-no-Tsurugi* 布都御魂劍 (lit. Futsu-August-Spirit-Sword) of the Iso-no-Kami Shrine of Yamato Province.
2. The sword used in praying for rain: The sword, now preserved at the Ryūkō-in Temple 龍光院 of Mt. Kōya, was used by Priest Kōbō-Daishi 弘法大師, when he offered a prayer for rain in the Shinsen-en Gardens.
3. The sword as body-protector: A sword called *Tsubokiri-Maru* 壺切丸 has been handed down generation after generation as body-protector to the Prince Imperial. A sword was often used as a baton at the appointment of the *Taishōgun* 大將軍 (lit. Great General) or the Envoy to China.

The *Ame-no-Murakumo-no-Tsurugi* 天叢雲劍 (lit. Heaven's Clouds-gathering Sword), otherwise called the *Kusanagi-no-Tsurugi*, is usually designated as the Treasure-Sword, the Imperial Signet, in such books as the *Kimpishō* 禁秘抄, according to which it was "one of the three Imperial swords of the *Jindai* or Gods' dynasty." The so-called three swords were:

1. The *Kusanagi-no-Tsurugi* 草薙劍 (lit. Grass-mowing Sword)

2. The *Hagiri-no-Tsurugi* 羽斬劍 (lit. Feather-cutting Sword)
3. The *Takakura-no-Tsurugi* 高庫劍 (lit. High-Throne Sword)

The *Kusanagi-no-Tsurugi* is one of the three, and the *Nibonshoki* 日本書紀 writes about it as below:

"Susa-no-Wo-no-Mikoto 素戔鳴尊 descended from Heaven and proceeded to the headwaters of the River Hi in the Province of Idzumo... When the time came, the [large] serpent naturally appeared. It had an eight-forked head and an eight-forked tail; its eyes were red like the winter-cherry; and on its back firs and cypresses were growing. As it crawls it extended over a space of eight hills and eight valleys. Now when it came and found the saké, each head drank up one tub, and it became drunken and fell asleep. Then Susa-no-Wo-no-Mikoto drew the ten-span sword which he wore, and chopped the serpent into small pieces. When he came to the tail, the edge of his sword was slightly notched, and he therefore split open the tail and examined it. In the inside there was a sword. This is the sword which is called *Kusa-nagi-no-Tsurugi*."

In one writing it is said: Its original name was *Ama-no-Murakumo-no-Tsurugi*. It perhaps received this name from the clouds constantly gathering over the place where the [large] serpent was. In the time of the Imperial Prince Yamato-Take 日本武皇子 its name was changed to *Kusa-nagi-no-Tsurugi*.

Susa-no-Wo-no-Mikoto said: "This is a divine sword. How can I presume to appropriate it to myself?" So he gave it up to the Gods of Heaven."<sup>1</sup>—Aston

So Susanowo-no-Mikoto presented the Sun Goddess with the sword that he obtained on the waterheads of the River Hi in the province of Izumo, and it was enshrined, we believe, with the Divine Mir-

<sup>1</sup> The *Gods of Heaven* is Aston's translation of the ideographs 天神 (*Heaven-Kami*), which name, according to some scholars, designates the Sun Goddess, as the writer of this article plainly seems to think.—The Editor.



ror in her Imperial Palace. When the Imperial Grandchild, Ninigi-no-Mikoto 瓊瓊杵尊 made his descent from Heaven to the land below, the Sun Goddess handed the sword to him, and it was kept on the same couch and in the same hall with the Emperor from the Emperor Jimmu 神武天皇 till a replica was made of it, and of the Divine Mirror, in the 6th year (92 B.C.) of the reign of the Emperor Sujin 崇神天皇 due to his fear of the Imperial Signets.

In this way was the Divine Sword handed from the Great *Kami* to the Imperial Grandchild, Ninigi-no-Mikoto, and later entrusted, with the Divine Mirror, to Toyosuki-iri-Hime-no-Mikoto 豐鍬入姫命, the Imperial Princess, to be worshipped at the village of Kasanui in Yamato Province. And again, during the reign of the Emperor Suinin 垂仁天皇, his successor, the Divine Sword was entrusted to Yamato-Hime-no-Mikoto, the Imperial Princess, who enshrined it on the waterheads of the River Isuzu in Ise Province, as we find in the *Kogo-Shūi* 古語拾遺, which says: "Amaterasu-Ōmikami<sup>1</sup> and the *Kusanagi-no-Tsurugi* were removed there."

The following quotation from the *Nihonshoki*, in its *Book of the Emperor Keikō*, 40th year, tenth month, Water-junior-Bull day, shows that Yamato-Hime-no-Mikoto 倭姫命 bestowed the Divine Sword on Yamatotakeru-no-Mikoto 日本武尊 when he visited her at Ise on his eastern expedition, on which he succeeded in subjugating the rebels:

"Yamatotakeru-no-Mikoto set out on his journey. On the Earth-senior-Horse day (the 7th), he turned aside from his way to worship at the shrine of Ise. Here he took leave of Yamato-Hime-no-Mikoto, saying: 'By order of the Emperor, I am now proceeding on an expedition against the East to put to death the rebels, therefore, I am taking leave of thee.' Hereupon Yamato-Hime-no-Mikoto took the sword *Kusanagi* and gave it to Yamatotakeru-no-Mikoto, saying: 'Be cautious, and yet not remiss.' This year Yamatotakeru-no-Mikoto first reached

<sup>1</sup> Meaning the Divine Mirror.

Suruga. The brigands of this place made a show of obedience, and said, deceiving: 'On this moor there are large deer in plenty... Do thou go and hunt them.' Yamatotakeru-no-Mikoto believed these words, and going into the middle of the moor, sought for game. The brigands, desiring to kill the Prince, set fire to the moor. But the Prince, seeing that he had been deceived, produced fire by means of a fire-drill, and kindling a counter-fire, succeeded in making his escape.

One version says: 'The sword *Murakumo*, which the Prince wore, wielded itself, and mowed away the herbage near the Prince, thus enabling him to escape. Therefore that sword was called *Kusa-nagi*.<sup>1</sup>'

The name *Murakumo* was accordingly changed to *Kusanagi*, and Yamatotakeru-no-Mikoto succeeded in exterminating the rebels with this Divine Sword. He made a victorious return to Owari Province.

The *Nihonshoki* writes about this event as follows:

"Yamatotake-no-Mikoto, having returned again to Ohari, straight-way took to wife a daughter of the Ohari House, by name Miyazu-Hime 宮養媛, and tarried there until the next month. Here he heard that on Mount Ibuki in Afumi there was a savage Deity. So he took off his sword, and leaving it in the house of Miyazu-Hime, went on foot."—Aston

In the *Kojiki*, we find:

"Her Augustness Yamato-Hime bestowed on him the Herb-Quelling-Sabre,<sup>2</sup> and likewise bestowed on him an august bag, and said: 'If there should be an emergency; open the mouth of the bag.'... So then, when he reached the Land of Sagami, the Ruler of the land lied, saying: 'In the middle of this moor is a great lagoon, and the Deity that dwells in the middle of the

<sup>1</sup> *Kusa-nagi* 草薙 means "grass-mowing."

<sup>2</sup> *Herb-Quelling-Sabre* as well as *Grass-Quelling-Sabre* is Chamberlain's translation of *Kusa-Nagi-no-Tsurugi* 草薙劍.

lagoon is a very violent Deity.' Hereupon [Yamatotakeru-no-Mikoto] entered the moor to see the Deity. Then the Ruler of the land set fire to the moor. So, knowing that he had been deceived, he opened the mouth of the bag which his aunt, Her Augustness Yamato-Hime had bestowed on him, and saw that inside of it there was a fire-striker. Hereupon he first mowed away the herbage with his august sword, took the fire-striker and struck out fire, and kindling a counter-fire, burnt [the herbage] and drove back [the other fire], and returned forth, and killed and destroyed all the Rulers of that land, and forthwith set fire to and burnt them. . . . When, having thence penetrated on and subdued all the savage Yemishi and likewise pacified all the savage Deities of the mountains and rivers. . . . and went to dwell in the house of Princess Miyazu 美夜受比賣之命<sup>1</sup> to whom he had before plighted his troth. . . . placing in Princess Miyazu's house his august sword 'the Grass-Quelling-Sabre,' he went forth to take the Deity of [Mount] Ibuki."—Chamberlain

Leaving the Divine Sword in the province of Owari, the Prince went on to subdue the rebels of Ōmi Province, where he soon succumbed to an illness. His sword was, and still is, enshrined at Atsuta in the province of Owari. The *Nihonshoki*, in the *Book of Jindai*, quotes the following from some book:

"This sword is called *Kusa-Nagi-no-Tsurugi*. It is now in the village of Ayuchi 吾湯市, in the province of Ohari. It is this Deity which is in charge of the *Hafuri*<sup>2</sup> of Atsuta."—Aston

The following quotation is taken by the *Nihonshoki* from another book:

"This sword was formerly with Susa-no-Wo-no-Mikoto. It is now in the province of Ohari."

In the *Book of the Emperor Keikō* of *Nihonshoki*, under date of the Water-

<sup>1</sup> These ideographs are used phonetically to express the name or its reading.

<sup>2</sup> *Hafuri* 祝 can be freely translated "a Shinto priest."

senior-Rat day (4th), Autumn, 8th month in the 51st year of his reign, we find:

"The cross-sword *Kusanagi*, which was at first worn by Yamatotake-no-Mikoto, is now in the shrine of Atsuta in the district of Ayuchi 年魚市,<sup>1</sup> in the province of Ohari."—Aston

The following is taken from the *Shaku-Nibongi* 釋日本紀, which quoted it from the *Owari-Fudoki* 尾張風土記:

"*The Atsuta Shrine*. When Yamatotakeru-no-Mikoto returned from his rounds in the eastern provinces, he married Miyazu-Hime, ancestress of the Owari-no-Muraji. While he tarried in her house, he went out one night to wash his hands. He hung on a mulberry-tree the sword he wore, and he came in, forgetting to bring it with him. He went out in surprise, when he saw the sword radiating like *Kami*. Instead of taking the sword, he addressed Miyazu-Hime, saying: This sword has a divinity. It should be enshrined as my reminder. A shrine was accordingly dedicated and it was named after the village."

And the *Kogo-Shūi* 古語拾遺 says:

"That *Kusanagi-no-Tsurugi* is now enshrined at the Atsuta Shrine in Owari Province, but no formal rituals are as yet performed."

No authentic history gives the exact date when the shrine was inaugurated.

The *Kampyō-Engi* 寬平緣起 has a following passage, concerning the Divine Sword:

"[The Prince] returned to the dwelling of Miyazu-Hime. . . . While he tarried there, he went out one night to the closet. There was a mulberry-tree near the closet. He took his sword off and hung it on the mulberry-tree. When he came out of the closet, he forgot his sword. He went back to his bed-chamber

<sup>1</sup> The two sets 吾湯市 and 年魚市 are phonetically to be pronounced *Ayuchi* irrespective of the meaning of the ideographs.

and it was towards dawn that in surprise he went out to get the sword from the mulberry-tree. The whole tree looked radiant, and the light dazzled the eye. But he brought the sword in without minding the light, and told her how the mulberry-tree shed light. She said in reply: 'Nothing was the matter with the tree before and the light must have come from the sword.' He was silent and rested. Then he addressed the Princess, saying: 'I will go back to the Capital and send for you.' He took off his sword, and said: 'Enshrine this and make it the protector of my bed.' His attendant, Ōtomo-no-Takehi-no-Omi 大伴建日臣 remonstrated, saying: 'It should not be left behind. I understand that there is a violent deity on Mount Ibuki. It will not be got rid of without the power of the sword.' Yamato-takeru-no-Mikoto talked big, saying: 'Even though he be a violent deity, I will kick him to death.' He left the sword behind and went his way to Mount Ibuki," etc.

Again the same book says:

"After the sudden demise of Yamatotakeru-no-Mikoto, Miyazu-Hime kept her promise made with him. She kept her lonely bed by venerating his Divine Sword. Its radiance increased day after day, and its miracles became more manifest. If a prayer was offered to it, its effect was sure to come at once. Thereupon, Miyazu-Hime invited her relatives and friends to tell them in council, saying: 'I am now old, and my end may come any morning or evening. I desire to dedicate a shrine to the Divine Sword before I sleep my last.' All those present agreed, and a place was selected for the shrine. There was a maple-tree. It caught fire spontaneously and burned. When it fell on an irrigated rice-field, it kept on burning till the irrigated rice-field became hot. Hence the place was called Atsuta 熱田."<sup>1</sup>

Later, Priest Dōgyō 沙門道行 attempted in vain to run away to

<sup>1</sup> The ideographs 熱田 mean "hot-rice-field."

Shiragi, as Silla, the ancient kingdom of Korea, is called in the Japanese language, after stealing the miraculous Divine Sword, as the *Nihonshoki* tells us, under date of the 7th year (668 A.D.) of the reign of the Emperor Tenji 天智天皇:

"In this year the Buddhist priest Dōgyō stole the *Kusanagi* Sword and escaped with it, making for Silla. But wind and rain so perplexed him on his way, that he came back again."—Aston

In the *Engi* 緣起 or the history of the shrine, we find:

"*Ame-no-Mikoto-Hirakasu-Wake-no-Sumera-Mikoto* 天命開別天皇<sup>1</sup>, 7th year Earth-senior-Dragon. Priest Dōgyō of Silla was desirous of taking the Divine Sword to his native land by stealing it and he stole in the shrine. He seized the Sword, hid it under his surplice and made off from the province of Ise. In the night the Divine Sword came out of the surplice of its own accord and came back to its Main Shrine. Dōgyō too came back. With considerate meditation and earnest entreaty, he hid [the Divine Sword] under his surplice again and ran to the province of Settsu, where he took ship at the port of Naniwa. He lost his way on the sea and drifted back to the port of Naniwa. A certain person received an oracle, saying: 'I am the Sword-Kami of Atsuta. I was taken out by fraud by a wicked priest and almost reached Silla....' Then the officials searched east and west for the Divine Sword in surprise and consternation. Dōgyō thought within himself that he would escape arrest if he threw the Sword away. He tried to get rid of it, but it would not leave his body. Dōgyō surrendered himself and he was executed."

As detailed above, the miraculous power of the Divine Sword saved it from being taken overseas, and its miracles became so manifest that when a prayer was offered to it, it was sure to be answered at

<sup>1</sup> This is another name of the Emperor Tenji 天智天皇, meaning, word by word, "Heaven-command-make-open-Emperor."

once, as we see from the following in the *Nihonshoki*, in the *Book of the Emperor Temmu*, under date of the Earth-senior-Tiger (10th) day of the sixth month in the first year (687 A.D.) of the Shuchō era 朱鳥:

“It was ascertained by divination that the Emperor’s disease was owing to a cause from the *Kusanagi* Sword. The same day it was sent to the shrine of Atsuta, in Owari, and deposited there.”

So we see from the above quotation that the August Sword was for some time enshrined in the Imperial Palace, but it was returned to Atsuta where it has since been safely enshrined.

Now we come to the shape of the Divine Sword, which nobody has ever seen carefully, nor is there any literature correctly describing it, but we find the following description in the *Gyokusenshū-Uragaki* 玉籠集裏書 written by Tamaki-Isai 玉木葦齋:

“It was some eighty years ago that a party of four or five persons of the family of the Chief Priest of the Atsuta Shrine tried to have a secret look at the Divine Body. The Divine Sword is enshrined in the Doyō-Den Hall 土用殿. . . . They entered the *Naijin* 内陣 (the Adytum) only to find that everything was shrouded by a kind of mist that filled the room. They made their way by fanning the mist and with secret light looked at the August Signet, a wooden box about 5 ft. large. A stone box was in it, and there was red earth stuffed in between the two boxes. In the stone box was contained a camphor box, or a log scooped out like a box and the Divine Body was enshrined on gold spread out on the bottom of the camphor box. Red earth was also stuffed in between the stone and camphor boxes. Each box was locked but one key opens it, though its opening is a secret known only to the Chief Priest. The Divine Body is about 2.7 or 2.8 ft. long, its blade-tip looking like an iris blade, swollen at the middle, with some joints, looking like the backbone of a fish, about six *sun* near the hilt. All looked white. Whether

or not the Divinity was offended, the Chief Priest was sent into exile, the rest dying of pestilence or some other diseases, excepting the narrator, who, happily surviving them, left this record, etc. For information, I add that this record was handed to me by Matsuoka-Masanao 松岡正直.”

But what became of the replica-sword that the Emperor Sujin 崇神天皇 enshrined in his Palace in the sixth year (92 B.C.) of his reign?

The sword that the Emperor Sujin commanded to be made by imitating the Divine Sword in the 6th year (92 B.C.) of his reign was enshrined in the Imperial Palace for a long time. On the 24th day of the third month in the 2nd year (1185 A.D.) of the era of Genreki 元曆, however, when the young Emperor Antoku 安德天皇 (the 81st) was drowned at Dan-no-Ura 壇浦 of Nagato Province, the sword, which was then held by Nii-no-Ama 二位尼, the wife of Taira-no-Kiyomori 平清盛, went to the bottom, never to come up, for all that Minamoto-no-Yoshitsune 源義經 did in search for it. So another Imperial sword, which was the Day-Throne-Sword<sup>1</sup> of the Seiryō-Den Palace, was used in substitution for some twenty years, the sword now enshrined on the left-hand side and the Imperial Signet on the right-hand side, of the Throne, till another divine sword of the Ise Shrines was inaugurated in place of the lost one, when the Emperor Juntoku 順德天皇 (the 84th) was enthroned on the 25th day of the eleventh month in the 4th year (1210 A.D.) of the Shōgen era 承元 (the 4th year of the reign of the Emperor Tsuchimikado 土御門天皇) (the 83rd). The *Kimpishō* says:

“At the time of the abdication of the Throne in the era of Shōgen, a revelation was made in a dream in which a messenger came from the Ise Shrines to offer the Treasure-Sword. . . . The sword is an ordinary one, gold lacquered.”

The *Hyakurenshō* 百鍊鈔 writes concerning this sword, under date of the 23rd day of the sixth month in the 2nd year (1183 A.D.) of Juyei era 壽永, as follows:

<sup>1</sup> The protector of the Throne in the day-time.

“Lately, Chikatoshi 親俊, the Chief Ritualist, addressed the ex-Emperor, saying: ‘In a dream I visited the Shrine and sat on the ground in the gardens. I saw my father Chikasada 親定 and Lord Chikaakira 親章 (both deceased) sitting on the upper side of the Court. A message was conveyed to me [from the Sword God] by Chikasada, saying: ‘Let me go to the Imperial Palace . . . . And, present myself to the ex-Emperor as quickly as possible and Yasutsune 泰經 should be appointed in charge of the protection of the Imperial shrine.’ I awoke, and Shigenari 成長, a Shinto priest, brought the August Sword the following morning, painted with a tiger in gold lacquer, etc. I took the Treasure Sword in compliance with the injunction given in a dream and I have brought it here to the Imperial Capital.’”

The Imperial Sword, which was thus presented to the ex-Emperor Goshirakawa 後白河上皇, was enshrined in the Imperial Palace, and it was handed down to the ex-Emperor Gotoba 後鳥羽上皇 upon the death of the ex-Emperor Goshirakawa, in the 3rd year (1192 A.D.) of the Kenkyū era 建久. It was inaugurated as the legitimate Divine Sword, in compliance with the divine message of Ise, on the 25th day of the eleventh month in the 4th year (1210 A.D.) of the Shōgen era 承元, when the former order of the Sword and the Jewel was restored, namely, the sword enshrined on the right-hand side and the Jewel on the left-hand side, of the Throne. (The Day-Throne-Sword was again used as before).

The Treasure-Sword and the Imperial Signet, according to the *Kimpishō* 禁秘抄 are installed upstairs over the pillow in the *Michō* 御帳 or Imperial Curtain; the Sword laid in the east with its hilt turning southward and its scabbard northward, and the Signet in the west. The August Sword has since been installed all the time in the Imperial Palace, though it is taken out of the Palace with the Imperial Signet, to proceed with the Emperor when he makes a trip for over a day.

There is a *Waka* or Japanese poem of thirty-one syllables that the Empress-Dowager Shōken 照憲皇太后 (1850-1914), the Consort of the

Emperor Meiji 明治天皇 wrote about the Sword. It reads in the original Japanese:

“Moyuruhi no  
Honoka ni tachite  
Kusa nagishi,  
Kami no Tsurugi zo  
Tōto karikeru.”

(Freely rendered:

“O how miraculous  
That the Divine Sword should stand amidst the flames,  
The burning herbage to quell.”)

I have stated the origin and history of the Divine Sword in outline. But the Three Imperial Treasures, namely, the Mirror, the Sword and the Jewel, have many mysterious graces, about which the *Jimmō-Shōtōki* 神皇正統記 writes as follows:

“The Divine Signets are comparable to the sun, the moon and the stars: the Mirror is the body of the sun, the Jewel the spirit of the moon and the Sword the soul of the stars.”

Again, it says:

“The mirror is the source of honesty, the jewel the source of mercy and the sword is the source of wisdom. It would be impossible to govern the land under Heaven without acquiring these three virtues.”

Without brightness like that of a mirror, you could not expect true benevolence or resolute decision. The sagacity and wisdom of the successive Emperors of Japan can be well compared to the brightness of a mirror, for they are fair, impartial and unselfish, treating everybody with the same kindness and love. The firmness of the Divine Sword will make one distinguish right from wrong, for the sword stands by justice and helps the weak against the strong for humanity's sake.

So the mirror, the sword and the jewel have each some graces of their own, distinct but cooperative and complementary to one another. Japan has owned the so-called Three Divine Regalia that have been handed down ever since the *Jindai* or Gods' dynasty, which precedes the Imperial line lasting for 2600 years. Of all countries in the world, Japan is the only Empire that has been governed by an Imperial family of a line unbroken from time out of memory. It is quite natural that in a country of such a state organization as ours, the mirror, the sword and the jewel, the symbols of wisdom, benevolence and courage, should be inaugurated as the Divine Signets of the Imperial Throne. The Japanese may well be proud of their life in such a glorious country, but at the same time we must work with sincerity to prove ourselves equal to, and worthy of, the responsibility that may fall on our shoulders.

### III. The *Yasakani-no-Magatama* or the Divine Jewel

The ancient Japanese loved *Tama*<sup>1</sup> or gems with which they adorned their bodies, and the method of their adornment as well as the use is still seen in such old relics, as the *Iwaike* 齋瓮<sup>2</sup> (lit. Sacred jar) and the *Haniwa* 埴輪<sup>3</sup> (Clay-images and figures), which have been brought to light. This love of beads or gems seems to have lasted even until the Nara period,<sup>3</sup> for the *Shōsōin* Repository 正倉院 at Nara preserves a tax register of the *Dajōkan*<sup>4</sup> for Chikuzen Province dated the 10th year (738 A.D.) of the Tempyō era 天平, in which we find the following descriptions:

The *Dajōkan* bought the following beads and jewels on the

1 *Tama* 玉 (lit. ball) may mean "bead," "gem" or "jewel."

2 Both *Iwaike* and *Haniwa* are brought to light with the excavation of ancient tombs and mounds.

3 Cf. *Cultural Nippon* Vol. VIII, No. 4: "The Use and Variety of *Tama* in the Nara Period" by Mr. Ishida-Mosaku.

4 *Dajōkan* 大政官 is the Ministry.

eleventh day of the seventh month in the tenth year of the Tempyō era:—

- 113 white beads at the price of 71 sheaves 1.1 handfuls of rice plants<sup>1</sup>
- 701 dark-blue beads at the price of .41 sheaves 1.8 handfuls of rice plants
- 933 navy-blue beads at the price of 47.8 handfuls of rice plants
- 42 green beads at the price of 3 sheaves 1.7 handfuls of rice-plants
- 7 red curved jewels at the price of 16 sheaves 8 handfuls of rice plants
- 1 round bead at the price of 1.2 handfuls of rice-plants
- 2 bamboo beads at the price of 3.4 handfuls of rice plants
- 1 navy-blue curved jewel at the price of 1 sheaf 8 handfuls of rice plants

It is interesting to note, as we see in the original register written in Japanese, that *mai* 枚 or sheet was the unit used in counting the beads in ancient times. But by this time, i.e. the Nara days, the uses to which beads were put had greatly changed from those of the ancient times, for some were now used for the ornament rosaries on the metal work of what appears to be fragments of a Buddhist banner, the beads on which being fixed with a wire.

Concerning the love for beads and jewels of the ancient Japanese the *Kogo-shūi* 古語拾遺 says, the descendants of Kushi-akaru-Tama-no-Mikoto 櫛明玉命 (lit. Wondrous-bright-bead-prince), ancestor of the Imbe-Tamatsukuri family of Izumo Province, resided in that province and manufactured beads and jewels, which they presented to the Imperial Court, together with their annual tribute, till about the Heian Period (794-1185 A.D.). The Tamatsukuri-Yu Shrine 玉造湯神社 (mentioned in the *Engishiki* 延喜式 or the systems of the Engi era) of

1 A handful 把 of rice-plants produced a *shō* 升 (1.588 quarts now; but about half the quantity in those days) 10 handfuls made a sheaf 束.

the village of Tamayu in Yatsuka-Gōri of Izumo Province and the Imbe Shrine of Imbe, its neighbouring village, were situated in the local bead-manufacturing center or the old site where the Tamatsukuri family of Izumo resided in ancient times. It is a plain proof of how much the ancient Japanese loved beads and jewels and what great demands there were for them in those days, that many beads and jewels are still preserved at the Tamatsukuri-Yu Shrine, and the ideographs 玉造, meaning "bead-maker," are still retained in the names of many local places scattered over the country. It will not be altogether a mistake, therefore, to think that there was a special class of people whose duty it was to make beads in those days, as is fully endorsed by the curved jewels 曲玉 or tube beads 管玉, which have been excavated in large numbers from ancient tombs and mounds.

It was most likely due to the graces of beads and jewels that our ancient people loved them so much and that there were even some special classes of people whose duty it was to manufacture them. What then are the graces of beads and jewels?

Before we come to the graces of the beads, however, we shall first see what kinds of beads have been brought to light in various localities in Japan.

The beads of ancient times may be classified into the following ten kinds according to their shape:

1. *Maga-tama* 曲玉 curved-jewel
2. *Kuda-tama* 管玉 tube-bead
3. *Kiriko-Dama* 切子玉 faceted-bead
4. *Usu-dama* 臼玉 mortar-bead
5. *Natsume-dama* 棗玉 jujube-bead
6. *Maru-dama* 丸玉 round-bead
7. *Mikan-dama* 蜜柑玉 orange-bead
8. *Kuchinashi-dama* 梔玉 jasmine-bead
9. *Hira-dama* 平玉 flat-bead
10. *Ko-dama* 小玉 small-bead

According to the materials, the beads are classified:

1. rock-crystal
2. agate
3. amber
4. glass
5. jadeite
6. jasper
7. marble
8. steatite
9. serpentine
10. quartz
11. enamel
12. clay
13. gilt copper
14. silver
15. copper

According to the colour of the beads the following classification can be made:

1. white bead
2. red bead
3. blue bead
4. green bead
5. purple bead
6. yellow bead
7. deep blue bead
8. navy blue bead
9. black bead
10. reddish black bead
11. darkish blue bead

Then there were the *Full-tide bead* 潮満瓊, the *Ebb-tide bead* 潮涸瓊, the *Habuto-bead* 羽太玉, the *Life-bead* 生玉, the *Resurrection-bead* 死反玉, the *Night-shining bead* 夜光玉, the *Water-taking bead* 美豆止留太萬, and the *Fire-taking bead* 比止流太萬, which last is a fire-bead 火玉.

The ideograph 玉 is a simple application expressive of the Japanese "tama" (or euphonicly *dama*) for which the ancient Japanese used the ideographs 多麻 meaning, according to the *Iroha-Jiruishō* 伊呂波字類抄, "superior virtue" 上徳, for it is a generic term expressive of anything graceful or aesthetic. It is a general name for a bead of any kind, irrespective of shape or material; for the beads which are perforated for putting a cord through them and also for a string of beads thus jointed; the latter is also called *misumaru*, *maga-tama* or *magari-tama*, for which the book quoted above has the ideographs 連城.

A string of beads is flexible and bends easily. It changes its shape if need be, for, according to the *Nihonsboki*, the *Yasakami-no-Magatama* changes its shape very subtly. By "superior virtue," mentioned above, is certainly meant the subtlety with which a string of beads changes its shape. Moreover, it changes its shape, and yet is as perfect as before. We find such beads as the *Life-bead*, the *Resurrection-bead* and the *Sufficiency-bead* among the ten signets that, according to the *Tenjin-Honki* 天神本記 and the *Tenson-Honki* 天孫本記, which seem to have been tradi-

tionally preserved by the Mononobe family, the Ancestress-Kami conferred on Nigi-Hayahi-no-Mikoto 饒速日命 at the time of his descent from Heaven to the land below, while the *Nihonshoki*, in the *Book of the Jindai*, mentions the *Full-tide-bead* and the *Ebb-tide bead*; all these names indicating the graces or effects the respective beads owned.

In this way it is that the Japanese *tama*, referring to the virtue of things in general, is expressed by the Chinese ideographs 玉 and 珠 for the quality of beads, and by 圭, 瓊, and 璚, for the shape and function.

These graces of the bead are symbolized in the form of its material existence, as can be seen from the fact that it had been included as one of the Three Imperial Regalia, namely the *Yasakani-no-Magatama* 八坂瓊勾玉, which has been handed down from generation to generation as the protector of the Emperor and one of the Heirlooms of the Imperial Throne.

Concerning the *Yasakani-no-Magatama*, which was used when the Sun Goddess closed the door of the Heaven's Cave, in which she shut herself, the *Nihonshoki* has the following to say:

"[Ame-no-Koyane-no-Mikoto and Futo-tama-no-Mikoto] dug up a five-hundred branched True Sakaki-tree of the Heavenly Kagu-yama. On its upper branches they hung an august five-hundred-bead string of *Yasakani*-jewels."

In one book quoted in the *Nihonshoki*, we read:

"On the middle branches he [Ame-no-Koyane-no-Mikoto] hung a string of *Yasakani* jewels made by the ancestor of the jewel-makers, Ama-no-Akaru-dama, a child of Izanagi-no-Mikoto."

Again, another book quoted in the *Nihonshoki* says:

"[All the Gods] caused the ancestor of the *Be*<sup>1</sup> of jewel-makers, to make jewels."

While the *Kojiki* has the following passage:

"Charging His Augustness Jewel-Ancestor 玉祖命 to make an

<sup>1</sup> *Be* is an ancient hereditary corporation or guild.

august complete string of five hundred jewels of *Yasakani-no-Magatama*."

These quotations will show to the reader when and how the *Yasakani-no-Magatama* was made. It was then enshrined in the August Shed of the Sun Goddess, who conferred it later on Ninigi-no-Mikoto, the Imperial Grand-child, at the time of his descent on the land below, for the *Nihonshoki* has the quotation from some other book:

"Amaterasu-no-Ōmikami gave to Amatsu-Hikohoho-Ninigi-no-Mikoto the three treasures, viz. the Curved Jewel of *Yasakani-no-Magatama*, the *Yata-no-Kagami*, and the *Kusanagi-no-Tsurugi*."

The Divine Jewel is called by several different names, thus

(1) *Yasakani-no-Iotsu-no-Misumaru* (*Nihonshoki*)

八坂瓊之五百箇御統

(2) *Yasaka-no-Magatama-no-Iotsu-no-Misumaru-no-Tama*

八坂勾瓊五百津美須麻流之珠 (*Kojiki*)

(3) *Iotsu-no-Misumaru-no-Tama*

五百箇御統之瓊 (A book quoted in the *Nihonshoki*)

(4) *Mizu-Yasakani-no-Magatama* ( " )

瑞八坂瓊之曲玉

(5) *Uzu-no-Takara-no-Yasakani-no-Magatama* ( " )

珍寶八坂瓊之曲玉

(6) *Yasakani-no-Magatama* 八坂瓊勾玉 and *Yasaka-no-Magatama*

八坂勾瓊 for short.

*Yasaka* 八坂 is said by some scholars to be *Iyasaka*, meaning "more prosperous," and by others to have been taken from the name of a local place called *Yasaka* 八坂, but I agree with those who hold that *Yasaka* means "eight feet" 八尺 (pronounced *Yasaka*). *Iotsu*, for which are used the ideographs 五百箇 (lit. Five-hundred-pieces), should be taken to mean simply "many" or "a great many," instead of adhering to its literal sense. If *Misumaru* 御統 means, as we said above, "to join with a cord a number of perforated beads in the form of a rosary," it is plain



that the *Yasakani-no-Magatama* cannot be a single bead or jewel, but a string of jewels. Tanikawa-Kotosuga 谷川士清 (1709-1776) is perhaps the first scholar who gave an archaeological interpretation to the *Magatama*, for he says, in his *Magatamakō* 勾玉考, that the *Magatama* 勾瓊 is the so-called *Magatama* 勾玉 or curved bead; Motoori-Norinaga 本居宣長 favours this opinion, for he writes, in his *Kojikiden* 古事記傳, that the *Magatama* 勾瓊 is a bead that is curved as some people say, like those slender and curved beads which are still often unearthed and that the *Yasakani-no-Magatama* must be the curved bead. But *Misumaru* 御統 is, as we have seen above, a name given to a number or string of beads, which is flexible or easily bending, and they are, therefore, what we may call in the Japanese *magaru-tama* or beads that bend. Accordingly, the beads thus strung into a rosary are not necessarily the curved ones which are known as *magatama* to archaeology.

As regards the ideograph 瓊 (*ni*) of *Yasakani* 八坂瓊, we find from the *Shaku-Nibongi* 釋日本紀 that it means "red," like the ideograph 丹 for red (also read *ni*), though some scholars prefer blue for it. But the ideograph 瓊, pronounced *tama*, means bead or gem in general, irrespective of colour.

Now, the Mirror *Yata-no-Kagami* and the Sword *Kusanagi-no-Tsurugi* were copied in the 6th year (92 B.C.) of the reign of the Emperor Sujin 崇神天皇, and the original mirror and sword, which had been handed down from the *Jindai* days, were respectively enshrined at Ise and Atsuta. Nothing, however, is written in history concerning the Imperial Jewel, *Yasakani-no-Magatama*. In the *Kimpishō* 禁秘抄 compiled by the Emperor Juntoku 順德天皇 (the 84th), we find:

"The Divine Jewel 神璽 has remained unchanged ever since the days of *Jindai*. It went to the bottom in the era of Juei 壽永, but it floated up."

The accident of the Juei era (1182-1185), mentioned in the above passage, refers no doubt to the annihilation of the Taira family, most members of which went to the bottom at Dan-no-Ura of Nagato Province on the 14th day of the third month in the 2nd year (1185 A.D.)

of the Genreki era (or the fourth year of Juei era), taking the young Emperor Antoku 安德天皇 (the 81st) with them. The Divine Jewel also sank in the sea, but fortunately it came up, when, the *Gempei-Seisui-ki* 源平盛衰記 tells us in detail, Kataoka-Tarō-Tsuneharu 片岡太郎經春 of Hitachi Province, finding the Signet, took it to his comrades-in-arms, who had no idea what it could be till the court-ladies told them that it was the Divine Jewel. The *Gukanshō* 愚管抄 endorses what is said above, saying in effect:

"The casket of the Jewel, which floated up, was discovered by a warrior, who wanted to show it to the *Naisbi* or Lady-in-waiting of *Immei* 尹明内侍."

And Kitabatake-Chikafusa 北畠親房 write in his *Jinnō-Shōtō-ki* 神皇正統記:

"The Divine Jewel, which is called *Yasakani-no-Magatama*, has come out of the sea because it is an Imperial protector, which has been kept near the Imperial body ever since the days of *Jindai*."

This is considered to be a miraculous effect wrought by the Divine Jewel. On the 25th day of the fourth month, in the same year, the Divine Jewel and the Divine Mirror were taken back to the Imperial Palace at Kyōto, when, it seems, the casket of the Divine Jewel was seen, for the *Kimpishō* writes about it as follows:

"It is covered with blue silk, covered with purple thread, and tied up like a net. When a *Naisbi* (a lady-in-waiting) holds the casket, her fingers may be put through its cord."

This is perhaps the first minute record we have concerning the Divine Jewel. Then, the *Hanazono-Tennō-Shinki* 花園天皇宸記 or the Autographic Diary of the Emperor Hanazono writes about the re-wrapping of the Divine Jewel under date of the first day of the first month in the 2nd year (1312 A.D.) of the Ōchō era 應長, as below:

"Concerning the wrapping of the Divine Jewel, about which I

asked the Premier the other day. He told me a precedent about re-wrapping it when damaged. It was in the years of Daiji 大治 (1126-1130), Genreki (1184-1185) 元暦 [ ] and also Einin 永仁 (1293-1298), when the ex-Emperor was on the Throne, when it was re-wrapped, etc. It was done at the command of the ex-Emperor. Now, it must be re-wrapped according to the precedent in the following way: The Emperor issues the order for re-wrapping, the Premier sees to it, a Lady-in-waiting to *Chūnagon* takes out the Jewel casket, and the Premier sews up the broken part of the cord."

So the Divine Jewel was re-wrapped in the Daiji era (1126-1130) of the reign of the Emperor Sutoku 崇徳天皇 (the 75th), in the civil war of the Juei era 壽永 (1182-1185) of the reign of the Emperor Gotoba 後鳥羽天皇 (the 82nd) and in the Einin era (1293-1298) of the reign of the Emperor Fushimi 伏見天皇 (the 92nd). It was also re-wrapped in the Ōchō era (1311) when its cord was broken. Under date of the 18th day of the second month in the 2nd year (1312 A.D.) the same diary writes:

"The Premier came to court at the time of the sheep (2 p.m.) and he tied the Jewel Casket in the Morning-meal Hall at the time of the monkey (4 p.m.). (The cord and the silk wrapper are both very old and damaged, and therefore they must be renewed. Both were presented by the *Kurōdo-no-Ryō* or Court-recorder). Kageko 蔭子, the Council and Lady-in-waiting, wrapped the casket. First the Casket was taken out and it was put on the Large Stand of the Morning-meal Hall. The Lady-in-waiting took the original cords off. (There are two: one old, and the other less old). The silk is not taken off, the original silk being left as it was, and so it is now doubly covered over. The old silk is so damaged that the Jewel Casket appears through it. The said Casket has a cover which is just recently put on. There are two keys on the cover, on the back side of the Casket. (We

do not know which is the front and which is the back side of the Casket, but we use the word *back*, thinking that the side facing us is the front). There are two jars in the Casket. The keys of the cover are pushed in. The said jars look like a *Karabitsu* 辛櫃 (a kind of box) when you look at them from behind. The front side looks the same way. (We have not seen the object, but we took it for granted as to which should be the front side.) There are jars. (One jar has a cover and the other two on the box). These three jars are tied with a similar cord, which is purple and is tied tight. This Casket has curtain cloth on its four corners. All is covered deep with dust, but the wrapping is done without dusting, said the Premier. The said silk is blue damask with small hollyhock patterns. The Court-recorder presented it. As the original procedure is not clear, the wrapping is done simply with a guess, said the Premier. The wrapping cloth was simply pressed and folded. When the wrapping was over, the cords were tied. Originally there were two cords: the older one is not discernible, but the new one is, being used when the lining was mended in the Einin era. There are five pairs of cords here, and five new pairs are again used. After the tying was over, the old cords were all tied up over it, said the Premier. This process is adopted after the record made by Lord Masakane 雅兼卿 in the Daiji era."

Under date of the first day of the Second month in the same year, the diary says again:

"The silk used in wrapping the Jewel Casket was presented today by the Court-recorder. (Blue damask of small hollyhock patterns. It is hammered silk. A cord of the same [colour], 2 ft. long. The lining is plain silk.) Seven cords were presented (10 ft. long, and purple in colour), so said the Premier. Both the ends of the cords should be sewed, etc."

Moreover, there are three sketches of the Imperial Casket in the

said Diary written by the Emperor Hanazono 花園天皇.

These pictures give a general idea of the Casket of the Divine Jewel. We have seen above that the Casket was re-wrapped in the Ōchō era, after the procedure adopted in the Daiji era. The same procedure was also adopted when the Casket was re-wrapped in the Genreki and Einjin eras. Then the *Kimpishō* 禁秘抄 tells us that the Casket is covered with blue silk, by which is meant, as we have seen above, blue damask of small hollyhock patterns, lined with plain silk and tied tight with purple cords.

We find the following description of the Jewel Casket, in the *Shōho-iji* 正保遺事, which is said to have been related by Premier Takatsukasa when the Emperor Kōmei 孝明天皇 (the 121st), the Great-grandfather of H. I. M. the Emperor, proceeded back to his new Palace in the eleventh month in the 2nd year (1855 A.D.) of the Ansei era:

“The August Casket of the Divine Jewel is 1.3 or 1.4 ft. long, 7 or 8 inches wide and about 4 inches deep. It is tied hard with cords like a package bound for Edo (Tōkyō). It is said to be tied once in every fifty years, but the new cords are tied several-fold over the old ones used years ago. Lady Nagahashi 長橋局 and another (whose name I forget) are in charge of the tying.”

From the above description as well as the one we find in the diary kept by the Emperor Hanazono 花園天皇, concerning the wrapping of the Jewel Casket under date of the 2nd year (1312 A.D.) of the Ōchō 應長, we learn that it is an old custom to add new covers over the old ones whenever the Casket of the Divine Jewel is re-wrapped.

The Divine Jewel, as we have seen, has been handed down generation after generation ever since the *Jindai* days, and there is no knowing, as nobody has ever seen it, what the Jewel is like in shape, colour or quality, nor is it known as to how many beads make the Imperial Signet. Surrounded in such obscurity lies the sacred mystery of the Divine Jewel.

It is a matter of great significance, in view of the fact that a bead

in itself is attributed with some mysterious graces, that the Imperial family of Japan should have among its Heirlooms a string of beads that has come down since time out of memory. Accordingly in the *Nibonshoki* we find the following description of how warmly Itote, the local chief of Ito in Tsukushi received the Emperor Chūai 仲哀天皇 (the 14th), who proceeded to Kyūshū to attack the rebel tribe of Kumaso:

“Itote 五十迹手, the ancestor of the *Agatanushi* of Ito in Tsukushi, hearing of the Emperor's coming, pulled up Sakaki-trees of 500 branches, which he set up in the bow and stern of his ship. On the upper branches he hung Yasaka jewels, on the middle branches white-copper mirrors, and on the lower branches ten-span swords, and coming to meet the Emperor at Hikijima in Anato, presented them to him.”—Aston

After presenting the Emperor with the jewels, mirrors and swords, Itote addressed him, saying:

“Mayst Thou, govern thy country with subtlety and elasticity like the carvings of the Yasaka jewels.”

Itote suggested that the Imperial administration should be as subtle as a string of beads and at the same time he expressed his allegiance by means of the jewels. It is with the same spirit that Kitabatake-Chikafusa 北畠親房, the author of the *Jinnō-Shōtōki* 神皇正統記 says with truth that “the jewel is the spirit of the moon, because it is the symbol of gentleness and obedience and the source of piety and love.”

The Japanese are known for their magnanimity and adaptability, accepting everything and everybody that comes, either friendly or hostile. They are tender-hearted and merciful, and they love peace. They are artistic and tasteful, and adapt themselves to any situation if need be. Indeed they can well be compared to a string of beads, subtle and mysterious. Mysterious indeed are the graces of the Divine Jewel, the Imperial Signet, which symbolizes the benevolence of the Emperor, whose body-protector the Divine Signet has been ever since the *Jindai* days.

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