

Origin and Growth of the Worship of Amaterasu*

By

MATSUMAE TAKESHI

Tenri University, Tenri City (Japan)

I. Various Solar Deities in Ancient Japan

In modern Japanese folklore and folkways, we find many vestiges of ancient solar worship. The custom of clapping hands to the morning sun on special festival days such as *Ohimachi*,¹ the offering of *Tentô-bana*, of the offering of various kinds of flowers attached to the top of a bamboo pole to the solar deity *Tento-sama* on the eighth of April of the lunar calendar, and fire-festivals such as *Ohitaki*, *Saito*, *Sagichô*, and *Dondo*² in winter all originated from the old solar cults. In ancient times, before the worship of Amaterasu became popular, there is evidence that solar myths other than the myth of Amaterasu were prevalent among the people. In a folk tale, it is told that once seven suns appeared at the same time, and the people were very uncomfortable in the heat. To remedy the situation, a giant, Amanojaku, shot down all but one of the suns with bow and arrow.³ This tale has parallels among the Miaos, Taiwan aboriginies, and in Chinese mythology. According to one version transmitted by the words of a rice planting folksong from Izumo, Sanbai, the deity of the rice field, was born of Father Sun and Mother Dragon.⁴

* This thesis was originally Matsumae's lecture in the spring semester, 1977, at Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

1. "Ohimachi" is the name of the festival which is held on several special days of the year such as the 15th of January, May, September and November by the members of a religious club. Generally, they have a feast throughout the night, and then pay homage to the morning sun.

2. These are the local variant names for the fire-festivals held mainly on the 15th of January.

3. A folk-tale in Okayama Prefecture. See *Fudoki Nihon* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1957), Vol. II, p. 120.

4. *Tsue no Shûzoku*, Vol. 4 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1969), combined and edited by the Office of Bunkachô Bunkazaika, p. 265. Cf. Yanagita Kunio, *Min'yô Oboegaki* (Tokyo: Sogensha, 1940), pp. 330-332.

Parallels to this belief can also be found in South-east Asia. In many districts of Japan, legends of the same motif are told about the place names *Himaneki Iwa*, or Sun Recalling Rock, *Himaneki-dan*, or Sun Recalling Altar. According to these legends, a rich man or a powerful man ordered his servants to transplant rice in his field. He wanted to finish the work in one day, and pressure them to do so. However, it appeared that the sun would set before the work could be completed, so he tried to call the sun back with his fan. The sun came back and they were able to finish the work. Unfortunately, however, a big fire fell from heaven and the man's mansion was destroyed. Today, we can still see the ruins of altars from which the mythical character was believed to have called back the sun, and there are several such sites in Japan.⁵

The *Kojiki* tells another solar myth. Once, a maiden was impregnated by the sunshine and bore a red stone. Ame-no-Hiboko, a prince of Silla, (a part of what is now Korea) begged to have it, and was given the stone. He kept it at his palace. When the stone changed into a beautiful girl, Akaruhime, he married her. Later, however, he mistreated his wife, and she left him to go back to Japan. She arrived in the Ōsaka area, and subsequently came to be worshipped in the Himekoso Shrine. When her husband, the Prince Ame-no-Hiboko, came after her, the deity of the Ōsaka area would not let him land. Thus, unable to catch up with his escaped wife, he went to Tajima, where he came to be worshipped in the Izushi Shrine in Tajima.⁶

Akaruhime, the deity of the Himekoso Shrine is also called Shitateruhime.⁷ The word "shitateru" means "to shine downwards". Thus we can guess that the red stone symbolized the sun. This story has a parallel in a myth from Koguryō in Korea. A maiden became pregnant by the sunshine, and bore a big egg. The egg hatched and a child was born. He became Zu-Mong, the first king of the Koguryō Dynasty.⁸ In Silla and Kalla, (also in Korea), similar stories of people hatched from eggs are told. The story of being born from a red stone must have been

5. Yanagita Kunio, *Imôto no Chikara* (Tokyo: Sôgensha, 1940), pp. 151-160.

6. Kurano Kenji and Takeda Yûkichi (eds.), *Kojiki Norito* (Tokyo: Iwanami-shoten, 1958), pp. 255-258; *Kojiki*, trans. by Donald Philippi (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1918), pp. 291-293.

7. See Ban Nobutomo, *Jimmyôchô Kôshô*, VI, in *Ban Nobutomo Zenshû*, Vol. 1 (Tokyo: Kokusho-kankôkai, 1907), p. 121.

8. Tae-hung Ha, *Tales from the Three Kingdoms*, Korean Cultural Series, Vol. X (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1970), p. 12.

a variant form of this type. The above-mentioned story of Prince Ameno Hiboko and Akaruhime was transmitted by the descendants of Koreans that came to Japan. According to one version of the *Nihongi*,⁹ Hiboko brought seven treasures from Korea to Japan. Among the treasures were a red stone and a sun mirror, which may have been the emblems of the sun deity. The name Hiboko means "sun spear", that is, "a spear as an emblem of the sun". Thus, conjecture that one stream of Japanese sun worship came from Korea, accompanied with sacred solar treasures, and joined with indigenous Japanese sun worship. Solar deities were worshipped in many districts in Japan.

The sun goddess Amaterasu, is, of course, the mythical ancestor of the Imperial family. She is also called Ôhirume-machi. The word "amaterasu" is the honorific form of "amateru", which means "shining in heaven". According to early records such as the *Engishiki* and the *Sandai Jitsuroku*, from the Heian Era, there were many shrines which were called Amateru or Amateru-mitama Shrines, particularly in the Kinki area. It was at these shrines that the sun was worshipped. There was also an Amateru Shrine on Tsushima Island. In medieval times, that shrine was called Teruhi Gongen, or the Shining Sun Deity Shrine. The solar deity worshipped there, however, was believed to be a male deity, and was referred to in the *Kujihongi* as Ameno-himitama, or the Heavenly takeoff Sun Spirit.¹⁰ According to the *Nihongi*, Ameno-himitama expressed himself through the medium of an oracle, and demanded to be served by the Tsushima clan in 487 A.D.¹¹ Amaterasu shrines in Yamato, Yamashiro, Tamba, and Settsu were also dedicated to male sun deities. Many clans worshipped sun deities other than Amaterasu. Through research in this area,¹² I have come to the conclusion that almost all Amateru and Amateru-mitama shrines were dedicated to the same deity, "Amateru Kuniteru Hoakari" or Heaven and Earth Shining Fire. He was also worshipped as a male deity by the Owari Clan, also known as the Amabe clan, and its branch clans. It is evident that these clans

9. *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697*, trans. by W. G. Aston (Tokyo: Tuttle, reprinted 1972), p. 166.

10. It was written in early Heian Period. In this old document, Ameno-himitama was regarded as the ancestral deity of the Tsushima Clan.

11. Aston, *Nihongi*, p. 392. Aston took this solar deity for the Goddess Amaterasu. However, the original text does not mention Amaterasu Great Deity at all, but of a solar deity who gave an oracle and was served by the Tsushima Clan. It is evident that this deity was Ameno-himitama.

12. See T. Matsumae, *Nihonshinwa to Kodai Seikatsu* (Tokyo: Yuseidô, 1970, Chap. IX. Matsumae, *Kodai Denshō to Kyūtei Saishi* (Tokyo: Hanawashobō, 1974), Chap. VI.

originated among the Ama people.¹³ The Owari Clan served the Atsuta Shrine in Nagoya. In the later, this shrine was regarded as a sanctuary of Amaterasu, because one of the three Imperial Regalia, the Sword Kusanagi, was kept there. But, this shrine was not originally that of Amaterasu. Perhaps it was Hoakari that was worshipped in the shrine. The sun deity Hoakari originally had no connection with the Imperial Family, but in several versions of classical mythology, Hoakari was regarded either as one of the grandsons of Amaterasu, or as a son of Hononinigi, the heavenly grandson of Amaterasu.¹⁴

II. The Original Form of the Worship of Amaterasu

According to the *Nihongi* and the *Kogoshui*, during this period, Amaterasu was worshipped at two shrines, at Ise and at Hinokuma. The Hinokuma shrine was originally that of the sun deity worshipped among the Ama people in the Provinces of Kii. We may conjecture, then, that these sun deities also had a connection with the sea and ships or barques, because of the close association between the Amabe and the sea. The original form of Amaterasu was indeed the sun deity among the Ama people in Ise. In this area, many solar rituals still survive. At the Futami Okitama Shrine, on the Futamaga-ura coast, which is famous for the Male and Female Rock, loop-shaped ropes of straw are offered to the rising sun. On the small island Kamishima near the Ise Shrine, a big sun-wheel is made of the branches of the silverberry tree, and many youngsters toss it up into the air with poles as a part of the New Year's Festival. This festival is called the Geta Festival.¹⁵

Another male sun deity worshipped in the Ise area was Sarudahiko, a monster-like deity with a red face and bottom, and with a long nose. Sarudahiko played an important role in the myth of the descent of the Heavenly Grandson. In the *Kojiki* and the *Nihongi*, this deity is depicted as standing at the heavenly cross-roads, shining like a sacred mirror.¹⁶ His red face represents the color of the morning sun. In some aspects, Sarudahiko resembles a monkey god. The word "saru", in fact means monkey or ape. The deity's red face and red bottom also remind us of

13. The Ama or Amabe people are believed to have been a fishing race of a southern origin.

14. Aston, pp. 89-92.

15. Hotta Yoshio and others, *Nihon Sairei Fudoki*, Vol. II (Tokyo: Keiyûsha, 1962), p. 243.

16. Philippi, *Kojiki*, p. 138; Aston, *Nihongi*, pp. 77-78.

a monkey. In Japan and Asia, monkeys and apes are often believed to be related to the sun.¹⁷ Before Amaterasu came to be regarded as the ancestral goddess of the Imperial Family, there had been a center of the solar worship in Ise. Several local sun deities must have been worshipped there. Sarutahiko, one of these solar deities must have been a primitive form of Amaterasu. According to a version of the *Nihongi*, Sarutahiko, shining brightly at the Heavenly Crossroads, waited for Prince Hononinigi. He stood so that the Prince and his party could not pass, and all the attendant deities of the Heavenly Grandson feared him. Then, Ameno Uzume, the goddess of the Sarume Clan, was ordered to challenge him. She consneted, and, showing her genitals, walked toward him smiling. Sarutahiko was charmed, and gave in to Prince Hononinigi's orders. The same goddess is famous for showing herself in the same way before the Heavenly Rock Cave in order to lure Amaterasu out. Her behavior must have been the prototype for the obscene *kagura* dance performed by the maidens of the Sarume Clan for the sake of their sun deity Sarutahiko. When the worship of Amaterasu as the Imperial ancestral goddess was established in later years, the Sarume maidens must have performed the same dance for Amaterasu. This fact supports the theory that Amaterasu was originally a male deity. Modern Japanese scholars such as Dr. Tsuda,¹⁸ Dr. Orikuchi,¹⁹ Tsukushi Nobuzane,²⁰ Professor Okada²¹ and I,²² support this theory. According to a medieval diary written by a monk Tsûkai (通海), a strange legend was told among the priests of the Ise Shrine, as follows: The Great God Amaterasu visited the high priestess *saiô* (齋王) or *itsuki no miko* every night, and united with her.²³ The next morning, several scales, as from a snake or lizard, were left in her bed. No one but the priestess knew, however, what form this Amaterasu assumed for such visits. In ancient times, Amaterasu was regarded as a snake deity or as a sun deity.

17. See Matsumae, *Nihon Shinwa no Shinkenkyû* (Tokyo: Ôfusha, 1960), pp. 44-46.

18. Tsuda Sôkichi, *Jindai-shi no Kenkyû* (Tokyo: Iwanami-shoten, 1924), pp. 476-502.

19. Orikuchi Shinobu, "Amaterasu Ômikami", *Orikuchi Shinobu Zenshû*, Vol. XX (Tokyo: Chuô-kôronsha, 1956), pp. 90-101.

20. Tsukushi Nobuzane, *Amaterasu no Tanjô* (Tokyo: Kadokawa-Shoten, 1962).

21. Okada Seishi, *Kodai Ôken no Saishi to Shinwa* (Tokyo: Hanawa-shobô, 1970), pp. 359-400.

22. Matsumae, *Nihon no Kamigami* (Tokyo: Chûô-kôronsha, 1974), pp. 171-182.

23. *Tsûkai Sankeiki*, *Zoku Gunsho-ruijû*, 70. See Tsukushi, p. 8.

III. Amaterasu and Saiô

The word *saiô* or 'itsuki no miko' means sacred princess. In ancient times, upon the accession of an Emperor, an unmarried princess from the Imperial Family was selected for service to the Ise Shrine.

The name "Amaterasu Great Deity" is a neutral name and does not imply feminine gender. In many cases in Japanese folklore, priestesses served their deities as a wife would serve a husband. For example, a virgin priestess (*monoimi*) served Takemikazuchi Great Deity as his wife in the Kashima Shrine. In Kyoto, a sacred maiden, called *areotome*, served the thunder deity Wakeikazuchi, of the Kamo Shrine, as his wife. In ancient times, a sacred maiden was selected from the Kamo Clan by divination. In the early Heian Period, however, an unmarried princess was appointed as *areotome* upon the succession of each new emperor. The *areotome* princess was also called *saiô* or *itsuki no miko*, and her function was similar to that of the Ise *saiô*. In the old folk belief of Japan, priestesses or shamanesses were often believed to be the wives of male deities. According to a version of the *Nihongi*,²⁴ Princess Yamato-totohi, who had the power of predicting the future, became the wife of the deity Ômononushi, during the reign of the Emperor Sujin.²⁵ This deity visited her at night, but was never seen in the daytime. According to another version common during the same age, Princess Nunaki-in-hime was appointed priestess of the deity Ôkunidama, tutelary deity of Yamato. However, she proved too weak to be the wife of this powerful god. She became sick and resigned her post.

In modern shamanistic belief, blind shamanesses called *itako* usually serve as wives to their deities. I believe that the relation between the *saiô* and Amaterasu is the same. In the Ise district, Amaterasu was sometimes called Amateru, too. This was the original name of the deity. I conjecture that this Amateru was a male sun deity, who was worshipped by the fishermen of Ise. But, in the later days, perhaps in the fifth or sixth century A.D., the Imperial Court in Yamato identified him with the ancestral deity of the Imperial Family, and sent a *saiô*, accompanied by many priests and officials from clans such as the Nakatomi and Imibe. The first *saiô* served Amateru or the proto-Amaterasu, as his

24. Aston, p. 158.

25. The tenth Emperor. A legendary person. Mimaki-irihiko is his original name. The *Nihongi* relates that he ruled the country from 97 B.C. to 30 A.D. However, many modern historians maintain that this date is not reliable, and that his actual reign was at the beginning of the fourth century A.D.

wife. But after several generations, her successors came to serve Amaterasu. It is uncertain how this change took place. Dr. Orikuchi, however, has suggested that the male elements of this deity faded away, while the female elements gradually increased. The reason for this is alleged to be that the impression of the *saiô* priestesses of several generations became so popular and strong that the original sex of this deity was forgotten. Furthermore, Dr. Orikuchi maintained that Ôhirume; another name for this deity was also originally another name for *saiô*, and that the word "*hirume*" means "the wife of the sun".²⁶ In later days, the two names "Amaterasu" and "Ôhirume" were confused, and identified with each other. Finally, the deity Amateru became the great goddess Amaterasu, accompanied by many attendants. Mr. Tsukushi has suggested that the original sex of the deity was changed after the model of the Empress Jitô, accompanied by the Nakatomi and Imibe nobles.²⁷ This is an interesting hypothesis. But, I will agree with Orikuchi's opinion rather than Tsukushi's theory, because the evidence strongly suggests that the alteration of the sex of this deity took place in an earlier age. According to the myth of the Heavenly Rock-Cave, Amaterasu, in the manner of a priestess, wove divine garments for an unknown deity in her sacred weaving hall. Then, she celebrated the feast of the Niiname Festival.²⁸ In ancient Japan, there was a custom that priestesses wove sacred garments and offered them to the deities before the Niiname Festival began. In the spring and autumn festivals of the Ise Shrine, such holy garments were made by the priestesses. A similar custom was observed as a part of the Daijô-sai or Grand Harvest Festival of the Imperial Court. The motif of Amaterasu's weaving is a reflection of that old custom, rather than the impression of the Empress Jitô.

As for the origin of the *saiô* system of the Ise Shrine, the *Nihongi* tells the following legend. From the age of the Emperor Jimmu, Amaterasu and her emblem, the Yata mirror was worshipped within the Imperial palace. However, the Emperor Sujin, alleged to have reigned 97 B.C.-30 A.D., dreaded her power and transferred the emblem to a village called Kasanui in Yamato. Hence, Princess Toyosuki-irihime served the deity there as a *saiô*.²⁹ Later, in the fifth Century B.C., the Emperor

26. Orikuchi, "Amaterasu Ômikami".

27. The Emperor Temmu's wife. After her husband died, she reigned from 687 A.D. to 696 A.D. As for the relation between her and Amaterasu, see Tsukushi, pp. 208-225.

28. Aston, pp. 40-41.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 151.

Suinin, Sujin's successor, appointed Princess Yamato-hime as the "mitsueshiro" or a medium of Amaterasu as the successor of Toyosuki. Princess Yamato-hime looked for a suitable place for the shrine of Amaterasu, travelling about several districts, carrying her sacred mirror. Finally, she arrived at the Isuzu River, and, by the oracle of Amaterasu, a shrine was established there in the fifth century A.D. in honor of the goddess.³⁰ This is the story of the origin of the Ise Shrine, although it is only a legend, not an historical fact. The *Nihongi* tells of several *saiô* who were sent to Ise in later periods. However, the most reliable sources in the *Nihongi* are the records from the middle of the sixth century A.D., during the reign of the Emperor Keitai. After this emperor sent Princess Sasage, many other *saiô* were appointed in succession. The exact date of the beginning of this system is unknown. However, I think that the first *saiô* was sent towards the middle of the fifth century A.D. According to Professor Okada, the shape of the box (*mifunashiro*) in which the sacred mirror of Amaterasu is kept resembles that of stone coffins used around the middle of the Tumulus Age in the later period of the fifth century A.D. Hence, he conjectures that the origin of this *mifunashiro* can date back to that period, and that furthermore, the establishment of the Ise Shrine can date back to that age.³¹ According to the *Nihongi*, in the reign of the Emperor Yûryaku, Princess Takuhata was sent as a *saiô* to the Ise Shrine.³² In the same era, a local lord Asahi-iratsuko, or "Morning-sun-male-person" in Ise, was destroyed by the Imperial army.³³ Asahi-iratsuko must not have been a historical person, but rather a local sun-god in this district. This legend reflects the historical fact of the conquest and ruling of the worshippers of the local sun deity in this area by the Yamato Court. According to the *Toyoukegû Gishiki-cho*, the old record of rituals of the Ise Shrine, written in 805 A.D., in the reign of this emperor, the Food Goddess Toyouke was worshipped in the Gekû Shrine of Ise for the first time. It is notable that many such Ise-related incidents are described in connection with the reign of this emperor.

IV. The Actual Origin of the Ise Shrine

In the sphere of archaeology, the earliest remains of worship were

30. *Ibid.*, p. 175.

31. Okada, p. 370.

32. Aston, p. 337, 341.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 365.

found within the precinct of the Naiku shrine of Amaterasu in recent years. These remains can be dated back to the middle of the fifth century A.D. I believe that around this period, the nobility of the Yamato court paid attention to the local sun deity in Ise, who had been worshipped among the fishermen. Thus, they identified this deity with the ancestor of the Imperial Family. Then, they sent a *saiô* and many court priests to this sanctuary to serve this deity. They changed the character and function of the deity by degrees into a national sun deity. If this deity had been conveyed from the Imperial Court as the legend says, the mode of rituals and the style of structures in the Ise Shrine would probably have been the same as those of the Imperial Court. However, the two were very different. The story of the wandering of Princess Yamato-hime is nothing but the legend explaining why Amaterasu was worshipped and served by *saiô* in Ise. The name "Yamato-hime" may not have been the personal name of a particular person, but a common name for many successive *saiô*, who were sent from Yamato. The word "Yamato-hime" means the princess who came from Yamato. The *saiô* for generations served the sacred Yata mirror of Amaterasu. I conjecture, however, that the sacred mirror was not the original emblem of this deity. The original object of offering was a sacred pillar called "*shin-no mihashira*", standing under the floor of the main hall of this shrine. As a part of my research,³⁴ I have discovered that the rituals and festivals of this shrine consisted of two different components: original and indigenous elements and later elements brought by the nobles of the Yamato Court. On the nights of the three important festivals, *Ômonoimi*, three maiden-priestesses (the *saiô* was not included) approached the sacred pillar carrying torches and offered food and sake to this pillar. This ritual was regarded as the most essential. Nobody was permitted to approach the pillar but these maidens. Even the *saiô* and other high priests and officials who were sent from the Court could not take part in this secret ritual. The *ômonoimi*-maidens were of the indigenous, hereditary priest families of this shrine, the Watari and the Arakita. On the day following the ritual, various public ceremonies were held in the front-yard of the Naiku Shrine. Then, the *saiô* paid homage to the deity, the Nakatomi priest recited a prayer, and the Imibe priest set a big bough of a *sakaki* tree there as a sign of celebration. The *gosechi* dance was performed by court maidens. These rituals were practiced there in front of the gate of the main hall in the daytime. They were the later com-

34. Matsumae, *Nihon no Kamigami* (Tokyo, Chûdô-kôronsha, 1974), pp. 171-177.

ponents which were conveyed by the court nobility. Some scholars pointed out that the structure of the *shôden*, or the main hall resembled that of a store house in the Yayoi Period in style.³⁵ Thus I conclude that in a more primitive stage of development, the Ama people of this district worshipped the solar deity Amateru, and a few maidens were selected as priestesses to serve this deity. They offered food to the sacred pillar as his emblem on the occasion of their festivals. But, in the later age, about the middle of the Tumulus Age, the Yamato nobility paid attention to this deity. They identified the deity with their ancestor, sent a *saiô* as the highest priestess, and the Nakatomi and Imibe priests to serve the deity. They offered their treasures and erected treasure houses near the sanctuary. Later, one of the treasure houses became the main hall of the shrine. The original sacred emblem, called *shin-no-mihashira*, or the central pillar, had been replaced by the new emblem of the Yata mirror, one of the treasures. However, the custom of having native maidens offer food to the pillar survived until modern times. In the sixth or seventh century A.D., the sex of this deity gradually changed from male to female, as a result of the strong impression of successive generations of *saiô*. Why did the Yamato court regard this deity as the ancestor of the Imperial family? Was there not any other solar deity who deserved this honor? What of the deity of the Hinokuma Shrine in Kii? My answer is as follows: The nobility in the Yamato Court was influenced by the Korean belief that the country should be ruled by the "children of the sun". This belief was popular among the Korean people in the fifth or sixth century A.D. In the old kingdoms of Korea, (Koguryô, Silla and Paekche), the royal families were believed to have been the direct descendants of the solar deity. The nobility of the Yamato Court adopted this belief in order to govern and unify the country. Thus, they sought the most suitable solar deity for the ancestor of the Imperial family. At one time, the deity of the Hinokuma Shrine was purported to be their ancestral deity. However, the deity of the Ise Shrine was finally selected as the most suitable one. This was probably because Ise was located to the east of Yamato, that is, in the direction of the rising sun, and because there was no powerful nobility in this district that had served this deity. If any powerful nobles such as the Kii Clan in the Hinokuma Shrine had served the deity of the Ise Shrine, the Yamato nobility would have found it difficult to regard this deity as their only ancestor, and to prohibit the common people from

35. Cf. Watanabe Yasutada, *Shinto Art: Ise and Izumo Shrine* (Tokyo: Heibon-sha, 1974), pp. 104-115.

the worship of the deity as they actually did. According to one version of Amaterasu's Heavenly Rock Cave Myth in the *Nihongi*, deities ordered the goddess Ishikoridome to make a sacred mirror for the goddess Amaterasu. This mirror became the sacred emblem of the great deity of the Hinokuma Shrine in Kii.³⁶ According to the *Kogoshûi*, the first mirror made by this deity was not satisfactory. The second mirror made by the deity, however, was much better. The first mirror became the emblem of the Hinokuma Shrine, and the second mirror that of the Ise Shrine.³⁷ This story represents the fact that several changes took place before the solar goddess in Ise was settled to be the Imperial ancestor. However, before the establishment of Amaterasu worship at Court, was any deity regarded as the ancestor or the guardian god of the Imperial Family? If so, which deity was it? I conjecture that the proper ancestral and tutelary deity of the Imperial Family was not Amaterasu, but Takamimusubi, one of the Eight Deities of the Ministry of Shintô Affairs in the Imperial Court. According to the *Engishiki*, Takamimusubi was revered and served on the occasion of the Daijô-sai or the Grand Harvest Festival of the Imperial Court. First fruits of rice in the sacred field were offered to this deity. Meanwhile, Amaterasu was not worshipped in this festival.³⁸

36. Aston, p. 47.

37. *Kogoshûi*, written by Imube Hironari in 808 A.D.; Ida Sueharu, *Kogoshûi Shinkô* (Tokyo: Meibunsha, 1940), p. 61.

38. Matsumae, *Nihon no Kamigami*, pp. 90-137; the same author, *Kodai Denshō to Kyūtei Saishi* (Tokyo: Hanawa-shobō, 1974), pp. 37-47.