

Sakahagi* : The “ Reverse Flaying ” of the Heavenly Piebald Horse

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I.

This paper deals with the *sakahagi* 逆剥, usually translated as “ backward flaying ” (Aston 1956, I: 45) or “ backwards skinning ” (Philippi 1969: 80), of the heavenly piebald horse. This was one of the misdeeds of Susanowo, brother of the sun-goddess Amaterasu, and it is apparently something scarcely worth noticing within the sequence of mythical events which culminate in the concealment of the sun-goddess in the heavenly rock-cave. Such, at least, is the impression one gets when studying the abounding bulk of publications on Japanese mythology. The salient point of *sakahagi* would then, as pointed out nearly everywhere, lie solely in the defilement of the sacred weaving hall where Susanowo dropped the skinned animal while Amaterasu was sitting there weaving garments for the gods.

But is this *sakahagi* (including its implications) indeed as unimportant and trifling a motif as it may seem? This question can only be answered from a knowledge of the exact meaning of *sakahagi*, both in itself and in the context of the myth, yet we lack such a knowledge. It is the aim of this paper to fill this gap in our understanding of the myth.

If (assumedly) the rôle of *sakahagi* in its context is as important as its actual meaning in itself, then we have to consider the myth into which *sakahagi* is integrated *as a whole*. The opinions as to where to start may differ. There are reasons, however, to take up the story with Izanagi, the first parent, entrusting “ their missions to the three noble children ” (Philippi 1969: 71).¹

From the several versions dealing with the allotment of their

missions to the "three noble children," that is to Amaterasu, to the moon-god Tsukiyomi, and to Susanowo, there emerges clearly the undisputed rôle of the sun-goddess as ruler over the heavens, but also the primal designation of Susanowo as ruler over the world.² Susanowo, however, forfeited his realm from the beginning by constantly weeping in a very vexing way: his weeping caused the verdant mountains to wither, rivers and seas to dry up, and many of the people to die an untimely death. Therefore his designation was changed to the far away *Ne no kuni* 根の国, the realm of the dead.

Before entering his new domain Susanowo ascends to the heavens; there some kind of ordeal consisting in the bearing of children shall prove his good intentions toward the sun-goddess, and, however the outcome, Susanowo is thought to be the winner. But now Susanowo "raged with victory" (Philippi 1969: 79), interfering in every possible way with the cultivation of the rice-fields of Amaterasu, finally defecating in the new hall where Amaterasu will taste the first-fruits. Still Amaterasu excuses everything he did. It is at this point that Susanowo flays the heavenly piebald horse by a reverse flaying, followed by the flinging into the sacred weaving hall³ where either the weaving maiden dies or the sun-goddess hurts herself, according to which version of the myth we are looking at. Thereupon the sun-goddess conceals herself in the heavenly rock-cave, and constant darkness reigns. Thus all the gods assemble, devising various plans to lure her out again. Finally the roaring laughter of the deities watching the obscene dance of the goddess Ame no Uzume arouses the curiosity of the hidden sun-goddess; she opens the rock-door and reappears. Now the gods impose upon Susanowo a fine as well as a purification, terms finding expression by the word *harahe*. Thereafter Susanowo leaves the heavens; he descends to the land of Izumo where he slays the eight-

TABLE 1

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| 1 | On the strength of his character as a weeping god Susanowo is entrusted with the ruling of <i>Ne no kuni</i> |
| 2 | Susanowo ascends to the heavens |
| 3 | Misdeeds of Susanowo |
| 4 | Concealment of the sun-goddess |
| 5 | Reappearance of the sun-goddess |
| 6 | <i>harahe</i> imposed upon Susanowo |
| 7 | Susanowo descends to the land of Izumo |
| 8 | Susanowo proceeds to <i>Ne no kuni</i> , his domain |

forked serpent, marries the maiden rescued by this act, and produces children. At length he proceeds to *Ne no kuni*, his domain. These actions we can roughly summarize as in Table 1.

Table 1 shows that the actions form pairs: Susanowo being finally entrusted with the rule over *Ne no kuni* (it should be noted that, within the scope of the myth, it is only Susanowo whose case is disputed!) corresponds to his proceeding there (1—8); his ascent to the heavens corresponds to his descent (2—7), his misdeeds correspond to the *harahe* therefore imposed upon him (3—6), and the concealment of the sun-goddess has its counterpart in her reappearance (4—5). Thus the concealment and reappearance of the sun-goddess constitute the core of the myth, yet it is apparent that the myth as a whole bears on Susanowo.

We may well ask whether this well-balanced order was achieved by accident or by design. While this is a question that can be solved only by examining the myth as a whole, we may nonetheless assume that any order intended for the whole should also be reflected in the details. Thus adequate proof in one case may be of an exemplary significance.

Within our roughly designed scheme, the misdeeds of Susanowo (3) find their counterpart in the *harahe* imposed on him (6). If the order outlined in Table 1 was indeed intended, then the essential single misdeeds of Susanowo ought to correspond with the essential single parts of the *harahe* and vice versa. To prove this we can, for the part of the *harahe*, rely on the results of a paper which was published some time ago (Naumann 1979a).

II.

Since our examination concentrates on the misdeeds of Susanowo, and especially on *sakahagi* and its implications, it is necessary to be aware of the exact content of the relevant texts. I begin with the full text of the episode in *Kojiki* (=KJK), and I will try to translate as literally as possible to convey the original meaning, omitting only the honorific denominations of gods.

The *Kojiki* relates (KJK 1: 78/79–80/81; cf. Philippi 1969: 79–81):

Flushed with victory [Susanowo] broke down the ridges of the rice-fields of Amaterasu and buried [=filled in] the ditches. Moreover, in the hall where she held the Great Tasting he defecated and strewed it about. Even though he did this, Amaterasu did not reprove him, but said: "That which appears to be excrement must be what my brother has vomited and strewn about

while drunk. Also his breaking down the ridges and burying the ditches—my brother must have done this because he was sorry for the place.” Even though she spoke thus extenuatingly, his misdeeds did not cease, but became even more flagrant. When Amaterasu was inside the sacred weaving hall, and had divine garments woven, he broke a hole into the ridge of this weaving hall, and when he stripped the heavenly piebald horse by a reverse stripping and let fall in there, the heavenly weaving maiden, seeing this, was alarmed, and with the shuttle stabbing her genitals she died. At this time, Amaterasu, seeing this, was afraid, and opening the heavenly rock-cave door, went in and shut herself inside . . .

If we now follow the main text of *Nihon-shoki* (=NSK 1: 111–112/113; cf. Aston 1956, I: 40–41), then

Susanowo in spring sowed seed over again and broke down the ridges. In autumn he let loose the heavenly piebald colt [or horse] and made it lie down in the midst of the rice-fields. Again when he saw that Amaterasu was about to taste the New [rice], he secretly defecated in the palace of [Tasting] the New. Moreover, when he saw that Amaterasu was in the sacred weaving hall, engaged in weaving divine garments, he stripped the heavenly piebald colt, and breaking a hole into the tiled roof of the hall he flung in. Then Amaterasu started with alarm, and wounded herself with the shuttle. Indignant at this, she entered the heavenly rock-cave, locked the rock-door, and dwelt there in seclusion.

There are some differences between this text and that of *KJK*: Susanowo's methods of interfering with the rice-cultivation of Amaterasu vary; there is no scission as we find in *KJK* with the palliative speaking of Amaterasu; there is no mention of a “reverse stripping” when the horse is flayed by Susanowo, and it is unmistakably Amaterasu herself who is the weaving maiden, and she gets merely wounded by the shuttle and does not die.

In addition to this, *NSK* presents three variants of the episode. Variant 1 declares (*NSK* 1: 114/115; cf. Aston 1956, I: 45–46):

After this Wakahirume was in the sacred weaving hall weaving august garments of gods. Susanowo saw this, and reversely stripping the piebald colt, he flung into the interior of the hall. Then Wakahirume was startled, and fell down from the loom, wounding herself with the shuttle she held in her hand, and divinely departed.

Following this Amaterasu enters the heavenly rock-cave and shuts the

door.

In this variant 1 the weaving maiden bears the name of Wakahirume, "Young Day-woman" or "Young Noon-woman," and she dies as did the weaving maiden according to the *KJK* version.

Variant 2 (*NSK* 1: 114/115; Aston 1956, I: 47) mentions, besides the filling up of ditches and breaking down of ridges, the stretching of ropes round the fields of the sun-goddess when the grain was being formed in autumn, which would have been an impingement on ownership.

Again, when the sun-goddess was in the weaving hall, he stripped alive the piebald colt and flung into this hall.

All this, the sun-goddess takes calmly, excusing everything. But:

when the time came for the sun-goddess to celebrate the Tasting of the New [rice], Susanowo secretly defecated under her august seat in the palace of [Tasting] the New. The sun-goddess, not aware of this, went straight there and took her seat. Accordingly, the sun-goddess felt ill all over. She therefore was enraged, and took up her abode in the heavenly rock-cave . . .

We perceive that in this variant 2 the order has been changed: the flaying of the (live) horse is inserted between cultivation and tasting the first-fruits of the rice.

Variant 3 (*NSK* 1: 116/117; Aston 1956, I: 48-49) augments the misdeeds of Susanowo interfering with the cultivation of the rice-fields by adding the loosening of locks and setting up of pointed wooden slats. Moreover, this variant also mentions the reason for Susanowo's misconduct, thereby making it rationally comprehensible: Susanowo is envious because his own fields are worthless while the sun-goddess owns all the fertile ground. In this variant, too, the sun-goddess takes everything calmly. For the rest, the variant ties up with the preceding ones by simply adding "etc. etc."

III.

Taken together the differences in the texts are few but revealing. There are discrepancies in the sequence of the misdeeds, but these discrepancies are to be valued diversely. Thus it is unessential whether the breaking down of the ridges comes first and the filling up of the ditches second, or vice versa, for these are deeds of the same category. In this regard, any further elaboration of the topic "interference with the cultivation of the rice-fields" likewise makes no difference, for all these misdeeds clearly form but one unit of separate yet interchangeable deeds. They appear en masse, at any rate, only within variant

3 of *NSK* and in later texts which are not apt to contribute to the understanding of the myth.⁴

Now in *KJK* as well as in the main text of *NSK* the interference with the cultivation is followed by the interference with the ceremony closing the cultivation. *NSK* variant 1 tacitly implies the same order, and variant 3 ends its narrative before this point using only "etc. etc." That interfering with the cultivation and interfering with the rite closing the cultivation constitute one unity is also shown by the scission in *KJK*: all these misdeeds, as bad as they may be, are excused by Amaterasu. Only variant 2 locates the scission in another position. Here the interference with the cultivation is followed by the flaying of the horse. This, however, and also the flinging into the weaving hall, has no consequences, it is only called improper, with the sun-goddess excusing everything. But owing to the stench of the excrements Susanowo left under her seat, she feels sick all over, and this in turn causes her to enter the heavenly rock-cave.

If (as mentioned above) variant 3 is an effort to explain the interferences of Susanowo rationally—he begrudges his sister the better fields—then variant 2 can only be taken as an attempt to make the reaction of the sun-goddess rationally comprehensible. This means that at the time when this version came into being (that is, at the latest, when it was written down) any knowledge of the meaning of the reverse flaying of the piebald horse had already been lost, and the direct bearing of the flaying on the death of the weaving maiden was no longer recognized. It was easy, on the other hand, to imagine how the goddess owing to the stench of the excrements became sick unto death so that she concealed herself in the rock-cave. The drastic description shows, moreover, how alien it was to the thinking of the time to take the defecating in the palace of tasting the first-fruits first of all as a cultic defilement as to-day it is mostly thought of.⁵ It was the absolutely concrete effect of filth and stench the narrator had before his eyes.

This attempt at rational explanation nevertheless destroyed the logical sequence connecting the cultivation of rice with the appertaining cultic feast, and the flaying of the horse and flinging into the weaving hall appear now more than ever as isolated, unorganically inserted details. Hence we can take this variant 2 only as a late, rationalistic transformation and corruption of the original myth. It will, therefore, be excluded from further considerations.⁶

The sequence "interference with the cultivation of rice—interference with the pertaining cultic feast" suggests enhancement and aggravation of the misdeeds which, following the scission of pardoning, find their actual culminating point in the act of *sakahagi*. This becomes

evident in the result of this act: following the flaying of the horse and the flinging into the weaving hall the weaving maiden hurts herself and dies, the sun-goddess conceals herself in the rock-cave, and darkness reigns over the whole world. An action which was able to bring about such devastating consequences must have been very weighty indeed!

Neither the usual interpretation that this deed of Susanowo means merely a defilement of the sacred weaving hall (cf. for instance Kurano 1977: 174), nor the explanation of Ōbayashi Taryō, who declares that the misdeeds of Susanowo are offences against production, namely offences within the scope of cultivation, cattle-breeding, and weaving (*STS*: 142), do justice to this mythic fact.

Matsumura Takeo (1954, III: 45-46), to be sure, sees a connection, even an enhancement in the sequence of the misdeeds of Susanowo; yet Matsumura proceeds from the premise that myth, being in the service of rite, presents only some kind of ceremonial model (Matsumura 1954, III: 37) or some kind of religious "legomenon" for the prevention of misdemeanours (Matsumura 1954, I: 82-83). And as to him, furthermore, the purport of the enhancement in the sequence of the misdeeds seems only to be to hit devastatingly, in the person of the Izumogod Susanowo, the people of Izumo as the main opponent of the Yamato court, it seems quite obvious that it is just the rationalistic variant 2 of *NSK* that corresponds with his conceptions. The cultivation of the rice-fields and the activities in the sacred weaving hall are to Matsumura but "preliminary rites" of the sun-goddess with regard to the highest and most important rite, the tasting of the first-fruits of rice. Accordingly the misdeeds of Susanowo culminate in his defecating in the location of this cultic activity. If we follow Matsumura, then, by this story it was possible to discredit Susanowo in the eyes of the people of olden times, and to qualify him as a miscreant (Matsumura 1954, III: 45-46). Thus Matsumura deals with the flaying of the horse solely under the aspect of the defilement of the weaving hall; as an action in itself he leaves it completely out of his account.

In the course of a symposium on Japanese mythology (in this case centering on the "Takamagahara-myths," that is the myths concerning the sun-goddess), Itō Seiji raised the question whether flaying alive or flaying reversely *in itself* would have been considered *tsumi* 罪, or "offence" (*STS*: 100). The question, already isolated from the myth by the way it was posed, he at once restricted by the usual assertion that anyway the weight of the deed lay in the defilement of a sacred place. For there is, as he pointed out, a passage in *NSK* (1: 114/115) in which the hide of a stag is "stripped in the whole," *utsuhagi* 全剝, while there is no mentioning of *tsumi*.⁷

One of Ito's further aims (*STS*: 110) was to clarify why in all versions of this myth there appears a horse, and why this horse is always a dappled one. He himself considers a comparison with Demeter or Poseidon, but he also alludes to Matsumae Takeshi (1970: 137) who seems to suppose that in the flaying of the horse and flinging it into the weaving hall we might perceive a horse-sacrifice, though he gives no reasons for this opinion and is not very explicit. The discussion of this point during the symposium, however, brought about nothing that might further our understanding of the myth (*STS*: 111–112, 133–146). The essential points were discussed long ago (cf. Naumann 1959: 175–181), likewise with negative results.⁸

All of these attempts suffer in the end from lack of endeavour to understand the myth proper, the mythical action as such. Let us now attempt an investigation that will proceed from the myth itself.

IV.

The most conspicuous of all the actions here is, to begin with, the *sakahagi*, or the reverse stripping by which the hide is peeled from the heavenly piebald horse. The direct object of the verb *hagu*, “to strip,” “to peel off,” that is to say, the hide or coat, is not mentioned, the texts contenting themselves with an ellipsis: “To strip [the hide off] the horse.” There is also no object indicated in the case of the following verb *otoshiiru*, “to let fall,” “to drop into,” or *nageiru*, “to throw,” “to fling into.” Hence we do not know with certainty what was dropped or flung into the weaving hall—the stripped animal, the hide, or both. On the other hand, it is just this failure to indicate the object that calls our attention to the action as such.

Normally an animal is skinned by peeling off the hide from the tail toward the head.⁹ In the case of smaller animals (and also, on occasion, in the case of larger ones) this is done without making a separating cut along the belly; here the hide is peeled off in the whole from anus to neck, which corresponds exactly with the above-mentioned *utsuhagi*. Skinning from tail to head follows anatomical conditions; skinning from head to tail, while possible, is laborious and wearisome, and therefore “unprofessional.” Seen from this point of view, skinning reversely would be a mistake no hunter or butcher would be found guilty of. But it is not tabooed.

If the mythical events had taken place on the plane of everyday life, then we would have to agree with Itō (*STS*: 100) who doubts whether the way of skinning posed any problem at all. This myth does not depict everyday life, however, it quite obviously depicts events of a cosmic order. This aspect cannot be limited to the concealment

and reappearance of the sun-goddess in her capacity as the all-illuminating sun. It applies to the myth as a whole, thus holding true for every detail. Consequently the reverse skinning of the horse is, a priori, not to be thought of as an everyday mistake; we have to look on a plane different from that of everyday life for its significance.

Ancient Japanese literature now hints at two magical practices which both rest (as does the reverse skinning) on reverse actions, namely, reversely drinking rice-wine while reciting spells, and reversely clapping hands (cf. Naumann 1979 b, *passim*). Both of these magical practices cause death, a quality they obtain just because they are *reverse* actions. The original actions, however, which have been thus reversed into their very opposite, are actions of blessing which, on their part, effect "life." They are benedictions wishing health and longevity, offered with the highly raised wine-cup, and the clapping of the hands accompanying those benedictions. We do not know how such a reverse action would, in fact, have been carried out. The essential point lies solely in the idea that the total reversal of an action will bring forth the total reversal of its original effect; at the same time it must be emphasized that these reverse actions bear exclusively upon the utmost existential opposites, life and death.

In the magical-religious ideas expressed here we do not leave the human plane; yet the inferences relating to the nature of these two magical practices as reverse actions and as death magic apply to the *sakahagi* as well insofar as the *sakahagi* too can be considered a reverse action causing death, if only on the mythic plane. That means, then, that if there are on the human plane actions that cause death when performed in a reverse order and effect life when performed in the normal order, then so also on the mythic plane should we be able to find behind the reverse skinning that causes death an opposite, positive skinning that effects life. The texts now clearly show us that indeed we have to take the reverse action of *sakahagi* as causing death.

The *KJK* records the death of the weaving maiden, who stabs herself into the genitals, the very source of life, with the shuttle. According to the main text of *NSK* the weaving maiden is Amaterasu in person, yet while this text speaks only of Amaterasu wounding herself, in *NSK* variant 1 Wakahirume falls from the loom, and departs this life. Finally we cannot escape from noticing that the "concealment in the rock-cave" is in itself to be considered either as the dying of the sun-goddess or as the consequence of her death, for the word *iwagakuru* 岩隠, "to conceal oneself in the rocks," had become a much used synonym for "to die" since the time when the upper classes interred their dead within tumuli containing rock-chambers.¹⁰ So at any rate

we can state that the reverse skinning of the horse is the direct or indirect cause of the death of a weaving maiden connected with the sun-goddess. The main text of *NSK*, incidentally, does not mention the reverse skinning but speaks simply of skinning and thus follows here, as elsewhere, a rationalistic tendency to avoid anything alluding to the abnormal or to magic (cf. Naumann 1979 b: 59–60).

V.

The demand for a life-giving skinning as the positive opposite of the death-causing *sakahagi* eliminates the idea of a horse-sacrifice as a possible lead. We can find, however, a correspondence with *sakahagi*, in the positive sense, outside Japan, in a pre-Columbian rite of old Mexico. Here a man impersonating the god of the parting vegetation is killed by tearing out his heart, then he is flayed, and a priest impersonating the god of the new vegetation is clothed with this skin (cf. Krickeberg 1961: 45; Frazer 1913: 296 ff.). The skinning and subsequent clothing with the skin represent an act of renewal of life which is not limited to the god. The action is carried out, as Krickeberg (1966: 230) pointed out, “damit, wie es der Xipe-Hymnus mit klaren Worten sagte, auch die Erde eine ‘neue Haut’, die frische grüne Vegetation, anlege.”¹¹

It would be useless to look for an analogous rite in Japan and Matsumae (1970: 136) is right in turning against such a supposition.¹² Yet the point in question is not to trace a rite. What we have to aim at is rather to understand the train of thoughts underlying the *sakahagi*. This seems to be a train of thoughts that can only be approached by a detour. The pre-Columbian rite will serve as a signpost on this route, for being the complete counterpart of *sakahagi* in the positive sense, it is bound to lead us to the intellectual or religious complex where *sakahagi* is to be located.

Within the pre-Columbian rite described above, the flaying has to bring new life to the dead god, for the “new skin” won by flaying the victim is a symbol as well as the means of the renewal of his life. Seen from a profane point of view the rite is a completely wan attempt to demonstrate the renewal of life by skinning, which is a practice that in any event is impossible to realize on the human plane. Nevertheless, this rite was practiced as a kind of imitative magic, year after year, to induce Xipe Totec, the Aztec god of vegetation and the spring, to renew his life from within himself by shedding his old skin and reappearing in a new one.

Frazer (1913: 302) stated not only that “the personation of a god by a man wearing the skin of a human victim is probably intended to

represent and ensure the resurrection of the deity," but also that "the idea of resurrection from the dead is suggested by the observation of snakes and other creatures that cast their skins." He found proof of this in stories telling about the origin of death and relating how the ability to renew one's life by changing the skin was first meant for man, but then was taken from him by malice or stupidity, by a mistake or a betrayal, and given to the snake. The stories Frazer (1913: 302-304) quotes cover South America, the South Pacific, Annam, and even East Africa; yet their range is considerably wider, there being, among others, even examples from the ancient Near East (cf. Antoni 1980: 258-259). The example nearest to Japan was recorded by Nikolai Nevskii (1971: 11-13): On the Ryūkyū Islands it is said that the moon-god was sorry for the limitation of the human life. Therefore he decided to give man the water of life, and to give the water of death to the snake. He accordingly filled a pail with water of life and had it carried down by a man. But when this man took a rest, the snake drank all the water of life. Thus the snake enjoys immortality which manifests itself by the ability of the snake to cast off its old skin after having lain stiff and "dead," and to creep forth from it, revived, in a new skin.

Behind this type of myth which is distributed over wide parts of Eurasia stands the idea that immortality, that is the ability to change one's skin, is acquired by drinking the water of life owned by the moon (cf. Naumann 1977: 408). The idea is also expressed by the picture of a snake drinking from the bowl of the moon. This iconographic concept we can trace in the ancient Near East, in neolithic China, and in neolithic Japan of the middle-Jōmon period, all indicating the high antiquity of the conception (cf. Naumann 1977: 399 ff.). A reduced representation—the snake creeping along or toward the rim of a vessel, coiling round or forming the handle of it—comes from the same basic thought. Vessels of this kind are found in the same regions as the other ones and they have also been found in pre-Columbian America. They were mostly ritual vessels used in the cult of the dead (cf. Naumann 1977: 410-411; Hentze 1965, *passim*). Figurines and vessels of the Middle-Jōmon period of Japan which share this iconographic complex indicate that they share also the conceptions underlying it. But there is yet another way to follow these conceptions, which will lead us even nearer to the myth in question.

Xipe Totec, "Our Lord, the Flayed One," whose name refers, as Krickeberg (1966: 208) notes, to his representation in the illuminated manuscripts and in plastic art, was worshiped by the older peoples of the highlands and by the Mixtecs, the Zapotecs, and the Pipils long

before the Aztecs arrived, as is proven by numerous findings. Realistic representations of the god, his face covered with a mask of human skin (figs. 1 and 2), can be traced back to the 3rd century A.D. in Mexico and on the Pacific coast of Guatemala. Carl Hentze (1959: 70 ff.) compared these representations with certain Japanese clay masks of the Jōmon period which he characterizes as follows: strangely closed eyes framed by a narrow bulging ring; a doubly rimmed mouth-slit which creates the impression of two pairs of lips; a button-like reduced nose above which a pucker slopes down into the puckers around the eyes; rope-like tori over the cheeks, between the eyes and the outer frame of the mouth, leading off from the nose; an altogether circular shape; ornamental gussets. Yet prominence is given mainly to the double framing of the mouth and the ring round the closed eyes (figs. 3 and 4).

The obvious relationship between the representations of Xipe Totec and the Japanese masks led Hentze (1959: 73-74) to the assumption that both of them depict a ritual where the skin of a victim was placed on another head. Yet the circle of conceptions or rites connected with the donning of the "new skin" should not be drawn too narrowly, as he points out. Thus Hentze thinks the idea of revival by a new skin also is demonstrated by the "revived" death's-heads and skulls coated with skin and furnished with "new eyes" found in Mexico and the Antilles; and his supposition that even the ancestor heads of the Pacific area, modelled over skulls, are to be included into the scope of these conceptions seems very convincing. Just these latter led him to the assumption that the clay masks of prehistoric Japan represent "mit neuer Haut (Menschenhaut) überzogene Toten- oder Ahnenschädel" (Hentze 1959: 80). With his practiced eye Hentze has seized upon the essential features of the Japanese masks: in spite of the strong stylization the covering with the "new skin" seems obvious enough. Other masks of the same kind confirm this impression.¹³ But we cannot agree with Hentze when he assumes that the curly ornaments above the forehead should possibly be looked on as false hair (as is the case in the ancestor heads from the Sepik river), and when he from this, and from the further assumption that the eyes of one of the masks represent cowrie-shells, comes to the conclusion that these masks represent heads of the dead or of ancestors.

This does not mean to deny Hentze's fundamental perception that these masks are pictorial representations of the covering with the "new skin." We can, nevertheless, perceive the significance of this figuration within the context of the Final-Jōmon period of Japan (where it appears) only by extending our investigation to the figurines related closely to the masks.¹⁴

VI.

The figurines, which are supposed to be wearing "snow goggles" (Groot 1972: 67), originated in the Kamegaoka culture of North-east Japan. This culture flourished during the Final-Jōmon period and extended its influence to the Kantō Plain and farther south into middle Honshū. We distinguish three types of this kind of Kamegaoka figurines, succeeding one another. First are the small, often solid figurines with relatively large heads, their tops decked with small excrescence-like coils; then there are slightly bigger and at the same time hollow figurines whose tops now show a round or oval aperture, making the inside of the figurine visible. The same ornaments as before cover now the rim of the aperture. Finally these hollow figurines attain considerable height (30 cm and more), with the aperture on the top now arched over by usually four fillets meeting in one point and decorated as before the top, thus evoking the impression of a crown-like headdress. For the rest all these figurines show the features Hentze described with regard to the masks, except that, in the course of progressive stylization, the eyes become more and more prominent, swelling to overwhelming largeness and supplanting everything else until the remaining parts of the face are barely and only schematically indicated (figs. 5-9).

The reduction and the concentration on the eyes cannot be a fortuitous coincidence; it points to the eye as the most important conveyor of the meaning of these figurines. When in the foreword to *Nihon no dogū* (p. 5) Takiguchi Shūzō speaks not only of the impression of "closed eyelids" but also mentions that these eyes convey to him a "feeling of eternal darkness," he seems to have perceived, by intuition, the sole thing that can be expressed by these closed, dead eyes: darkness in opposition to light.

Darkness and death belong together, and it is not without good reason that the terrible world of the dead ruled by the goddess Izanami is *Yomi no kuni*, the "Land of Darkness" (cf. Naumann 1971: 144). But the masks and faces of these figurines which are dominated by the expression of death in their remaining features as well, bear the distinct character of symbolic representations to such a degree that they, though including it, yet transcend the human fate of death.

In the case of the above-mentioned clay figurines and vessels of the Middle-Jōmon period (see pp. 17-18), the central theme of death and revival was figuratively expressed under the aspect of the reviving power of the water of life owned by the moon and partaken of by the snake. Fundamental to this symbolism is the orientation by the periodically recurring sequence of waning and waxing of the moon—that

celestial body whose evolution presents itself to the human eye more distinctly and forcefully than that of any other celestial body (cf. Naumann 1977: 418). It is thus the cosmic event ("Geschehen") of the revolution of the stars in general and that of the moon in particular that has to serve as the very image of and as the guarantor for the events on the human plane. But what kind of cosmological—and therefore fundamental—bearing is to be found here with the Kamegaoka figurines and their symbolism of the closed, dead eyes and the pulled over "new skin?"

In the iconography of the circumpacific area (and elsewhere as well) it is not unusual to find the eye as the symbol of the celestial bodies of the sun and moon (cf. Hentze 1960 *passim*, esp. 341–344). In this respect we should remember that in Japanese myth, too, sun and moon are connected with the eye. In the *KJK* (1: 70/71) as well as in one variant of *NSK* (1: 95–96/97) the sun-goddess and the moon-god are said to have come into existence by Izanagi's washing his left and right eye respectively.

Even from this point of view it seems not out of the way to connect the emphatically accentuated eyes of the Kamegaoka figurines with the celestial bodies of the sun and/or moon, in which case the closed eyes can mean only the disappearance of their light and the darkness resulting from this, or, in other words, the "death" of the celestial bodies. This supposition gains additional weight when we consider the other symbols the figurines are also decked with. Spirals and double spirals, some strewn irregularly about the body of the figurines, and some arranged strictly symmetrically, are generally considered to be symbols of the revolution of the celestial bodies (cf. Wirth 1966: 434–438, 445–447; Hentze 1951: 25–32). The astral significance of the figurines is further suggested by the shape of the head ornaments. The small clay coils put on the top of the figurines, round the aperture or on the fillets stretched across the aperture, are sickle- or crescent-shaped (cf. Kidder 1964: 65). While some might think the coils could represent curly hair as well, the continuity in the use of just this shape and the special and unmistakable use in controllable instances exclude this interpretation.

The "coronet" itself, worn by the later figurines, fits in well with this symbolism. In some cases we can recognize the derivation of the fillets forming the coronet as being double spirals joined together.¹⁵ Further, if we look at the fully developed fillets from above, then there emerges the picture of a circle divided into its four quadrants. This picture, too, is not the result of coincidence. It is a pattern appearing already on figurines of the Middle- and Later-Jōmon periods, having

been incised there on the back of the head (sometimes in the shape of a cone-like "hat"—fig. 10).¹⁶ It is, apart from this, a well-known pattern from the Chinese neolithic age where we sometimes even find a crescent within each quadrant (fig. 11). There, as Hentze (1951: 35) has shown, it signifies the division of the moon into its phases. In case of the Chinese vessels the immediate connection with the spiral is also given: the circle divided into its quadrants forms the centre of a spiral which, for its own part, indicates the process of movement, the evolution.

To end our reflection let us return once again to a small head of a figurine belonging to the initial phase of the faces clothed in the "new skin" (figs. 5 and 6). This head seems to me to be one of the most impressive manifestations of this world of ideas. Big spirals are incised on the back of the head; in front, on the top, there is a spiral that coils in a particularly distinct way in intertwining whirls. To the left and right of this spiral, slightly set back, there are two stump-like protuberances that resemble the stumps of horns, which is most likely how they should be understood, especially in the light of the fact that other Kamegaoka figurines are provided with distinctly marked stumps of horns tending to become a crescent on the top of the head (fig. 12). I would thus like to say that the small head mentioned above represents an image of the dark moon who, very soon, revived by the new skin, will appear in the shape of the crescent, the thin sickle of the new moon.

Our digression has ascertained that the so-called "snow-goggles figurines" symbolize the death and rebirth of a celestial body, specifically the moon; at the same time they show that this rebirth is achieved by casting off the old skin and donning a new one. To demonstrate this we confined ourselves to the iconographic features of the figurines. But there are also mythological examples of the belief that not only those beings who received the water of life from the moon, but also the moon itself, renew their lives by shedding their skin. By the 1920's Briffault had collected a wealth of material concerning this theme, laying stress on the notice that "the moon itself is thought by some peoples to owe its faculty of rejuvenation to the power of casting off its old skin" (Briffault 1927, II: 651; cf. Antoni 1980: 253-261). To cite but one instance, the Uitoto of Columbia think that the moon sheds its skin every month. To them, the moon is identical with the snake, and the rapidly growing snake of their myth, which must be put in larger and larger receptacles, represents the waxing moon (Preuß 1921: 64 ff.; 219 ff.). The motif of the rapidly growing snake was also known in ancient Japan where we find it in the *Hitachi-kuni fudoki* (NKBT 2: 78/79; cf. Naumann 1977: 408 note 17), a fact that confirms the former

existence of the conceptions underlying this motif in Japan as well.

VII.

But there is still further evidence of these conceptions in Japanese mythology itself. Klaus Antoni, in his doctoral dissertation on the "White Hare of Inaba" appearing in the myths concerning the god Ohokuninushi, has proven that the "white," which is to say, the naked, hare, robbed of his coat by the crocodile, corresponds in every regard with the Aztec moon-rabbit which is devoured and disgorged by the feathered snake (here a demon of darkness). As is shown by corresponding myths, as far as the moon or moon-beings are concerned, being "skinned" signifies the same as being "devoured." When the White Hare of the Japanese myth relates the story of how he lost his coat, he confronts the listening gods „mit einem Rätsel von wahrhaft kosmischem Ausmaß," as Antoni (1980: 291) formulates it, and it is only the god Ohokuninushi who knows the solution to the riddle: he helps the hare to a new skin and hence sets the world in order once again, for death, symbolized by the skinning, must be followed by new life which is endowed by the new skin (Antoni 1980: 289–292). It is evident that this symbolism refers to the cosmic range as well as to the human one (cf. Eliade 1961: 2–3).

I used the rite and the figuration of the god Xipe Totec as a starting point in the quest for a positive counterpart to the death-causing *sakahagi* which could serve as a key to our understanding the mythical action. Returning now to this same point, it only remains to point out that, in the Aztec illuminated manuscripts, the moon-rabbit emerging from the open jaws of the feathered snake is also the determinative of Xipe Totec as the "Lord of the fifteenth day-sign *quauhtli* 'eagle,'" or, as Seler remarked, "von Xipe Totec, der den goldenen Halbmond in der Nase trägt und, wie die alte Mondgöttin *Tlaçolteotl*, in der abgezogenen Haut des Opfers erscheint, steht es aber doch wohl fest, daß er seinem eigentlichen Wesen nach ein Mondgott ist, und nur, weil der Mond der Herr alles Wachstums ist, zum agrarischen Gott geworden ist" (Seler 1904, II: 64; cf. Antoni 1980: 375 note 504).

Our aim was to understand the train of thoughts underlying the mythical *sakahagi*; this seems to me to be sufficiently perceptible now. We can see that the character of the *sakahagi* as a reverse action causing death is corroborated by its positive counterpart.

The act of *sakahagi* in itself, however, does not show against whom it is directed. Thus, the hide of the horse—for it has become evident by now that it must have been the hide and not the skinned carcass of the animal—is flung into the sacred weaving hall to show the intended

victim. This action, however, reveals even more. We do not know exactly what the *imi-hataya* 齋服屋, the sacred weaving hall, signifies, but it is certainly not the mere transposition of a cultic weaving house into myth. Although this problem must await further research, I should like to refer to the connection of the sacred weaving hall with the "eight-fathom house" which is an image of the cosmos (cf. Naumann 1971: 196-209). And, as in *Yamashiro-kuni fudoki* (NKBT 2: 414/415) the divine child ascends to heaven by breaking through the roof of the "eight-fathom house," Susanowo, in our myth, breaks a hole into the roof of the weaving hall and flings in the deadly hide. The hide, then, is a gift from above. It is the gift from the one being who holds power over life and death, as we shall see later.

Skinning and donning the new skin are connected with a symbolism of revival which bears, *within the cosmic range*, first of all on the moon, yet in a broader sense on "light" in general, in opposition to the "dark." We should expect that *sakahagi*, as the reverse action, and *within the same range*, thus needs must effect the reverse, that is the death of light. And since the killed person in our myth is a weaving maiden who is connected with the sun-goddess everything seems to tie up very well with the proposed ideas of "light" and "darkness."

Yet this turn leaves us unsatisfied, for several questions—who is this weaving maiden, what is she weaving, and what are her relations to the sun-goddess?—remain unsolved. And, last but not least, we still have to inquire into the nature of the piebald horse that was skinned.

VIII.

It is certainly not by coincidence that every variant of this myth speaks not simply of a horse but of a piebald horse. As early as 1896, Aston commented on this in his translation of *NSK*, pointing out that "Indian myth has a piebald or spotted deer or cow among celestial objects." He thought the idea was "probably suggested by the appearance of the stars" (Aston 1956, I: 40 note 3). Later he compared the piebald horse directly with *Prisni*, the dappled cow of Indian mythology, "which is explained as a personification of the variegated appearance of the starry heavens" (Aston 1905: 100).¹⁷

Aston's attempt at interpretation, though a product of thinking in the categories of nature-mythology, still contains an important thought: he brings the two colors of the dappled appearance into relation with light and darkness. Yet the alternation of light and darkness is also brought before the eye by the periodically recurring phases of the moon. Thus it is no wonder that moon-animals are by preference represented as two-colored or dappled.¹⁸ The dappled appearance of the horse,

then, may indicate its lunar character. The least we can say is that it points to the alternation of light and darkness.

But if we asked first why the skinned horse had to be a piebald one and not just a horse, we now have to ask why a horse at all and not some other animal.

In Japan the horse is attested to not earlier than the Final-Jōmon period. Groot (1972: 66–67) lays stress on its appearance at the sites of the Kamegaoka culture. In his opinion, however, this fact is due to Yayoi influences on the Kamegaoka culture, for he thinks that the horse was first brought to Japan by the Yayoi people. Since Groot wrote his book in 1951, however, it has become clear that the horses of the Final-Jōmon sites were small-sized, while the horses of the Yayoi sites are, with one exception, all middle-sized and therefore come from a different stock. The horse bones found so far show one common feature: they are undamaged, and the teeth indicate that the animals reached an old age, up to twenty-five years. Hayashida Shigeyuki has concluded from this fact that these horses were kept as domestic animals yet were used neither for food nor for sacrifices (cf. Naumann 1959: 148–150; see also *Sekai kōkōgaku jiten* 1979, I: 110). Because they also could not have been used for riding or working purposes, or as draft-animals, we must suppose that the horse was either an object of special value (as is suggested by the rare occurrence) or that it served some religious or cultic purpose. The same holds true even for the horses of the Yayoi period.

As the complex of ideas connected with the *sakahagi* seems to date back at least into the Final-Jōmon period, later developments in Japan can have no bearing on our reflections. It is possible, however, that we may find the information we are looking for by once again exploring the same complex of ideas as they are found outside Japan.

In China the horse, though used as a draft-animal since the Shang Dynasty and later used for riding as well, appears in religious imagery only at a relatively late date. It seems to be seen first in pictorial representations in Han tombs, but the content of these representations is not always clearly cosmological in nature. There are, therefore, only a few—yet significant—representations we can rely on. We may assume, though, that these too emerge from a certain tradition. It is also noteworthy that the Han Dynasty, while it is relatively late in Chinese history, corresponds roughly to the last stage of Jōmon culture in Northeast Japan.

The horse appears on several painted tomb-tiles where it is depicted as standing next to a tree laden with mulberry fruit (figs. 13a and 13b). The fruits are strewn with white spots, indicating the special nature

of the tree which is enhanced by a glittering star on the top of the tree: it represents a cosmic or celestial tree, the branches of which hold the sparkling stars. The tree must, therefore, belong to the nocturnal heaven. If this is true, then the winged horse standing by the tree must also belong to the same nocturnal heaven, or to the night. In one picture (fig. 13a) the horse is standing to the left of the tree; it is a dark creature with only its wing being white. The position of the horse corresponds, as Hentze (1937: 128) remarks, to the west which is where the moon will rise anew in the shape of a thin sickle. The other picture (fig. 13b) shows a completely white horse to the right of the tree, that is in the east, again corresponding to the full moon rising in the east. That the horse belongs to the moon as Hentze (1937: 128; 1932: 163 f.) concluded from the iconographic details of these pictures, is also emphasized by *Huai-nan-tzu* (4=Chu-tzu chi-ch'eng 7: 60): "Time dominates the moon. The moon dominates the horse. Therefore, the horse is born after twelve months." The same is said by *Ta-Tai li-chi* (XIII, 81), another text of the Former Han period (cf. Wilhelm 1930: 251; Eberhard 1942: 15).

Thus, the rôle of the horse as a moon-animal seems well established, at least in a certain context, in the conceptions of the time of the Former Han Dynasty. That we are indeed still moving within the range of the traditional conceptions of much older times becomes evident as soon as we regard the remaining part of the picture discussed above (fig. 13c). As noted, there is the white horse standing to the right of the mulberry tree. To the left of this tree there appears a tiger. It has its head turned back toward two men (the second of whom cannot be seen in our reproduction) who are holding it by a rope. As early as in the iconography of the Shang bronzes the tiger appears as a demon of darkness who devours and disgorges the "light" in the same manner as we saw the feathered snake of Mexico devour and disgorge the moon-rabbit.¹⁹ The tiger stands to the left of the tree because it is always associated with the west.

Against the background of these constantly recurring conceptions it does not seem out of the way to regard the skinned horse of the Japanese myth likewise as a moon-animal. That means, then, that Susanowo flayed a moon-animal, an action equivalent to the devouring or killing of the moon. This action should be followed by the donning of the new skin and the thereby effected revival. Instead the skinning, which was originally to be carried out as a precondition for the renewal of life, is executed here as a magic reversal, and the skin, which is now destined to effect the reverse, causes another death.

IX.

This leads us to the weaving maiden weaving divine garments in the sacred weaving hall. In one version this maiden appears as an independent person besides Amaterasu who herself is also present in the weaving hall. In this case the weaving maiden dies. According to the second version the weaving maiden is identical with Amaterasu, but in this case the sun-goddes merely wounds herself with the shuttle. In both cases, however, the action is followed by the concealment of the sun-goddes in the heavenly rock-cave.

These two differing versions seem to indicate a break within this myth. It has become clear in the course of our investigation that the death of the weaving maiden must correspond to the death of the "light" in some way; yet the concealment of the sun-goddes in the rock-cave is equal to the disappearance of, and therefore the death of the light and the reign of darkness. This is stated expressly in the myth itself. Nevertheless, when the *weaving maiden* dies, this is a *passive suffering of death*. But when Amaterasu conceals herself in the rock-cave it is *her own activity that leads her into it*, and it is her own activity that brings her back. These two conceptions differ fundamentally, they cannot be reconciled. Therefore, both versions of the narrative are but makeshift solutions: one shows the extrication from the dilemma by putting the weaving maiden and Amaterasu side by side as two distinct persons, and the other solves the dilemma by merging them into one person, the sun-goddes. But in this case, the sun-goddes is not allowed to die in the way the weaving maiden does, that is to suffer death passively—she merely wounds herself.

Certain consequences arise from this ascertainment. When schematizing the myth we noticed that, in its main tendency, it points at Susanowo, but that its innermost core (points 4 and 5 of the scheme indicated in Table 1) bears on Amaterasu. Now another picture begins to emerge: it seems that we should take this alledged core as a *corpus alienum* within this myth. In other words: an alien myth dealing with the *disappearance* of the light has been grafted onto a myth centering around Susanowo and dealing with the *killing* of the light. This fusion was made possible by the character of the weaving maiden in the Susanowo myth: she not only represented the light, she represented it in the same way as Amaterasu.

Let us remember that in variant 1 of *NSK* the weaving maiden is called Wakahirume, "Young Day-woman" or "Young Noon-woman." This name should be seen together with the name Oohirume, "Great Day-woman" or "Great Noon-woman" which is the name assigned to the sun-goddes in several variants of the *NSK*

accounts of her birth (*NSK* 1: 86/87-88/89). These two interrelated names, "Young Day-woman" and "Great Day-woman," suggest an inner coherence much as is found in the contrasting names of "God of the Young Vegetation" and "God of the Parting Vegetation"; they are, in other words, designations which express different aspects of the same deity. Hirume, "Day-woman" or "Noon-woman," might well be the original name of the sun-goddess in the tradition of the so-called Izumo-myths, or those myths centering around Susanowo and Ohokuninushi.

Even if we proceed from the nameless weaving maiden, her subsequent connection with the sun-goddess still confirms that this weaving maiden must also represent the light, or, more accurately, the daylight. The question of why a weaving maiden who is weaving divine garments should be predestined to fill this rôle, however, remains to be solved.

It was, or still is, as it seems, generally supposed that weaving is, in all probability, one of the achievements brought to Japan by the Yayoi culture (cf. for instance Kidder 1959: 90; *Nihon kōkōgaku jiten* 1980: 493, 545; *Sekai kōkōgaku jiten* 1979, I: 876). Meanwhile there have been found several potsherds of the Final-Jōmon period with impressions of woven fabric. Kagamiyama (1972: 472) mentions such potsherds from different parts of Kyūshū; he also refers to earlier publications of corresponding finds from Northern Japan, especially from two sites of the Kamegaoka culture (Kagamiyama 1972: 480). As it is the case with the horse, there is no place for the assumption that weaving originated in Japan; it therefore seems justified to look outside Japan for the sources of the traditions bound up with weaving. For this reason the legend of Ts'an-nü, the "Silkworm-woman," has already been used for comparative purposes (cf. Hentze 1937: 129; Naumann 1959: 205). This legend relates how a mother promises to give her daughter in marriage to the one who can bring back her husband who is doing military service in a distant place. The horse in the stable hears this and runs away, returning after a while with the man. When the horse expresses the desire to marry the daughter, it is killed. But its hide, spread out to dry, envelopes the passing girl and flies with her into a mulberry tree. There the girl changes into a silkworm and finally she becomes the silkworm-goddess.²⁰

If we compare this legend with our myth, however, it soon becomes evident that it is not possible to draw a parallel. Even though, in the legend, the hide of the horse is a means by which the girl experiences a change of the form of her existence, the skinning itself as the essential action is passed over. This may be partly due to the fact that the story was only recorded at a late date and therefore not only

may be spurious but may have lost some possible former cosmogonic or cosmologic significance—significance that we are no longer able to reconstruct. But even for the remaining part there is still no correspondence, for weaving, and, consequently, silkworm-nursery are specific conditions for the plot of our myth while in the Chinese legend their origin is explained.

We should, however, carefully consider the approach stemming from a reinterpretation made by Wolfgang Münke of the first two chapters of the *Shu-ching*, or the “Book of Documents.” Münke has attempted to free these chapters, which deal with Yao and Shun, from the euhemeristic interpretation of the commentators and to take them literally, thus allowing them to appear as they originally were meant to appear, that is as cosmogonic and cosmologic texts. They begin with the establishment of order in time and space, that is, with the regulation of the course of the sun in its temporal and spatial aspects. God Yao entrusts this to the Hi-Ho; he concludes his instructions with the words: “Faithfully guide the hundred *kung*, and all the spinnings will shine together” (*Shu-ching* 1, *Yao-tien*; cf. Münke 1976: 119. We shall presently return to the meaning of *kung*). The “shining spinnings” are mentioned a second time under God Shun, the successor to Yao. Of him it is said: “Every third year he beat [=examined] the spinnings, beat them three times. He extinguished the dark ones, let ascend the bright ones, and all the spinnings shone together” (*Shu-ching* 2, *Shun-tien*; cf. Münke 1976: 38).

Münke (1976: 38) takes the “shining spinnings” for the stars (“leuchtendes Gespinnst der Sterne”). This interpretation makes sense both in its immediate context as well as against the “mythologem of the Milky Way,” the legend of the Herdsman and the Weaver-girl to which Münke points (cf. Münke 1976: 203–204; Werner 1961: 73–74). In the same way we could take the “shining spinnings” simply for “light” in general.²¹

But who are the hundred *kung* whose activities produce the “shining spinnings?” Some Chinese commentators see the idea of man as a connecting-link between heaven and earth in the ideograph *kung* 工, and in this sense the ideograph would be identical with the ideograph *wu* 巫, “shaman”, “sorcerer” (cf. Morohashi Nr. 8714/meaning 1, following *Shuo-wen*; explanation of the graph). This is what Münke has before his eyes when he translates *pai kung* 百工 as “die hundert Feen” and at the same time remarks, “Das Etymon *kung* 工 / Verbindung zwischen oben und unten / bezeichnete primär den Dämon, den Zauberer, die Fee. Im Gottkaiserstaat übernahm es die Bedeutung ‘Handwerker’” (Münke 1976: 38).

In ancient China weaving was the most prominent activity of women in general; thus we are not surprised to find in Morohashi's Great Chinese-Japanese Character Dictionary, under the heading of *kung*, also mentioned the meaning of "weaver-woman," attested for the Former Han period (Morohashi Nr. 8714/meaning 6).²² Consequently, it seems to me rather to be misguided to take the "hundred *kung*" primarily as anything other than divine weaving women producing the shining spinings.

We are, therefore, not far off from our Japanese myth, and it seems now very convincing indeed to regard the heavenly maiden weaving divine garments as being a divine person producing "the light."

As a result of our investigation we can now state that when Susanowo flays with a reverse flaying the piebald horse, a moon-animal, his action is the equivalent to the devouring of or killing the moon itself, and that the death-magic made by the reverse flaying causes the death of a heavenly weaving maiden producing the light.

X.

Let us now see if, as we presumed in the beginning, the misdeeds of Susanowo do indeed find their correspondence with the separate items of the *harahe* (Table 1, points 3 and 6 respectively).

Before dealing with this question, however, it should be pointed out that the reverse flaying and its utmost disastrous consequences are in full accordance with the character of Susanowo as depicted at the outset of the myth, namely, that is as the weeping god who caused the death of every living thing on earth—this, at least, is what we may infer from the different accounts. In complete consistency with his character as the great destroyer of life on earth, he ascends to the heavens before entering the realm of the dead, his true domain, in order that he might complete his work of destruction in the heavens, too. Given the range of this tremendous context, bearing as it does on the essential questions of life and death, the remaining misdeeds of Susanowo—his interference with the cultivation of the rice-fields and defecation in the hall for tasting the first-fruits—seem only trivial and out of place.

Reverting, then, for comparison, to the results of the paper on *harahe* mentioned above (Naumann 1979a, *passim*, especially 185–187), there are three points to be considered.

1. All of the textual variants in accordance impose upon the culprit a fine of restitutive gifts as compensation for the material damage and wrongs suffered.
2. The intention of the second measure, the cutting off (or pulling out) of hair, and finger- and toenails, is represented differently.

- One textual tradition takes this equally to mean a compensation by way of corporal punishment. To the other textual tradition it is, on the contrary, an exorcism by which the negative, demonic forces of the god are driven out and positive forces are invited in, that is an exorcism by which the innermost nature of the god is converted: the destroyer of life becomes the giver of life.
3. This latter conception is confirmed by an additional textual variant describing the application of the spittle and the nose-mucus (or the tears) of the god as offerings. It was possible to show that, within the range of the religious conceptions dominating this myth, the life-giving forces are inherent just in this spittle. Susanowo's spittle, presented as an offering, is the medium for the resuscitation of the life destroyed by him. In this sense his spittle corresponds to the water of life.

It is significant that one other variant which is, in other respects, identical with the foregoing one, substitutes this essential but antiquated and long since enigmatic detail with a more up-to-date element: the recitation of the ritual prayer of the Great Purification, mentioned above. Here too, we see—as in our variant 2 which gave prominence to the defecating in the hall for tasting the first-fruits—a tendency to exchange unintelligible details for rationally comprehensible ones. Once again the inconsistency of the conceptions concerning point two—whether Susanowo underwent corporal punishment or exorcism—hints at a break within the tradition of the myth.

We can thus recognize in the *harahe*-episode two partially overlapping parts each of which provides the respective answer to two foregoing episodes of an entirely different character. The one part we can view as the establishment of a legal action as an answer to intentionally perpetrated misdeeds for which the perpetrator must pay. The second part represents the model of an exorcism as an answer to the “ultimate negative” which must be converted into the “ultimate positive.”

In regard to the first part, I have made the inference that here penal law was indeed not deduced from or based on a religious system, but that this law was merely sanctioned subsequently by the insertion of the episode into the myth.

In regard to the second part, our analysis of the *sakahagi*-episode has by now made it possible to unambiguously link this part with the pertaining misdeed. We perceive now with the utmost clarity that Susanowo is the deity who gives life and who takes life. All told, this myth is based on the knowledge that life becomes possible only through death. Susanowo as the dominating figure in this myth sets

in motion the eternal cycle which from now on shall determine the life of everything—that of man, that of nature, that of the universe. Hence Susanowo's domain must be *Ne no kuni* 根の国, the "Land of Roots," a realm of the dead whence new life sprouts.

This myth is devoted to the ultimate questions of existence. But parts of another mythic tradition have been inserted into this myth, parallel to its original structure. This inserted mythic tradition touches on the same questions but handles them in a different way. Of these inserted parts we need only mention the trivial misdeeds of Susanowo and the punishment they elicit, and also the entire mythologem of the concealment and reappearance of the sun-goddess (see Table 1, points 4 and 5). Disjointed in a similar manner these inserted parts also originally constituted one unity which was most probably followed by the myth of Ninigi, the heavenly grandchild, descending from the heavens.²³

In conclusion we can state that a careful investigation of a single and hitherto neglected detail in this myth has not only resulted in a new and deeper understanding of the meaning of the myth, but has also offered a new insight into its original structure. To complete this understanding, a new approach to the remaining parts of the myth will also be necessary.

NOTES

* I am very much indebted to Dr. W. M. Kelsey for corrections and suggestions concerning this English adaptation of a lecture held at the University of Bonn. For the remaining inadequacies I am responsible myself.

1. For the most commonly used sources I shall employ the following abbreviations:

<i>KJK</i>	<i>Kojiki</i>
<i>NKBT</i>	Nihon koten bungaku taikei
<i>NSK</i>	<i>Nihon-shoki</i>
<i>STS</i>	<i>Shimpojiumu Takamagahara shinwa</i>

For the following see *KJK* 1: 70/71-84/85; *NSK* 1: 86/87-128/129. (*KJK* is quoted from the edition *NKBT* Vol. 1, *NSK* is quoted from the same edition Vol. 67). Cf. Philippi 1969: 71-86; Aston 1956, I: 18-59.

2. Only one out of the five versions of the story (Variant 1 of *NSK*) states that Amaterasu and Tsukiyomi, the moon-god, "were made to shine down upon Heaven and Earth." In both the main text of *NSK* and in variant 11 of *NSK*, the moon-god is made an associate of the sun-goddess in the charge of heavenly matters. In *KJK*, however, he is entrusted with the realm of the night, and in *NSK* variant 6, with the realm of the ocean. While the main text as well as variants 2 and 6 of *NSK* show that Susanowo was first designated to be ruler over "the world," or over "this country,"

KJK and *NSK* variant 11 hold that his domain was the ocean. This latter designation of Susanowo needs another explanation and will not be dealt with in this paper.

3. It is not said *what* is flung into the hall. To avoid any rash conclusion concerning this object I refrain here and elsewhere from putting in the "it" which is required by the English grammar. The problem will be discussed on p. 14.

4. It is nevertheless these later texts, especially the *norito* or ritual prayer of the Great Purification (NKBT 1: 422/423–426/427), that are usually taken as the starting point in considerations of *sakahagi* (see for instance *STS*: 96–100 with graph on p. 97). In this document, however, *sakahagi* has become a meaningless item within the enumeration of the so-called "heavenly offences." As the Great Purification was supposedly first established under Temmu Tennō, that is after A.D. 673 (cf. Naumann 1979 a: 170), this ritual prayer of the Great Purification was at any rate composed at a time when the meaning of *sakahagi* had been long since lost.

5. To cite but one instance of this opinion see Kurano 1976: 59. Soiled cult-places were nothing unusual, though, as is shown by several regulations recorded in *Ruijū sandai kyaku* where for instance in an entry for the second year of *Jinki* 神龜 (=725) it is said that in the various provinces one will find dirt, stench, and cattle roaming loose within the shrines of the gods (*Ruijū sandai kyaku* 1, *Jinki* 2/7/20, ed. Kokushi taikai p. 6).

6. It is interesting to note that the text of the *norito* of the Great Purification (NKBT 1: 424/425)—and also that of *Kogo-shūi* (shinchū Kōgaku sōsho 1: 546) which in this point is obviously dependent on the *norito*—follows just this rationalistic variant in its enumeration of Susanowo's misdeeds (now styled the "heavenly offences"), thereby documenting the character and tendencies of the time.

7. Itō has, incidentally, improperly identified the passage as appearing in *KJK*.

8. Ledyard (1975: 249), stressing "common elements in Japanese-Korean myth that must have a Puyō tie", notes that "the 'backwards flaying of horses' . . . is seen in one Korean version of the Tan'gun myth." He cites for this *Sejong sillok* 154/5a–b, yet as far as I can see, although these pages of *Sejong sillok* do contain the Tan'gun myth, they show no trace of backwards flaying.

9. In commenting on *sakahagi*, everyone seems to have followed Motoori Norinaga who, obviously not conversant with the skinning of animals, stated in his *Kojiki-den* (8=Motoori Norinaga zenshū 9: 349) that *sakahagi ni hagu*, or "to strip with reverse stripping", means flaying "from the tail up"—see for instance Philippi 1969: 80, note 8; Kurano 1976: 62–63 (quoting *Kojiki-den* 30).

10. It has been pointed out before that the concealment in the rock-cave alludes to the death of the sun-goddess. Cf. Matsumura 1954, III: 64–65; Matsumae 1962: 144–145.

11. For the hymn of Xipe Totec see Seler 1904, I: 168–169, and for the rite and its significance see also Seler 1904, I: 154–155.

12. Matsumae refers here to Hara Masao, *Nihon minzoku no kompon shūkyō* (1966) which I have had no opportunity to consult. He says Hara thinks the *sakahagi* of the myth is the reminiscence of practising, in ancient rituals, a rite of flaying human beings alive, and remarks that there is no evidence whatsoever to support this opinion. As early as in 1936 Slawik (1936: 757) observed that flaying as a ritual action cannot be traced in Japan, but he points to "Schinden als rituelle Handlung" during a masquerade procession of the Csango-Magyars in the vicinity of Kronstadt. On this occasion a dance called Boritza was performed and also the sham-skinning and dismemberment of a young man, followed by his resurrection. Liungman (1937/38: 831) mentions this and many other instances of sham-killing during merry-makings in

Europe which he thinks are in the tradition of the killing and resurrection of the god of vegetation and were originally a "renewing sacrifice" (cf. Liungman 1937/38: 1128-1131).

13. See, for instance, the three masks from Iwate reproduced in *Dogū. Sōshingu* figs. 111, 114, 443.

14. Hentze 1959: 81-82 refers only cursorily to one figurine of the type in question but dwells on another that I cannot, for several reasons, regard as related.

15. See, for instance the figurine from Aomori, Nagawa-machi, reproduced in *Dogū. Sōshingu* pl. I and fig. 292.—The ornaments on ear-plugs of the same period likewise show an intermingling of variously joined double spirals and fillets dividing a circle into its quadrants. Furthermore it is of interest to note that small, plaque-like figurines, apparently a "pocket-edition" of our figurines, consist merely of double spirals or crescents stuck together (see fig. 14).

16. See also *Dogū. Sōshingu* fig. 31 and also the figurine reproduced in the same work as figs. 35 and 287. The same pattern seems intended on the face of two heads, both from the Middle-Jōmon period and found in Nagano, reproduced in the same work as figs. 64 and 74.

17. Itō (*STS*: 110) is in error if he thinks he is the first to ask why the horse of this myth is a dappled one (cf. also Naumann 1959: 175). For the following see also Lurker 1974: 94, 96.

18. To cite but one instance, Krickeberg 1961: 45 sees the lunar character of the Pulque-deities expressed by the two-colored painting of their faces. Though Hentze (1965: 200) counts the "checkerboard pattern" as an example of "unexplained details," it is nevertheless interesting to note that the checker with its alternation of dark and light squares, as well as dark and light triangles or lozenges staggered in the same way, appear on the neolithic painted pottery of the ancient Near East and China usually in connection with moon-symbols or near moon-animals (cf. Hentze 1932: figs. 14, 21, 23, 24, 106; Hentze 1965: figs. 26, 28, 43).

19. A concise digest of these conceptions which formed the main concern of Hentze's life-long studies can be found in Antoni 1980: 238-242. Regarding the tiger turning its head see Hentze 1951: 163-165.

20. Eberhard 1937: 79 (type 45) lists all the sources, the oldest of which is *Sou-shen-chi* 搜神記 (4th ct. A.D.). See also Eberhard 1942: 335 with further references; Münke 1976: 236-237; Werner 1961: 517-518; Itō 1979: 97-106.

21. There is an interesting parallel within Christian medieval symbolism, where Christ appears as the "lux mundi" and as "sol invictus." Lurker (1958: 52) points to a picture by the so-called "Oberrheinischer Meister" (about 1400 A.D.) showing the Holy Virgin while spinning: "Der schräg laufende Faden führt durch das Zentrum der Madonna, das sichtbar in ihrem Leib angedeutete Strahlenkind erscheint als ihr Gespinst."

22. Cf. also the graphs in Takada 1952: 256 and Karlgren 1957: 302/1172 a-c. Also very interesting in this connection seems to me one of the pictures on the famous bronze bell (*dōtaku* 銅鐸) said to have come from Kagawa (Shikoku) which is reproduced for instance in Kidder (1959: pl. 52). In this picture there is a person sitting, holding in the right hand an object identical with the graph 卍; the left hand is stretched out and the face is turned toward the left hand. (There is still another *dōtaku* of uncertain origin showing an almost identical picture, cf. *Zusetsu Nihon bunka-shi taikei* I: 352, figs. 441/9-10.) Kidder (1959: 107) speaks of a "dancing man with stick" when mentioning this picture, but considering the astounding ability of the bronze workers of the time to depict, albeit in a very simplified way, the typical postures and move-

ments, this explanation does not sound very convincing. The instrument, as well as the person holding it, indicate an activity as fundamental to the Yayoi people as the other human activities depicted on this bronze bell, namely the pounding (hulling) of grain, thatching of a roof, or the hunting of deer and wild boar. The instrument is a filature or reel, *kase*, *kase-gi* 繰 or 柶, 柶木, which is described as a wooden tool in the shape of an H or the graph 工 (cf. *Nihon kokugo daijiten* IV, 589 s.v. *kase*/1 and 595 s.v. *kase-gi*/1), and the person holding it is reeling thread or filature. The *kase-gi* is the forerunner of the *kase-guruma* 繰車 (cf. *Nihon minzoku jiten*: 146).

23. Slawik (1936: 751) remarked that the several variants of this myth give the impression "als seien sie aus Bruchstücken mehrerer Mythen künstlich zusammengefleckt," while Kurano (1977: 174–175) pointed out directly that originally the episode of Susanowo's raging and the later episode of his expulsion constitute but one coherent myth relating the origin of sin and offence and the origin of the ceremony of purification; that this coherent myth originally had no functional connection with the myth of the sun-goddess concealing herself in the rock-cave; and that this latter myth was inserted into the former one. This combination of the myth pertaining to the Great Purification and the myth of the concealment in the rock-cave rests, in his opinion, on the thought (or on the consciousness) of the unification of the opposing Yamato court and Izumo nobility. Furthermore Kurano thinks that originally the myth of Ninigi descending from the heavens followed immediately after the myth of the concealment in the rock-cave. Thus, even though Kurano did not grasp the meaning of the greater part of this myth, he at least partially recognized its inconsistencies.

Figures

Fig. 1 and 2: Figurine and mask of Xipe Totec. (After Hentze 1959: fig. 4 and 5.)

Fig. 3: Clay mask, h 10.8 cm, from Kamegaoka, Aomori-ken. (After Hentze 1959: fig. 3.)

Fig. 4 a, b: Clay mask, ϕ 14.5 cm, from Aso, Akita-ken. (After Hentze 1959: fig. 1 and 2).

Fig. 5 and 6: Clay head, h 9 cm, from Karumai, Iwate-ken. (Fig. 5 after *Nihon no dogū*: fig. 54; fig. 6 after Kidder 1964: Kat. 34.)

Fig. 7: Clay head, h 9.5 cm, from Korekawa, Aomori-ken. (After *Nihon no dogū* fig. 64.)

Fig. 8: Clay figurine, h 19.2 cm, from Hira (? Taira?), Nagawa-machi, Aomori-ken. (After *Dogū. Sōshin-gu*: fig. 1.)

Fig. 9: Clay figurine, h 34.8 cm, from Kamegaoka, Aomori-ken. (After *Nihon no dogū*: fig. 62.)

Fig. 10 a: Clay figurine (back view), h 11.5 cm, from Fukuda shellmound, Ibaragi-ken. (After *Dogū. Sōshin-gu*: fig. 284 b.)

Fig. 10 b: Clay figurine (back view), h 11.5 cm, from Shiizuka shellmound, Ibaragi-ken. (After *Dogū. Sōshin-gu*: fig. 287 b.)

Fig. 11: Neolithic pottery from Pan-shan, Kansu, China. (After Hentze 1951: fig. 6.)

Fig. 12: Clay figurine, from Aomori-ken. (After *Nihon no doki*, Kyōto kokuritsu hakubutsukan 1964: fig. 31.)

Fig. 13 a-c: Tomb-tiles, originally forming a unit, but now taken apart. From a Han tomb. (After Hentze 1951: pl. XC-248-250)

Fig. 14 a-c: Small, plaque-like clay figurines. a: h 4.1 cm, from Amataki, Iwate-ken. b: h 5.0 cm, from Teranoshita, Aomori-ken. c: h 4.1 cm, from Takata-shi, Iwate-ken. (After *Dogū. Sōshin-gu*: fig. 93, 94, 96.)



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4a



Fig. 4b



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 7



Fig. 11



Fig. 10a



Fig. 10b



Fig. 12



Fig. 13a



Fig. 13b



Fig. 13c



Fig. 14a



Fig. 14c



Fig. 14b

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