PETER METEVELIS
Tokyo

Martyred Childe of God

Abstract

The death of Japanese empress Suiko 推古 (r. A.D. 592–628), a historical personage, was portrayed in passages of the *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 with reference to symbolisms of the sun-hiding mythologem. These passages contribute what is identified as a "fly motif." The particular expression of the fly motif in the *Kojiki*'s 古事記 variant of the sun-hiding myth suggests a relationship, at least in terms of complementary symbolisms, between the fly motif and a postulated cicada motif. Though the Japanese evidence for a cicada motif is inconclusive (despite cultural prominence of cicadae otherwise), a *Nihon shoki* variant of the myth has the death of the anthropomorphized young goddess Waka-hiru-me incite the sun-goddess to hide, suggesting parallels with certain central myths of far-flung cultures to the south and west of Asia. In the South Asian example, the death of a mythical young cicada causes the disappearance of the sun. Might Waka-hiru-me, too, have had a cicada form?

Key words: flies — cicada — sun-hiding myth — eclipse — sun-goddess — Waka-hiru-me — insect — Suiko

Asian Folklore Studies, Volume 51, 1992: 183–198

IN the fifth lunar month of the summer of 627, the thirty-fifth regnal year of Empress Suiko, a strange thing happened near the capital of Japan:

> Flies [*hae*] gathered together in great numbers. They clustered together for ten rods, and floated away in the air across the Shinano pass with a sound like thunder. They reached as far east as the province of Kamitsuke, and then spontaneously dispersed.
>
> (*Nihon shoki*, Suiko 35.5; trans. ASTON 1956, II: 155)

We cannot interpret this passage from the *Nihon shoki* to mean that 627 was a year of the locust. Especially in view of the insects' sudden dispersal, any theory of locust infestation seems strained. Moreover, it is a logical leap to interpret "flies" to mean "locusts," since the true locust does not resemble *Musca* in the least. Neither does the description of the insects in the passage suggest the behavior of any species of *Musca*. Then what native insects assemble in this way? And members of what noisy species could be considered "flies"? Whatever interpretation is settled upon, I propose that the passage might have more of a traditional, religious import than a formal historical one.

According to the next passage in the same text, the second month, twenty-seventh day of the following year saw the aged empress—who counted herself a direct descendant of the solar deity—smitten with illness. On the second day into the following month, the sun was eclipsed, and four days after that the empress's condition became critical. She passed away on the seventh. I should point out that the passages referred to here are part of a continuing account of the empress's condition, and that the eclipse passage was worked into that account.

The eclipse passage draws the particular interest of the folklorist and the historian of religions where "total eclipse" (*shokujin* 蝕盡) is "euphemistically" given as *hae-tsuki-taru-koto*. According to one

writer,

> . . . The phraseology of this word is much like that of the euphemistic word *nahoru* [id. *naoru*, "recover"] which is used in place of the ominous word "death," and the word *yasumi* ["rest," "relax"] used in place of "illness." . . . in Japan, as with the Ainu, it was thought that people are disinclined to gaze up at the solar eclipse because during the eclipse the sun is taking on illness as a vicarious substitute for mankind.
>
> (ŌBAYASHI 1956, 257)[1]

And with the euphemism we surely come up against something that is at least as significant religiously as historically. The component *hae* in the euphemism undoubtedly refers to the same insect that appeared in noisy droves in the fifth month of the previous year. *Hae-tsuki-taru-koto*, phonetically read, means "the fastening-on of flies," or "fly-attachment." The fly appears to have been the harbinger of impending doom—but a doom from which there ought to be a resurrection, as the association with the eclipse event would probably indicate. I must add that the resurrection theme is clearly evident in a remarkable passage only a few pages earlier in the chronicle:

> On [the messenger's] return he reported that when he went to the [burial] mound and made inspection, the heaped-up earth had not been disturbed, but on opening the tomb and looking in, there was no corpse. It was empty, and there was nothing but the garment [the corpse had been wearing] folded up and laid on the coffin.
>
> (*Nihon shoki*, Suiko 21.12.2; ASTON 1956, II: 145)

It is not difficult to see in this passage the clear parallel with the Christian Resurrection (Luke 24 : 12; John 20 : 5–7), and we must wonder why the passage appears where it does in the text.

Looking back to Japan's centrally important sun-hiding myth, we find a clue to understanding the insects mentioned in the Suiko era. In the sun-hiding myth we find a buzzing insect, the *sabae* 狭蠅, whose name apparently means "fly of the fifth month" (MURABAYASHI 1943, 442; CHAMBERLAIN 1973, 52 n. 4; cf. SAIGŌ 1975, I: 241–43). The *sabae* show up in the form of a simile in the *Kojiki*'s account of the sun-hiding myth (SAIGŌ 1975, I: 241, 320; NISHIMIYA 1979, 44 n. 4, 50; CHAMBERLAIN 1973, 52–53, 64–65), though all the *Nihon shoki*'s various accounts of the myth neglect to mention them. In the *Kojiki*'s variant,

the *sabae* are said to buzz when the sun-goddess dies, or rather, is sacrificed by her obstreperous brother, Susa-no-o, and retires to her sepulcher in the lapidary sky (METEVELIS 1990), producing the effect of an eclipse. She resurrects later, of course, assisted by the sun-summoning ritual, which follows a sacred conclave and involves a bonfire and music and dancing under the direction of the chieftain Omohikane-no-kami. Her resurrection is also assisted by the "Armstrong Male," Ta-chikara-wo-no-kami, whose Christian counterpart comes forward in Matt. 28: 2–3. The ritual, by the way, is the first social act ever performed by the community of divine ancestors.

It is worth observing that the *sabae* are explicitly associated with Susa-no-o in an earlier section of the *Kojiki*, where he cried and howled: "For this reason the sound of bad Deities was like unto the flies of the fifth moon [*sabae*] as they all swarmed . . . " (CHAMBERLAIN 1973, 52; cf. SAIGŌ 1975, I: 241–42; NISHIMIYA 1979, 44; PHILIPPI 1969, 72).[2] This apparition of the *sabae* in the form of a simile foreshadows the one in the sun-hiding myth. Again I am reminded of a West Asian parallel: In Tablet XI of the Akkadian Gilgameš epic, following a sun-hiding myth of sorts in lines 96–106 and an associated deluge, line 161 relates that "the gods crowded like flies about the sacrificer" (PRITCHARD 1955, 95). How widely was this fly motif spread?

* * *

In various cultures insects have been associated with the disappearance or reemergence of the day (or a deity). The fragmentary pre-Hittite, Hattian myth of Telipinu's disappearance has the sun-god send a bee —a buzzing insect—to find and waken the wrathful Telipinu, and thus play a role in restoring the light (BEYERLIN 1978, 159–65). In like manner a Polynesian spirit named "He-that-buzzes-in-the-skies" was sent to search for the reviving trickster Hatupatu, who was killed (sacrificed?) by his elder brethren; the tale perhaps borrows the motif from solar beliefs (GREY 1977, 185). Philippine myths have it that the first death occurred when a fly messenger brought a message that enraged the deity Maguayen (GRAY 1979, passim, but esp. 12, 30, 35, 61; death cry on 48). The Ekoi people of eastern Nigeria relate that the black fly's buzzing caused a chain of events that ended in the bush fowl neglecting to call the sun; for this the fly was punished by having its voice taken away—all but its ability to buzz (ARNOTT 1962; Motifs A2422.5, A2239.2 [THOMPSON 1975]). When Sumerian Inanna sought Dumuzi, it was a fly from the hot, windy steppe that told her his whereabouts, as the sun told Greek Demeter where to find her daughter (the daughter had shrieked when abducted to the world of death, alert-

ing Demeter to something being amiss) (WOLKSTEIN and KRAMER 1983, 88, 167). Big Fly, who is associated with wind, is Sun's day messenger among the Navaho (REICHARD 1977, 78). An example closer to home occurs in the tale of Chumong, the legendary founder of the state of Koguryŏ in the north of the Korean peninsula, as told in the *Ku samguk sa* 舊三國史 (Elder history of the Three Kingdoms). According to this tale, a "fly" kept stinging infant Chumong around the eyes, preventing him from sleeping; superhero that he was, the infant shot the fly with an arrow as it rested on a spinning wheel, killing it. Wouldn't you know? The name Chumong means "skillful archer."

In many of these tales where the messenger-fly appears, its greatest attribute seems to be its buzzing (Motifs A2239.2, A2426.3.3). No doubt the precise species of fly varied from culture to culture. We should probably think of it as akin to the common horsefly, and perhaps in some cases this is what it was. We can well imagine buzzing flies swarming over the carcass of fallen game, or a sacrificial victim. I doubt, however, that the precise species was as important as the insect's place in the symbolic structure of the tales.

As it happens, the insect is not necessarily a "fly," nor always even a buzzing insect. In fact a variety of insect types substitute for the fly. The bee has already been mentioned, and I suspect it was more widespread than is currently recognized. In Greece the insect was Tithonus, beloved of Eos; he aged and withered (symbolic death) until there was little left of him than a chirping voice. Eos shut him up in a chamber and he metamorphosed into a katydid (in some of the tales mentioned above, too, there is this element of the young insect, or the worm that would transform). The dung-beetle, to give still another instance, seems to have possessed its own endearing qualities. It digs an underground chamber to feed itself and its larvæ in. In Egyptian religion, we find Kheperà (a *Scarabaeus sacer*) playing a role in myth, emerging from the primæval deep with the rising sun or pushing the sun through the sky on its daily mission.[3] Among its other religious qualities, the scarabaeus beetle was seen as the creature of the constellation we call Cancer; the constellation more than two millennia ago used to be near the solstice point of the northern summer, where the sun climbs to its greatest declination. Images of the scarabaeus were also used as talismans since they were symbols of the soul, and they were used as funerary objects placed on corpses and in tombs to protect the heart (mind) and tongue of the dead and to ensure resurrection.

In ancient China, however, it was not an image of the dung beetle that was placed with corpses in underground chambers, but a jade image of the cicada. The nymphs of the cicada also bore into the

ground to live, usually undergoing five molts before reemerging to embark upon adult life as though reborn (MACKENZIE 1923, 223–26; BRAZIL 1991). Despite the variety in the type of the mythical insect, the example in which the relevance of the insect to the sun-hiding myth is most impressive occurs in the Andaman Islands (in the Bay of Bengal), where the peculiar death cry of the cicada causes the sun to vanish (RADCLIFFE-BROWN 1964, 206–7, 213–16, 331).[4] Here is a brief example from among the several recorded Andamanese variants of the myth:

> Then *Teŋat* took in his hand the cicada and squashed it between his palms. As he killed it the cicada uttered its cry and the whole world became dark. When the people saw that it was dark they tried to bring back the daylight. *Teŋat* took some of the resin [he had recently acquired] and made torches. He taught the [primal people] how to dance and sing. When *Da Koŋoro* (Sir Ant) sang a song the day came back. After that the day and night came alternately.
>
> (RADCLIFFE-BROWN 1964, 215)

Given the religious importance of the cicada in China and its central position in the Andamanese sun-hiding myth, it deserves closer examination in our present context.

Until the rise of civilization, a wide swath of the earth, ranging from the Sahara to China, was wetter and more forested than now, and the cicada ranged more widely. Today the range of the 1,500 known species of cicada is more limited, but nevertheless is worldwide, extending especially from West Africa to India in the south, through Southeast and insular Southeast Asia, and throughout East Asia (DISTANT 1906). Most are tropical species. The cicada is well represented in Japan, with more than a score of species ranging from one to five centimeters in length (KATO 1961).

* * *

In our opening quotation from the *Nihon shoki*, the *hae* were said to swarm, migrate through a mountain pass, then disperse. Strictly construed, this behavior does not correspond to that of any insect species with which I am familiar; even the *Nihon shoki* treats it as unusual. The only plausible explanations for the behavior that occurred to me were euhemeristic ones involving cicadas whirring between trees in unusual numbers. I was embarrassed to catch myself euhemerizing, and one informant on the matter, naturalist Mark Brazil, has disillu-

sioned me of the whole notion. In his view, there are too many inconsistencies of fact in the passage for it to be taken at face value. There are, it happens, instances of mass emergences of cicadas in North America under certain conditions; but this phenomenon cannot be extrapolated to the Japanese case without some evidence, and anyway cicadas do not normally fly from tree to tree unless disturbed. I have never myself seen more than one or two at a time flying between trees. And since apparently no insect migrates in a swarm then suddenly disperses, the temptation is strong to dismiss such behavior as "unreal."

Then let us construe our opening quotation a little less strictly. In this way we can infer that the "flies" appeared in the fifth lunar month (suggesting that they were a seasonal insect and moreover a summer insect), swarmed, and made great noise—all of which might be thought characteristic of the cicada, though the "swarming" can be no more than an artifact of population density: the cicada remains a visually inconspicuous, solitary insect within its community.

The "singing" of some species takes the form of a droning that might be considered "buzzing." The "singing" of the cicada has been nicely explained by Brazil in his column "Wild Watch":

> The most striking feature of the cicadas is, of course, their singing, which apparently serves to attract females and as an aid to keeping the population together.
>
> Males produce a shrill, penetrating sound from specially developed organs at the base of the abdomen. This stridulatory organ consists basically of a soundbox and a resonating chamber. (Females have no stridulatory organs and so are silent.)
>
> Sound is produced by the tymbal, which is an organ on the body's surface formed as a ringlike thickening with a crisp, strong membrane stretched across it. A muscle attached to the membrane can pull it in suddenly, producing a sound like that made by the distortion of the top of a tin can.
>
> Each movement produces a click and the "song" is made up of a continuous series of little clicks amplified in a special air-space acting as a resonating chamber. Each species has a distinctively shaped "sound producer" that produces different tones and rhythms, so that the songs of the males of each species are distinct. With a little practice, it is possible to identify them by their songs.
>
> Cicada songs range from those that remind me of a demented dentist's drill to those of a circular saw striking metal (guaranteed to set your teeth on edge if the first didn't). Such sounds build and swell to a roar then stutter, fail and decline suddenly like an

> ailing motor, only to wind up again moments later.
>
> The volume produced can be quite deafening, not only to human ears but seemingly to cicadas, too. Apparently each male has a special muscle that it uses to immobilize its own auditory organ as it begins to sing so as not to deafen itself.
>
> That reminds me that cicadas have an interesting significance in traditional Oriental medicine. The bodies and discarded exoskeletons are used as a cure for—earache!
>
> (BRAZIL 1991)

In fact, all species of cicada (to my knowledge) have three distinct sound responses: 1) congregational, which is regulated by weather and the songs of other males; 2) courtship, which occurs usually prior to copulation; and 3) a disturbance squawk, which in myths becomes the death cry (e.g., RADCLIFFE-BROWN 1964, 331). The congregational singing of some species can be quite interesting. One Japanese species of cicada, *Tanna japonensis* (KATO 1961, 27), has such a distinctively sonorous song that I myself mistook it for a bird's song when long ago I first heard it. The Japanese name of this species, *higurashi*, might perhaps have linked it with the sun, though I know of no document that says so. In any event, the wooded areas of rural Japan can in fact be filled with an unbearable din produced by several species of cicada.

But as for their thundering noise in our opening quotation (the original text says, "*Naru oto ikazuchi no gotoshi*"), this might probably be ascribed to simple literary hyperbole, were it not for the connection with the sun-hiding myth: gathering clouds, storm wind, and thunder have a traditional relationship with the eclipse mythologem. Moreover, while the statement in the passage that the insects "floated away" scarcely evokes the behavior of any real (i.e., non-mythical) insect, the concept of "floating" does appear often in Japanese folklore and literature. For instance, there are "floating islands" and a "floating bridge of Heaven." Finally, the word translated as "pass" in the passage is actually "slope." In early Japanese literature, "crossing a mountain slope" is a standard euphemism connoting the departure of a soul (see AKIMA 1982); the connotation is often, as here, lost in translation. Hence the insects' movement through the "pass" was very probably being presented as a subtle literary device to suggest there would come a death.

Noting that a similar migration of "flies" (*hae*) over a mountain slope was allegedly observed in the year A.D. 660, during the reign of Empress Saimei, and was there said to portend a military defeat (ASTON 1956, II: 270), I am left with the impression that the insect migration

in the Suiko-era passage, whether it represents a real phenomenon or a traditional theme, was included in the text after the fact in order to help bring the mythic concept of "fly attachment" into a relation with the empress's impending death. In saying this, I should hasten to point out, I am not trying to imply that the writers of the *Nihon shoki* deliberately "fudged" history. Their consciousness of history differed greatly from ours and was associated with traditional themes, as in European saga and legend—or for that matter the whole corpus of the Japanese universal chronicles (i.e., the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*). The passage, then, should be seen as an allegory representing the facts on a deeper level of understanding.

If what I am suggesting is correct, we must wonder why the writer of the passage should call a cicada a fly. The Japanese language has a perfectly good word for cicada (*semi*), and modern Japanese never think of the cicada as a fly. The answer perhaps lies somewhere in the realm of symbolism. The common fly, being black and associated with dead carcasses, would appear more qualified than the cicada for the symbolic duty of announcing death and darkness. On the other hand the life cycle of the cicada seems more suitable in terms of the death-and-resurrection theme. The term *hae* probably never subsumed species outside of the *Musca* family, and thus would not have taken in the cicada. More likely is it that the flies, which after all have their own motif, replaced the cicada to represent the death panel of the death-and-resurrection diptych, and this perhaps would be facilitated by a superficial resemblance between the two kinds of insect: some species of cicada—notably the *higurashi*—indeed do physically resemble a fly writ large, especially in the broad head and the membranous wing structures, at least when seen from a moderate distance (see convenient illustration in *Kōjien* s.v. *higurashi*). This interpretation surely is more palatable than the locust hypothesis.

Coming back to the Andamanese sun-hiding myth, the particular passage quoted happens to be a gloss lacking in detail (I refer the reader to other variants and related information in RADCLIFFE-BROWN 1964, 186–228 passim), but it is consistent with the Japanese sun-hiding myth and it does show that two kinds of insect had to do with the sun-hiding tale in the Andamans. The cicada, which lives a solitary life, incites the sun to vanish in anger, while a social insect issues the original matins following the first pernoctation. I have seen examples of myths in other cultures in which the ant calls the dawn. While ants are not particularly noted for their ability to sing, at least not in post-mythical times, there were probably other reasons for the ant's apparition in the myth. I have not explored this area. In Japan the ant's place is taken

by the rooster (which obviously does sing for the sun in the morning), and in the Andamans the places of both Ta-chikara-wo-no-kami and Omohi-kane-no-kami are taken, more or less, by a single mythical individual, Kolwot, who was both strong of arm and a chieftain of the primal people. Kolwot bears similarities to other Japanese deities as well.

As for the cicada, its death cry occupies about the same position in the Andamanese sun-hiding myth as the buzzing of *sabae* does in the corresponding Japanese myth, save that the death cry occurs at death and the onset of eclipse whereas the buzzing occurs just after the arrival of darkness.[5] The Japanese myth does not state that there was a killing of *sabae*, and I do not think that happened (the Korean tale of Chumong mentioned above is the only one to my knowledge in which a fly has the role of victim, and even then it might turn out to have been a bee). But the foreshadowing passage in which flies associate with Susa-no-o's characteristically deadly behavior suggests that when Susa-no-o again applied that behavior to instigate the sun-hiding episode he was behaving much as Andamanese *Teŋat* did. And in both cultures the insect's apparition associates with the events in which the seasonal and diurnal cycles were established following ritual transgression (cf. LEACH 1971, 34, 40; METEVELIS 1985).

To be sure, I do not believe the *sabae* were the cicada. I believe them to be precisely what the myth purports them to be: good old-fashioned flies. However, considering that their very name associates them with the fifth month, the traditional time of the cicada, and that the Andamanese cicada does have a role seemingly comparable with that of the *sabae* in the context of the sun-hiding myth, there is reason to suspect literary conflation or, plausibly, even some minor degree of theocrasia being involved between the two insects in the recorded Japanese myth. If we cannot clearly view the *sabae* as the cicada, what *does* have the cicada's place in the Japanese myth?

* * *

According to the chronicles, Susa-no-o initiated the sun-hiding episode by sacrificing either the sun-goddess or a weaving-maiden named Waka-hiru-me-no-mikoto, depending on the variant. He did so by casting a dappled horsehide over the spirit of the goddess (whichever one) as she sat at work in her Hall of Abstinence Raiment, a weaving hall (NAUMANN 1982). If we regard Waka-hiru-me-no-mikoto, whom some scholars have taken—or mistaken—for the sun-goddess herself, her avatar, or her sister,[6] to be in fact the daughter of the sun-goddess, then we can view the episode in a much better light. The name Waka-

hiru-me-no-mikoto (The Lady, Young Noonday Female) appears in the sun-hiding myth only in the First Variant of the *Nihon shoki* (ASTON 1956, I: 45). Surely this name cannot apply to the sun-goddess herself, because it implies mythical maidenhood and the sun-goddess had already borne children by Susa-no-o before this episode. Moreover, in several variants of the *Nihon shoki*'s account of the nativity of the sun-goddess, she is called Oho-hiru-me (Great Noonday Female), the "great" showing a contrast with the "young."[7] Finally, in the First Variant the sun-goddess is mentioned by her name "Amaterasu" only after Waka-hiru-me "divinely departed," and *as a separate deity*; NAUMANN (1982, 27), moreover, suggests the parallel with the young and old vegetation—which in turn suggests that something sacrificial is in the works.

The First Variant says next to nothing about the nature of Waka-hiru-me, but structurally she occupies the position of the Kore in the well-known Greek myth of Mother and Daughter as well as the position of the cicada in the Andamanese myth. Space here does not allow the three-way structural parallels to be detailed. But I think that if the Japanese sun-hiding myth can be seen to have two basic forms, one in which the sun-goddess herself is sacrificed and one in which her daughter is sacrificed (making the angry sun-goddess a *mater dolorosa* figure like Demeter), there would be a grand structure closely paralleling the Homeric and the Phigalian/Thelpousan forms of the Demeter myth (in the former the daughter goes away, in the latter the mother goes away) (YOSHIDA 1973). The twin images of Greek Kore and Japanese Waka-hiru-me working at the loom before being attacked also seem to support the contention. Remember, too, that both Demeter and the Japanese sun-goddess were special national deities privileged to have the grandest and most centrally important temple complexes in their respective culture areas, both were associated with mystery cults, both had a solar connection, and both were intimately associated with a fiercely destructive Deity Wind (METEVELIS 1979). In the Andamans, too, there is a definite parent-child relationship between the central deity of the culture (named, depending on the region, Bilik, Biliku, Bilika, Puluga, or Öluga) and the cicada (RADCLIFFE-BROWN 1964, 150, 154, 198, 206); and as is the case with Greek Demeter and the Japanese sun-goddess, this central deity of the culture, who controlled the celestial fire, or the sun (RADCLIFFE-BROWN 1964, 198, 203, 206, 215), was associated in the Andamans with a fiercely destructive Deity Wind (RADCLIFFE-BROWN 1964, 148–49, 151–52). Furthermore, the Andamanese deity might have been connected with something resembling a mystery cult; at least it can be said that the most

important annual festival was denied the anthropologist's eyes (RADCLIFFE-BROWN 1964, 155, 166).

* * *

In Japan the chirping/buzzing cicada is prominent, not only physically in the environment, but also in culture and literature. In the poetry of the Nara period (710–794) and Heian period (794–1185) the cicada makes apparitions as an insect of the autumn and often as a symbol of solitude and melancholy, though these symbolisms are thought to have originated on the continent. In fact, the cicada is an all-summer insect in Japan and has been recognized as such in Japanese literature since the Edo period (1600–1868). Why then did earlier literature relate it to the autumn? I suggest that symbolism is everything here. In the Andamans the cicada was an "anomalous" creature (LEACH 1971, 38, 41–42), what Victor Turner would call a "liminal" creature. Though it is an "all-summer" insect in the Andamans, too, being absent there only during the cool season from December to March, the important annual festival called "killing the cicada" comes at the boundary between seasons, in December (RADCLIFFE-BROWN 1964, 155, 361). In other words, while the cicada is present during the warm and hot seasons, its ritual association is rather with the onset of the cool season, to which the festival looks forward. As the ethnographer observed,

> The cessation of the song of the cicada removes one of the possible causes of the anger of *Biliku*, and therefore marks the period of fine weather. That anger appears once more when the natives busy themselves with melting bees'-wax.
>
> (RADCLIFFE-BROWN 1964, 363)

Some such association might well have underlain the earlier Japanese view of the cicada, a view that, like much of the rest of the mythic knowledge, became weakened or lost to the centers of national tradition by the Edo period.

That the name *sabae* probably means "fly of the fifth lunar month" suggests the extremely prominent seasonality of this insect in cultural terms, if not in natural terms. A Chinese poem of the Western Chou period (which ended in 770 B.C.) includes the line "In the fifth month the cicada cries" (CHANG 1980, 239). On the continent, the fifth lunar month was an arid time: "In ancient times, [Chinese dragon processions] were held in the fifth moon, when the soil of the field and even the mud bricks of the farm-houses were split and cracked with the dry heat" (ZHAO 1989, 239). Symbolically, the heat would correspond

to the first of the three divisions of the typical East Asian sun-hiding myth: 1) hyperthermal sun (or superfluous suns); 2) darkness, often accompanied by flood; 3) the solar periodicity of the present day. In most such myths, a sacred creature "cries" and dies (or just cries) at or near the boundary between the first and second divisions, this being balanced by a matins crier at the second boundary. The Andamanese cicada naturally participates in this myth, since it sings at dawn and dusk (RADCLIFFE-BROWN 1964, 154, 330–31), making of it a true liminal creature and one that regulates the transitions between light and darkness. By contrast, most Japanese species are heard throughout the day during summer, but one, the *higurashi*, sings as the Andamanese species does: near dawn and dusk. Hence if the Wa-jin ancestors of the Japanese indeed did bring a cicada motif along on their migrations from the continental south to the archipelago, the insular environment would have been perfectly prepared for it.

Finally, we must observe that in the Andamans the young cicada is symbolically the martyred childe of God. If my interpretation is correct, so is Waka-hiru-me-no-mikoto. So, too, in a sense, is the expired Japanese empress.

NOTES

1. If I read him right, Elmer SUHR has a similar opinion concerning the sun in eclipse as savior, or agent of renewal (1970, 28–30, 43). See the etymologies for 蝕 and 盡 given in Kōdansha's *Daijiten* 大字典.

2. This is the myth of the investiture of places and functions upon the sun, moon, and storm (i.e., Susa-no-o), which implies the secondary partitioning of the cosmos following the separation of heaven and earth (cf. GASTER 1961, 449–50). I am of the opinion that it is not the deities *per se* that were malevolent; it was rather that their cries portended "evil" in the making. In the sun-hiding myth they could even be mourning. I cannot agree with the emendation of Motoori Norinaga (1730–1801) in which he substituted "evil" for "myriad" in the expression "myriad deities" (CHAMBERLAIN 1973, 64 n. 4; cf. SAIGŌ 1975, I: 320). The *sabae* pop up again at the opening of the Ninigi cycle of the myth system, the cycle in which Prince Ninigi, the grandson of the sun-goddess, makes the fatal mistake that brings mortality upon mankind: "But in [Middle Earth] there were numerous Deities which shone with a lustre like that of fireflies, and evil Deities which buzzed like flies [*sabae*]. There were also trees and herbs all of which could speak" (ASTON 1956 I: 64, 90; SAIGŌ 1975, I: 241). Ninigi married a tree, spurned a rock, and ever after his descendants, including Empress Suiko, have been fated to suffer mortality.

3. Oddly, the Egyptians usually depicted Kheperå with the solar orb between its forefeet, whereas the beetle actually rolls dung balls with its hindfeet. Dung beetles follow several life-styles: rollers that remove balls of dung to bury them in a place removed from the site of deposition, tunnelers that construct feeding or breeding burrows beneath the dung pile, and dwellers that feed or breed within the dung pile. *Scarabaeus sacer* belongs to the first category. For more on this remarkable insect,

see *Dung Beetle Ecology*, ed. by Ilkka Hanski and Yves Cambefort (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

4. I am reminded of the parallels in the New Testament that mention that Christ uttered a cry upon his death and that his death was followed by a sinister eclipse.

5. Cf. Motif B251.2.4 *Fly habitually buzzes when cleric returns from matins.*

6. E.g., MATSUMURA 1955, 43–44; ŌBAYASHI 1991, 71; ASTON 1956, I: 45 n. 4. A deity named Waka-hiru-me-no-kami is listed in a section of the *Kojiki* appearing subsequent to the section relating the sun-hiding myth (PHILIPPI 1969, 114), but her ancestry is not given. Moreover, the *Kojiki* here uses different graphs for "Waka-hiru-me." The genealogical table of KAWAGUCHI Kenji attempts no ancestry for Waka-hiru-me-no-kami, noting only that according to the *Kojiki* she married and produced offspring (1976, 141).

7. The Japanese sun-goddess is never represented in infant form. This is true also of her brother, whose full name is Take-haya Susa-no-o-no-mikoto (lit., "The Lord, Brave-early Male of Susa"—the "Susa" being of unknown provenance), implying miraculous adulthood at birth. He is also portrayed as a bearded deity from the first.

REFERENCES CITED

AKIMA, Toshio
1982 Songs of the dead: Poetry, drama, and ancient death rituals of Japan. *Journal of Asian Studies* 41(3): 485–509.

ARNOTT, Kathleen
1962 Why the bush-fowl calls at dawn and why flies buzz. In *African myths and legends retold*, Kathleen Arnott, 56–63. London: Oxford University Press.

ASTON, William George
1956 *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the earliest times to A. D. 697.* 2 vols. in 1. London: George Allen and Unwin.

BEYERLIN, Walter, ed.
1978 *Near Eastern religious texts relating to the Old Testament.* Translated from the German by John Bowden. The Old Testament Library. Philadelphia: Westminster Press.

BRAZIL, Mark
1991 Those strident ringing, singing cicadas. *The Japan Times* 5 September: 20.

CHAMBERLAIN, Basil Hall, trans.
1973 *Ko-ji-ki.* Tokyo: Asiatic Society of Japan.

CHANG, Kwang-chih
1980 *Shang civilization.* Early Chinese civilizations series. New Haven: Yale University Press.

DISTANT, W[illiam] L[ucas]
1906 *A synonymic catalogue of homoptera: Part 1, cicadidæ.* London: British Museum (Natural History) Dept. of Zoology.

GASTER, Theodor Herzl
1961 *Thespis: Ritual, myth, and drama in the ancient Near East.* New and revised edition. Garden City, New York: Anchor Books.

GRAY, J. Patrick
1979 Filipino myths of death and speciation: Content and structure. *Asian Folklore Studies* 38(2): 11–72.

GREY, George Edward
1977 *Polynesian mythology and ancient traditional history of the New Zealand race as furnished by their priests and chiefs.* London: John Murray.
KATO, Masayo
1961 *Fauna Japonica: Cicadidae (Insecta).* Tokyo: Biogeographical Society of Japan.
KAWAGUCHI Kenji 川口謙二
1976 *Kamigami no keizu* 神々の系図 [Genealogies of the gods]. Vol. 1. Tōkyō Bijutsu Sensho 15. Tokyo: Tōkyō Bijutsu.
LEACH, Edmund R.
1971 Kimil: A category of Andamanese thought. In *Structural analysis of oral tradition*, eds. Pierre Maranda and Elli Köngäs Maranda, 22–48. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
MACKENZIE, Donald Alexander
[1923] *Myths of China and Japan.* London: Gresham.
MATSUMURA Takeo 松村武雄
1955 *Nihon shinwa no kenkyū* 日本神話の研究 [A study of Japanese myths]. 3 vols. in 5. Tokyo: Baifūkan.
METEVELIS, Peter
1979 The Japanese sun-goddess as a monsoon deity. *Epochē* 7(1–2): 21–30.
1985 To be dead or not to be. Paper read at the Thirtieth International Conference of Orientalists in Japan, Tokyo, 30 May.
1990 Autopsis report: The sky has been falling. Paper read at the Thirty-fifth International Conference of Orientalists in Japan, Tokyo, 11 May.
MURABAYASHI Magoshirō 村林孫四郎
1943 *Kojiki jiten* 古事記辞典 [Dictionary of the *Kojiki*]. Revised edition. Tokyo: Kinshōsha.
NAUMANN, Nelly
1982 *Sakahagi:* The "reverse flaying" of the heavenly piebald horse. *Asian Folklore Studies* 41(1): 7–38.
NISHIMIYA Kazutami 西宮一民, ed. and annotator
1979 *Kojiki.* Shinchō Nihon Koten Shūsei 27. Tokyo: Shinchōsha.
ŌBAYASHI Taryō 大林太良
1956 Tōnan Ajia no nisshoku shinwa no ichi kōsatsu 東南アジアの日蝕神話の一考察 [A study of Southeast Asian eclipse myths]. *Tōyō bunka kenkyūsho kiyō*, 9: 217–78.
1991 The ancient myths of Korea and Japan. *Acta Asiatica* 61: 68–82.
PHILIPPI, Donald L., trans.
1969 *Kojiki.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.
PRITCHARD, James Bennett
1955 *Ancient Near Eastern texts relating to the Old Testament.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.
RADCLIFFE-BROWN, Alfred Reginald
1964 *The Andaman islanders.* Reprint edition. New York: Free Press.
REICHARD, Gladys A.
1977 *Navaho religion: A study of symbolism.* Bollingen Series 18. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
SAIGŌ Nobutsuna 西郷信綱
1975 *Kojiki chūshaku* 古事記注釈 [Exegeses on the *Kojiki*]. 5 vols. Tokyo: Heibonsha.

SUHR, Elmer G.
1970 *The mask, the unicorn and the messiah: A study in solar eclipse symbolism.* The column of the cosmos (a trilogy) 3. New York: Helios Books.
THOMPSON, Stith
1975 *Motif-index of folk literature.* Revised and enlarged edition. 6 volumes. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press.
WOLKSTEIN, Diane and Samuel Noah KRAMER
1983 *Inanna, queen of heaven and earth; Her stories and hymns from Sumer.* New York: Harper and Row.
YOSHIDA, Atsuhiko
1973 Some parallel motifs between Greek and Japanese myths. *Bulletin of the Faculty of Humanities, Seikei University* 9: 1–14.
ZHAO, Qiguang
1989 Chinese mythology in the context of hydraulic society. *Asian Folklore Studies* 48(2): 231–46.