

**BUDDHIST IDEOLOGY AND FORMATION OF LITERARY TEXT  
IN ANCIENT JAPAN: THE CASE OF NIHONKOKU  
ZEN`AKU-GENPO-RYOIKI**

Masao Yamaguchi

In contrast to the *Manyo-shu*, the uniquely beautiful anthology of ancient Japanese poetry, and the *Ki-Ki* (*Kojiki* and *Nihonshiki*), the wellspring of ancient mythical narrative, relatively less attention has been paid to the *Nihon-Ryoiki*. Some commentators have tried to avoid discussing it, giving the excuse that it is too heavily influenced by Buddhist teachings and morality. Others give the excuse that it is not as accomplished as a literary work as many other ancient literary texts. For the general reader, the work has had primarily historical interest, in that it was the first of a series of collections of narratives of folk origin.

However, if we look at the circumstances under which this work was written, we may find that an interesting aspect of the contact between two cultures of heterogeneous origin is to be seen in it. These two different cultural tradition are mediated in it to give birth to a new form of narrativity, providing a deep and lasting influence on subsequent literary forms of Japan.

**Kyokai and the Origin of Negativity in Ancient Japan**

Scarcely anything is known of Kyokai, supposedly the author of the *Nihon-Ryoiki*. A fragment of biographical information on the author is contained in the 38th story of the third volume of

the work, and this is the sole piece of information about him available. Some commentators believe that he had his origin in the Ki'i District to the south of Nara, and others maintain that he was related to the Ohtomo clan, which declined in the political struggles of the 8th Century. However, nothing has been revealed to confirm these theories. The only facts which are more or less confirmed about his life is that he was not of lower class origin. His family seemed to be of some influence in the district of his origin judging from the cultural background mirrored in his writings.

According to his own short autobiographical account, he seems to have been living with his wife and children, when one day in 787 (September 4th), he was seized by a serious sentiment of reflection and remorse toward his own uncritical attitude toward life. He was visited with a dream in which he discussed these feeling with Kyonichi, a monk with whom he was well acquainted. He seems to have decided to leave his family and retire to a life of seclusion in a monastery. He describes having seen another dream on March 17, 787 in which he was burning corpses. Some specialists maintain that this description shows his undecided attitude toward the custom of cremation as opposed to burying the dead, since this custom had been introduced not long before. In folk belief it was maintained that the souls of the dead, once departed from the corpse, might return, and therefore the corpse was either kept as it was for a week, or buried in the ground. Indeed, in the *Ryōiki* there is a story of a dead woman who was allowed to come back to life, but who could not because her corpse had already been cremated, and therefore she had to find another body to enter, thus causing confusion among members of the family of the corpse she inhabited in order to return to life (Vol. II, No. 25).

Kyokai seems to have received some priestly rank,

which placed him at the fourth of five levels of the priestly hierarchy (one from the bottom). This occurred in 795. He lost his son in 797, and his two horses in 798. It is Moriya who insists he used these horses not only for transportation but also in his shamanistic rituals (Moriya ; 1974).

In the eighth century, there were only a limited number of ways to become a priest. Buddhism established its influence in close association with the centralized state of ancient Japan. Buddhism thus came under the control of the state. The monks of such larger temples as Todai-ji and Ya-kushi-ji or Kofuku-ji were treated well by the government, and they organized a semi-bureaucratic system of their own through which they climbed the ladder of status. However, the numbers of those who could be admitted to these larger temples were extremely limited by government as well as priestly regulation.

There were also a large number of people who claimed to be monks. These self-made monks, were called *shido-so* (self-appointed monk). They were also called by such names as *hijiri* (the saint), *sami*, etc. The government took rather harsh action against some of these *shido-so*. For the government they were not only useless, but also dangerous beings. The *Ritsuryo* government forbade the people to drift away from their place of residence without permission. That is the basis on which it prosecuted them on occasion. Therefore the position of the *shido-so* was a very unstable one. They were sometimes treated like beggars and handled very badly, as described in several tales in the *Ryoiki* (Vol. I , No. 15, 29 ; Vol. II , No. 1 ; Vol. III , No. 15, 33).

It was for this reason that some specialists such as Katsumi Masuda have called the *Ryoiki* the literature of the *shido-so* (Masuda 1966). According to him, Kyokai himself, being a *shido-so*,

was surrounded by these wandering priests who used to live like ordinary people, and preached to the people in the countryside. Their activity provides a remarkable contrast to that of the priests in the larger temples who were so devoted to abstract doctrine or esoteric ritual that had nothing to do with the lives of the people except through the government that protected them.

There were three kinds of Buddhist temples in 8th century Japan, according to Kojiro Naoki, a specialist in ancient Japanese history : *tera* (temple), *dojo* (The installation for spiritual exercises), *do* (a simple hut for gathering), (Naoki 1960).

*Tera* were usually supported either by the government or the influential clans. It was rather through the *do* that *shido-so* carried out the Buddhist missionary work and evangelism. Living close to the ordinary people, they found it necessary to preach to people making use of tales of the everyday world (*seken-banashi*) to make the people feel at home with the teachings of Buddhism. It is for this reason that the majority of the tales are drawn from the kinds of stories that might have been told mouth-to-mouth among the people in whose midst they carried out their principal activity.

Although the *Ryoiki* was written as a collection of exemplary stories with the purpose of imposing Buddhist morals and rules upon the ways in which social phenomena were interpreted, the real social world of the times emerges much more vividly between the lines of the work. It is impressive to see that the names of actual villages or the names of otherwise insignificant persons are mentioned. This reinforces the supposition that the texts were collected and told by the *shido-so*.

This also helps to explain why the application of the Buddhist doctrine of causation was limited to the present world (*zen`aku gemposhugi*) and sometimes transformed into a demonstration

of magical power derived from the special protection of Buddhist gods, or application of a *sutra*. In the *Ryoiki*, this world was the central locus for the pursuit of happiness. Every deed would be reciprocated in this world, according to the author: bad for bad, and good for good through the intervention of the Buddha.

This attitude toward life seems to have been the reason why the *Ryoiki* has been identified as the first realist literature in Japan, according to some specialists, such as R. Itabashi (Itabashi; 1946). Itabashi contrasted the reality reflected in the *Ryoiki* with that of the *Manyo-shu*. In the *Manyo-shu*, with the exception of the work of Okura Yamanoue and two stylized poems written by anonymous beggars (*Manyo-shu* 3885, 3886) there is no reflection of the hard realities of life. The beggars and poor people were excluded as objects of artistic creation. There were certain levels of reality which could be made the object of poetic creation in the *Manyoshu*, whereas in the *Ryoiki*, the world is described as full of misery, poverty, inhuman activity, immorality, and people living sinful and foolish lives. Itabashi applied the word *shaba* (this very world) to describe such a world. According to him "*shaba*" should be the authentic place where social justice can be realized, and impiety and immorality should be punished. It is in this sense that the world is the place for achievement of morality as well as a place of sin. It is the place where the Gods cohabit with Satan and it is the dualistic world of light and darkness. We never find consciousness of sin in the *Manyoshu*. There is only light, but not the contrasting darkness (Itabashi; *ibid* : 1152).

It is of much interest to note that the *Ryoiki* was the first instance in which the notion of individual sin was described in ancient Japan. Saburo Ienaga demonstrated in his *The Development of the Logic of Negativity in the History of Thought in Japan* (1940) that

the concept of absolute negativity did not exist in ancient Japan.

Ienaga defined the world view of the Japanese for the 7th Century in two words: "optimistic (*koteiteki*)" and "contiguous (*rinsetsu*).” For the ancient Japanese all parts of the world were thought to be contiguous and interconnected in space and in nature. All existence, including the world of the dead, the world of the Gods, and the underworld were thought to be an extension of this world. Even *Takamagahara* (heaven) was described as the reflection of this world. The underworld was a place where one could go on foot. Ienaga recognizes that it was in the *Ryoiki* that the description of the visit to the underworld was transformed into a story of the dead who came back to this world, not a story of someone who visited that world on foot (Ienaga; 1940: 28). He suggests that through this a kind of breakthrough was achieved in the development of the notion of this as opposed to other worlds.

Following the idea of Nobutsuna Saigo that "It was on the basis of the idea of the country of *Yomi* (the other world) that the Buddhist idea of "hell" was accepted." Toshihiko Moriya maintained that the idea of "hell" was in the process of formation when the *Ryoiki* was written. The description of hell in the *Ryoiki* is not very distinct from that of the *Ki-Ki* (*Koji-ki*, *Nihonshoki*) in that the other world is described as that of the scenery of the next village as seen in Vol. I, No. 3; Vol. II, No. 7, 16; Vol. III, No. 21, 22, 23. Moriya writes that the idea of *Yomi no kuni* (the underworld) existed alongside a parallel idea of *Tokyo no kuni* (lit. the land of eternal happiness) a paradise beyond the sea. In the conception of hell, these two worlds were mixed. It was not until the 10th Century with the *Ojoyoshu* of Genshin that the idea of *jigoku* (hell) was established as a negative realm opposed to this world (Moriya; 1974).

Optimism was found alongside the notion of the contiguous world, according to Ienaga. He insists that the ancient Japanese not only appreciated purity, but also took it as the essential quality of the world. People are described as celebrating communal feasts continuously. "For the ancients, evil was easily overcome. They never dreamed of a principle of evil which could shake the pleasure of the world." Ienaga writes that it was because they lacked the logical concept of negativity that social reality was accepted as it appeared, making it impossible for the ancients to produce an attitude which allowed reflection on the ideal world through denying the present world.

As a matter of fact it was through the description of the *Ryoiki* that we can observe the internalization of the ideal of evil (Itabashi; 1946: 36). As I have shown in an earlier paper: "Nature and culture in the *Fudoki*" there existed the idea of negativity but in close association with the concept of space and pollution. For the ancients negative value was something which contaminated the people. Those people who lived beyond the frontier of the community were contaminated and polluted by evil spirits. Evil was not the essence associated with the moral activity of the people. It was more or less a state of being. If one should enter into a space dominated by an evil spirit, one became contaminated. Therefore, negativity was never internalized in an individual (Imai, M.; 1976: 155).

It was along with the establishment of the notion of the continuity of an individual's personality that the idea of evil became associated with the moral attitude of the person. The Buddhist doctrine of causation seems to have been responsible for the idea of the continuity of the individual not only in this world but also in future and past worlds (Nakamura, I.; 1980: 78). It was in this way that

the notion of narrative time could be brought into a concept of time that was largely disjunct, even though some notion of cycle might be seen in agricultural practice. This disjunct time was the time of myth and epic, which had no necessary *interconnection or continuity*. Neither did it have a sense of result or causation.

It was through the introduction of causational (linear) time that the time frame of the novel could come into existence. The *Ryoiki* seems to have been the first work to introduce this causational and narrative time sense, with its ability to link the present with the future and the past. We see in the *Ryoiki* numerous examples of this as in tales in which dead souls suffer because of their conduct in their previous life, or in tales of men transformed into animals because of evil conduct in their previous life (Nakamura, I.; *ibid*: 73-76).

It was through the establishment of the idea of neutral and universal time in Buddhism that the mean reality of the everyday life of otherwise nameless people became the object of the world of literary discourse in the *Ryoiki*, unlike in the *Manyo-shu* or in the *Ki-Ki*. Therefore we can see in the *Ryoiki* the process by which a methodology for observing and describing everyday reality was being consolidated. In other words, the possibility of introducing everyday reality into a literary text was realized first in the *Ryoiki*. In a sense it was an early form of ethnography in literary form. We can confirm this process by seeing how the style of the *Ryoiki* influenced the Buddhist narrative literature (*setsuwa bungaku*) out of which the ancient *roman* (*monogatari*) came to be born. It set up the frame through which everyday reality was reflected.

## II. The Mediation Aspects of *Ryoiki*

From the proceeding we can see that the *Ryoiki* can be defined as a written text which mediates between opposing traditions in Japanese literary and cultural tradition:

1. It mediates the Buddhist doctrine of transcendence with the doctrine of mundane reality and morality in everyday life.

2. It mediates the tradition of the literary text with that of the oral texts gathered by the *shido-so* (self-made monks).

3. It mediates the idea of causational time with the notions of situational and disjunct time.

4. It mediates the events of everyday life with the logic of succession of the miracle stories which are the source of literary imagination, through use of the Buddhist doctrine of causation.

5. It mediates the world of the events of everyday life with the fictional world. Here one can find the birth of a literary device for the first time in the text of the *Ryoiki*, even though it was written for a different purpose: propagation of Buddhist doctrine. Tsuyuki, who is concerned about fictionalism in the *Ryoiki* writes: "Each tale of the *Ryoiki* was not meant to transmit an event, as does the news. It is told through the reconstruction of the eyes and minds of either original story tellers, or of *Kyokai*, thus overcoming the limits of the genre or form of popular tale by means of the disguise of fiction (Tsuyuki, S.; 1964: 21).

So, we can reconstruct the process through which the original version of the real story undergoes transformation and takes on a general character which can be enjoyed in wider areas of communication as a literary product.

The process can be represented thus:

The original event,

transformed through narration,

enhanced through addition of miraculous elements, exaggerated through style and figurative language, becomes a literary product: a story of verisimilitude.

6. It mediates the world of politics, the central focus of history contemporary to the time, with the world of the local community, by means of development of an historical consciousness based on the intersubjectivity of a wider range of phenomena which was in the process of formation at the time (Takatori, M.; 1961).

Harada has made an analysis of the way in which Kyokai's reporting of the decline of the Ohtomo clan--and hence his sense of historical reality--was affected by the author's affiliation with this clan. Harada intimates that the author was too sympathetic in his treatment of groups of people of foreign origin in history contemporary to the time because of the patronage of the Ohtomo clan of these people (Harada, K.; 1972).

It was R. Kaminoshi who showed the formation of an intersubjective world around the time of the *Ryoiki*'s compilation, which surpassed the frontiers of the local community. This world was based on the establishment of "communicability" on a wide range. He defines communicability as "the interaction of varied domains in the interchange of merchandise, the commerce in, and spread of, productive technology, and the development of literacy, literature, and the observance of universal law (Kaminoshi, R.; 1976: 162). It was through the mediation of Buddhistic ideology based on universality that communicability became a force in literature, and the *Ryoiki* reflects this state exactly.

In order to show the mixture of universal logic and provincial thinking, I. Nakamura pointed out the existence in the *Ryoiki* of two types of words used to indicate causation, that of "*inga*" (causation in a Buddhist sense) and "*hyoso*" (manifest form, or mes-

sage seen in appearance). Nakamura defined Buddhist causation to be the exact correspondence between cause and effect, whereas in the days prior to Buddhism, all phenomena in the world were floating, being without definition, and ambiguous (Nakamura, I.; 1980: 44).

Kyokai defines the word *hyoso* as “an omen” or premonition of some historical event in Vol. III, No. 38. However, Nakamura insists that there is no other example of the use of the word “*hyoso*” in Buddhist writing, and this was a word invented by Kyokai. *Hyoso* is, after all, a non-rational and mystic conception that has nothing to do with the Buddhist logic of causation as an exact one-to-one correspondence. However, there is some similarity between the two words in that they are based on the idea of correspondence, although the content of one is totally different from the other. It was the surface similarity between the two terms which Kyokai tried to exploit in order to mediate Buddha’s logic and the logic of mystical causation with the world of folk belief. The idea of *hyoso* was not necessarily the invention of Kyokai alone. It was an image in use mainly in the political world in the name of a children’s song all through the 7th and 8th Century. During this period, children’s songs frequently expressed a premonition of what might take place, in either a positive or a negative sense, in the political world. This phenomenon of “political forecast” through children’s songs was an extension of the practice of decoding the hidden layer of reality by means of divination, and thus belonged to the pre-Buddhist type of thinking associated with the I-Ching. Nakamura insists that it was with the intention of avoiding the provincial connotations of the word “children’s song” that Kyokai substituted a word with universal connotations, the term *hyoso*. He notes that, on the other hand, it was somewhat risky to use the word *hyoso*, which implied the ap-

plication of a technique of shamanism that was strictly suppressed by the government throughout the second half of the 8th Century. The practice of *hyoso* with its roots in a magical mode of understanding the world, could easily function as a criticism of central power. But it was by means of applying this logic of *hyoso* that Kyokai was able to integrate the individual world of dreams (as in Volume I, No. 18; Volume II, No. 13, 15, 20, 32; and Volume III, No. 16, 24, 26, 36 and his own in Vol. II, No. 38) and the public world of politics. Kyokai might have found it necessary to associate the phenomena which appeared in reality and dream with the world of the collective unconscious, rather than interpreting these phenomena in terms of a Buddhist message of the absolute logic of causation. We might say, in fact, that he oscillated between these two worlds--the world of divination and that of universality. In fact, it was because of this very ambivalence that Kyokai was able to maintain a sensitivity to the miraculous aspect of the narrative, an aspect rooted in the collective imagination of the people.

Kyokai created a horizontal structure of narration in the *Nihon Ryoiki* by means of a concept of causational time, while simultaneously leaving room for the vertical dimension of pre-Buddhist thinking through which the world of folk imagination could be reflected.

On this basis, we may conclude that the *Ryoiki* mediated the world of new and official morality based on Buddhism with the world of folk and mythical imagination. But how can we see this in the actual text? Let me present and analyze several examples, beginning with the tale of Chiisako-be no Sugaru (Volume I, Story No. 1) :

Chisakobe no Sugaru 小子部栖輕<sup>2</sup> was a favorite of Emperor Yuryaku 雄略天皇 (called *Ohatsuse-wakatake no*

*sumerakikoto* 大泊瀬稚武天皇) who reigned for twenty-three years at the Palace of Asakura in Hatsuse 泊瀬朝倉宮.<sup>3</sup>

Once the emperor stayed at the Palace of Iware 磐余,<sup>4</sup> and it happened that Sugaru stepped into Oyasumidono 大安殿<sup>5</sup> without knowing that the emperor lay with the empress there. The emperor, ashamed of his conduct, stopped making love, and it thundered in the heavens. The emperor then said to Sugaru, "Won't you invite the rolling thunder to come here?" "Certainly," answered Sugaru, whereat the emperor commanded him, "Go, invite it here."

Leaving the palace, Sugaru hurried away on horseback, wearing a red headband<sup>6</sup> on his forehead and carrying a halberd with a red banner.<sup>7</sup> He passed the heights of Yamada in the village of Abe<sup>8</sup> and Toyura-dera 豊浦寺,<sup>9</sup> finally arriving at the crossroads of Karu no morokoshi.<sup>10</sup> He cried out: "The emperor has invited the rolling thunder of heaven to his palace." While galloping back to the palace, he asked himself why, even if it were a thunder *kami*, would it not accept the emperor's invitation.

As he returned, it happened that the lightning struck between Toyura-dera and Ioka 飯岡.<sup>11</sup> On seeing it, Sugaru sent for priests to place the thunder on the portable carriage,<sup>12</sup> and he escorted it to the imperial palace, saying to the emperor, "I have brought the thunder *kami*." The thunder gave off such a dazzling light that the emperor was terrified. He made many offerings<sup>13</sup> and then had it sent back to the original site, which is called "Hill of Thunder" 雷岡.<sup>14</sup> (It is situated to the north of the Palace of Owarida 小治田 in the old capital.)<sup>15</sup>

After a while Sugaru died. The emperor let the corpse stay

in its coffin for seven days and nights.<sup>16</sup> Then, recalling Sugaru's loyalty, the emperor had a tomb built at the place which had been struck by lightning and had a pillar inscribed: "The tomb of Sugaru who caught the thunder." The thunder was not pleased. It struck the pillar and was caught between the splintered pieces. When emperor heard this, he pried the thunder loose, narrowly rescuing it from death. The experience left the thunder in a confused state of mind which lasted for seven days and nights. The emperor's officer, in rebuilding the pillar, inscribed it with the following epitaph: "Here lies Sugaru who caught the thunder both in his lifetime and after his death."

This is the origin of the name, "Hill of Thunder," given in the time of the old capital.

This tale of Chiisako-be no Sugaru is one of the most popular tales collected in the *Nihon Ryoiki*. Yet, because its content seems to have nothing to do with Buddhist doctrine, we may wonder why such a tale was placed at the beginning of a collection intended to propagate Buddhist teaching. The tale seems too vulgar to be used as a myth which celebrates the power of kingship. The king in this description seems much too human to be called a divine being.

Quite a number of explanations have been proposed to clarify the mythical as well as ritual background of this tale. Most of these have focussed on the nature of Chisako-be no Sugaru (Sugaru of the Little Boy's Clan) himself or of the Chisaka-be clan. Here are some excerpts from these explanations.

1. Regarding the king's copulation in the daytime:

Moriya (1978) maintains that this conduct was not arbitrary, but was an agricultural ritual that the king performed in the name of the priest of agriculture. It was carried out at this time

of day because that was supposedly when the king's potency was at its height. Fukushima (1977) denies this possibility. Yet another interpretation holds that thundering corresponds to ritual copulation, since thunder symbolizes the union of heaven and earth to which the union of the king with the queen can be compared. (Kurosawa; 1978 : 31, Moriya; *ibid.* p.103)

## 2. On the Nature of Chisako-be:

Sugaru of Chisako-be appears in two other places in the *Nihongi* that have drawn the attention of specialists. One is the episode when king Yuryaku orders him to gather worms for silk (*Kaiko*). He mistakes the word silkworm for that meaning small child (*chiisako*) and, after gathering a large number of the latter, was made the object of ridicule. The king was amused, and gave him the name of Chiisako. (*Nihongi*).

On the basis of these two stories, two interpretations of the nature of Chiisako-be have been developed. One holds that Chiisako was a leader of court entertainers, including dwarves. It is because of this association that the act of Sugaru could not be permitted, partly because he was thought to be a very close attendant of the king, as well as a clown. (Miyaji; 1961: 133). The association of Sugaru with silkworms, however, has been the more suggestive interpretation. Kurosawa (1978) maintains that the growing of silkworms constituted an important part of the queen's court ritual. Chiisako-be, according to him, was in charge of the silkworm rearing. Sophisticated techniques of silkworm rearing were brought to Japan by foreign clans such as the Hata. Chiisako-be is also described as being in charge of the Hata clan. Furthermore, silkworms are fed the leaves of the mulberry (*kuwa*), and this tree was associated with thunder, not only in ancient Japan but also in ancient China, as the late Ishida, an ethnologist, has shown. (Ishida, E.; "Kuwa-

barako," in *Momotaro no haha*, Tokyo, 1956) Thanks to an association with the thunder-god, it seems that Chiisako-be became associated with Miwa-no-ookami Otomononushi, the thunder god of Miwa, known to have appeared in the form of a serpent to marry the daughter of the chief-priest of Miwa. At a certain period, the Chiisako-be clan seems to have claimed that they were descendents of the Miwa god (the thunder serpent), and to have assumed the role of priests for this deity. They shared this god in common with the Ohtomo clan, which produced Yasumaro, the author scribe of the *Kojiki*. (Kubota; 1976: 57)

With such knowledge in mind, we may proceed to the next stage of the tale.

### 3. The capturing of thunder by Sugaru:

The fact that the king ordered Sugaru to capture the thunder suggests that Sugaru's clan was associated with a profession related to the thunder god, as stated in the above interpretation. Several scholars have investigated the equipment with which Sugaru was charged. He wore "a red head band" and carried a halberd "with a red banner." What, specialists have asked, is the significance of the headband, the halberd, and the color red? Moriya says that the head band was the indispensable equipment of the priest, and that the halberd was a medium through which the god descended. The color red was, of course, a sacred color. Therefore, Sugaru was well-equipped as a priest who honored the thunder god. (Moriya; *ibid.*, p.101). According to Miyaji (1961, p.136-138), the color red in ancient China was associated with the Southern Emperor. The Southern Emperor was a legendary figure who was the incarnation of a god who agitated the thunder god, and to whom the thunder god was subordinate. Miyaji maintains that Sugaru had a relationship with the Kara clan, or that Kara may have been his ori-

ginal family name. The Karu clan lived to the south of Asuka, an area inhabited primarily by the Aya family (a clan of Chinese origin). It might have been the Aya clan that brought the cult of the Red God from the continent. (Miyaji; op. cit. p.138).

One myth in the *Hitachi-Fudoki* describes the chasing of the serpent god by the chief priest Matachi. This serpent god was considered to be a destroyer of the cultural order, a demonic figure who indulged in every form of negative conduct. In this myth, it was man who set the boundary between culture-order and nature-chaos, and man did not cross that border. In this version, it is nature that seems to be more under the control of man, since the god is actually captured by Sugaru. In earlier times it might have been thought that Sugaru was possessed by the god, rather than capturing him. For example, Shima (1967: 60), maintains that Chiisako-be was the family of the medium that served the king-god. It seems that it was against such a background that Buddhism attempted to purvey its doctrine of universal causation.

Therefore we can assume that this tale was deposited at the border line between the world of Buddhist influence and the world under the control of the indigenous deities. The author, Kyokai, might well have been aware of the mythological appeal that this type of narrative would have to the imagination of the people.

As we have seen, this narrative, which looks like an absurd story, has diverse mythological layers that might appeal to the collective unconscious. Indeed, self-made monks might have told many of the stories to the author, and it is even possible that the author himself was not completely liberated from the world of the popular imagination. However, we should not overlook the fact that the story was humanized, vulgarized, and tamed enough to efface its mythical, ritualistic background. This attempt of the author to dis-

tance the world of folk imagination, while leaving the ties to it intact, was not peculiar to him. It was also the strategy that the great temples adopted in order to establish themselves in a world which, until that time, had been inhabited by a mythical nation of indigenous gods.

The third tale in Volume I is, in a sense, a continuation of No. 1. This is the tale of a boy of great physical strength who eventually became Dharma Master, Dojo (Dojohoshi). Number 3 seems a little closer to the Buddhist context because it is told in order to demonstrate the power of the Gango Temple. The narrative consists of four parts.

Part 1. The thunder is captured by a peasant in the country of Owari and takes an oath to provide a reward if the peasant releases him alive. The farmer releases the thunder, and receives a child who grows into a boy with unusual strength.

Part 2. The boy fights with a mighty prince. The prince gives up the fight, perceiving that the boy is stronger than he.

Part 3. The boy becomes an acolyte at Gango-ji, and fights with a demon who used to kill an acolyte every night. He tears out the hair of the demon, and by tracing the demon's bloody tracks, the people find that they lead to a crossroad where an evil slave executed by the temple was buried.

Part 4. The boy fights with some princes who blocked the flow of water in the irrigation ditches that supplied rice fields belonging to the temple. He wins.

Of these parts, (1) and (3) seem to be distinct from (2) and (4). As a matter of fact, (2) tends to be associated with the mythical, giant hero who caused the separation of heaven and earth. The name Dojo-hoshi is said to have some distant relation to the Daidara-bochi who left his huge footprint on the rocks in many

parts of Japan (Moriya; 1978 : 81).

In the *Ryoiki* version, Dojo-hoshi is sometimes presented as a small child (*chiisako*), and sometimes as a *doji* (infant acolyte).<sup>\*</sup> This image of a small child naturally has resonances with the name Chiisako-be in the previous story. Moreover, the fact that Dojo-hoshi defeats a demon, and challenges those who block water, which is in control of the thunder god, further accentuates the association with Chiisako-be. Dojo-hoshi is also said to have been the son of the thunder god, who ascended into heaven from a mulberry tree. Therefore he could also be related symbolically to Chiisako-be, as one charged with the thunder god through a mulberry tree. Moriya maintains that the mulberry had been a rather new import from China, and that the *ki* tree may have been the one referred to in the original myth. This *ki* tree was closely associated with thunder in ancient Japan. Moriya holds that the story of the thunder dropping from heaven and returning by way of a tree is actually a fragmented version of the classic myth of the god marrying the daughter of a chief priest as a form of communication. There may have been many variants of this thunder god myth, including those in which the god married a priest's daughter or descended from heaven, but the latter form was probably chosen because it better fit the Buddhist ethic of repaying a debt in an honest way. This type of marriage between a god and the daughter of a priest was particularly well known in the version having to do with Ohmononushi of Mt. Miwa, who visited a young woman in the shape of a handsome man and left her home in the morning. The girl, who was suspicious of him, attached a string to his clothes so she could trace his whereabouts. She discovered that he was a serpent. The description of the people tracking down a demon by means of his bloody tracks in the *Dojo-hoshi* story, is most reminiscent of the de-

scription of the young woman identifying the snake of Miwa. (The *Ryoiki* contains one other story reminiscent of the myth of a god marrying a chief priest's daughter.)

The text of his story follows:

*On a boy of Great Physical Strength Whose Birth  
Was by the Thunder's Blessing<sup>1</sup>*

In the reign of Emperor Bitatsu 敏達 (that is, Nunakura-futotamashiki no mikoto 淳名倉太玉敷命 who resided at the Palace of Osada in Iware 磐余譯語田宮),<sup>2</sup> there was a farmer in the village of Katawa in the Ayuchi district of Owari province 尾張國阿育知郡片菴里<sup>3</sup> While he was working to irrigate the rice fields, it began to rain. He took shelter under a tree and stood there holding a metal rod<sup>4</sup> in his hands. When it thundered, he raised the rod in fear. At that moment the thunder *struck in front of* him in the form of a child, who made a deep bow. The farmer was about to strike it with the metal rod when the child said, "Please don't hit me. I will repay your kindness." The farmer asked, "What will you do for me, then?" The thunder answered, "I will send you a baby to repay your kindness."<sup>5</sup> Make me a boat of camphor, fill it with water, and give it to me with a bamboo leaf on the water."<sup>6</sup> When the farmer did this, the thunder said, "Keep away from me," and it ascended to heaven in a rising mist.

Some time later a baby was born to the farmer; the baby had a snake coiled twice around his head, and the snake's head and tail hung down his back. When the child reached his teens, he heard of a man of great strength at the court,

and he went to the capital, for he thought of challenging the man in a contest of strength. An unusually strong prince lived in a detached house on the northeast corner of the imperial palace grounds, where a stone eight feet square also stood. Once, the powerful prince came out, picked up the huge stone, and threw it. Then he went back into his house and closed the door to prevent people from entering. The boy<sup>7</sup> saw this, and he knew that the prince was the very man he sought.

That night the boy crept into the place and threw the stone one foot farther than the prince had. When the mighty prince discovered this, he clapped his hands to warm up, tried to throw it farther, but failed. A second time the boy threw it two feet farther, and again the prince failed. Then the boy, making footprints three inches deep, threw it three feet farther. The prince wanted to catch the boy, who was easily identified by his small footprints, but the boy ran away quickly. The prince tried to catch the boy as he was creeping out through the hedge, but he found that the boy was inside the hedge. When the prince jumped over the hedge to reach the boy, the boy was already on the other side, and the mighty prince was unable to catch him. The prince, realizing that the boy was indeed the stronger, gave up chasing him.

Some time later the boy became an acolyte<sup>8</sup> at Gango-ji 元興寺<sup>9</sup>. At that time no night passed without some of the acolytes in service at the bell hall being murdered. The new acolyte said to the monks at the temple. "I will put an end to these tragedies by killing the evil fiend,"<sup>10</sup> and the monks approved of his proposal. He proceeded to set four lamps and

four men at the four corners of the bell hall and said to them. "When I get hold of the fiend, take the covers off the lamps." Then he hid himself at the base of the door.

At midnight the huge fiend appeared, but departed at the sight of the boy, returning again before dawn.<sup>11</sup> The boy seized it by the hair and pulled hard. The fiend struggled to extricate itself, but the acolyte pulled it into the hall. The four men at the four corners, frightened, were unable to remove the lamp covers so the boy had to light the lamps, one by one, while dragging the fiend around the hall. About dawn,<sup>12</sup> the fiend, its hair having been torn completely out, escaped. In the morning people traced the blood stains as far as the crossroads, where a wicked former slave<sup>13</sup> of the temple was buried,<sup>14</sup> and they discovered that it was the ghost of that dead man. The hair is still preserved in Gango-ji as a treasure.<sup>15</sup>

Meanwhile the acolyte became a lay brother<sup>16</sup> and lived on at Gango-ji. The temple owned some irrigated rice fields. When some princes stopped the flow of water and the fields became parched, the lay brother said, "I will irrigate the fields." The monks agreed to his plan. First, he made a plow so heavy that it took ten men carry it. He took the plow in his hand like a cane and went to the fields, where he put it at the sluice gate to prop it open. But the princes took it away and closed the sluice gate that controlled the irrigation of the fields of the temple. Whereupon the lay brother placed at the sluice a stone so heavy that it would have required more than a hundred men to move it and proceeded to work in the fields. The princes, terrified by his great strength, did not dare to cause any more trouble. After that the fields

were never dry, and they yielded good crops. The monks of the temple allowed the lay brother to be ordained and to renounce the world, naming him Dharma Master Dojo 道場法師.

This is the story of the mighty hero of Gango-ji, reknown in later legends, whose extraordinary strength originated in the merits accumulated in his former lives. This miraculous event was witnessed in Japan.

Moriya insists that this story is a corrupt version of the myth of the god marriage told by the *Kagami-tsukuri* (mirror-producing) clan. Once belief in this had god weakened, he was remembered only in his dreadful aspects and described as a demon which ate a girl. The very existence of this type of god in the mythical imagination of the people, however, suggests a close relationship between Part 1 and Part 3 of this story, which identify the thunder god with the human who was in charge of him. Similarly, the struggle in Part 3 between the demon and Dojo-hoshi seems to suggest a secret relationship that the latter had with the former. In the myth of Susa-no-o defeating the Yamata-no-orochi, Susa-no-o is identified with the eight-headed serpent god because both of them are thunder and water gods, after all.

All of this information may lead us to conclude that the Dojo-hoshi figure is a reflection of a priest who was responsible for the worship of the thunder god, who communicates with his descendants by means of the *ki* tree. However, this particular tale nowhere mentions that the *ki* tree is essential to the cult of the thunder god. The layout of the Gangoji Temple provides us with a clue, however. For there was an old tradition that held that to the west of Gangoji was a cosmic *ki* tree. Many state rituals were carried out under this tree. In fact, the tree may have existed before the temple; the temple

would then have been built because the existence of the tree made it a sacred space. In any case, the large *ki* tree represented a prior form of belief on which Gangoji was dependent, and was at the same time the object that the temple had to overcome in order to legitimize Buddhist ideology. It was no doubt for this reason that the temple at some point constructed a facsimile of this tree, as described in the *Konjaku Monogatari* (Vol. II, No. 22).

When the temple of Gangoji was founded, during the reign of Empress Suiko (593-629), there had been a big *ki* tree on the site. Every attempt to cut down this tree apparently failed, as each cutter either died or was injured. A monk hid in the hollow of the tree in hopes of discovering its secret. At midnight, he heard a voice describing how the tree might be easily cut down. He proceeded to cut down the tree without any accident. Several birds (*kiji*) flew out of the tree to the south. The Empress, who was sympathetic to the poor spirit that had to leave its original home, built a shrine to the south of the capital, in the direction toward which the birds had flown.

Satoru Kuno has pointed out the similarity between this myth and a Chinese myth, and has suggested that this myth might have been formulated by a clan of foreign origin, like the Yamato-no-aya. The Yamato-no-aya had close contacts with the Soga clan, who owned the Gangoji Temple. (Konno, 1967, p.37).

This version bears similarities to the story of Matachi in the *Hitachi Fudoki*, in which the serpent god, after being chased from the borderline, is enshrined by Matachi himself. South is the direction known for its abundance of water, because of the existence of the large Asuka River. This also seems to explain the fact that Dojo-hoshi, in the *Ryoiki* story, is said to be the protector of water for irrigation.\* Incidentally, the *kiji* bird, in the form of which

the spirit of the tree fled, used to be seen as a messenger of the thunder god (Konno; 1967: p.41). The Gangoji Temple was founded by the Soga clan, patrons of foreign technology. The temple's group of priests were of foreign origin, men who worked patiently to absorb indigenous religious elements. Among the indigenous cults, the cult of the thunder-serpent god was one of the best established. It was for this reason that they tried to assimilate the thunder god into a legend of Chinese origin that dealt with the cutting down of a *ki* tree and the quelling of a demon.\* It was by absorbing elements of indigenous cults that the Gango-ji priests consolidated the ground on which the universalistic doctrine of Buddhism could be propagated.

Konno adduces other evidence which suggests that absorption of the thunder god by the Gangoji group was, in fact, achieved. Shugen Nanse describes the statute of Dojo-hoshi as having the face of a thunder-serpent. Chikamichi Ohe, who visited Gangoji in 1106 and 1140, kept a diary called "A personal Description of a Pilgrimage of the Seven Main Temples." In it, he notes that *Nitenhachi-yasha* (a minor guardian god under the control of *Shitenno*, the four heavenly angels), had a serpent in his left hand. Konno, who pointed out this fact, maintains that the *Niten-hachi-yasha* represents an integration of the thunder god into Buddhist iconography in the form of a subordinate of the Buddhist *Shitenno*. (Konno 1976: 28-9) Although the *Niten-hachi-yasha* was one of the minor guardian gods, it had a strong appeal to people who subconsciously believed in thunder gods. This integration of a guardian god and thunder god here achieves in iconography the same thing achieved in the narrative text of the Dojo-hoshi story.

It has also been suggested that the slave who was killed and buried at the crossroads reflects the image of the earth deity

who came under control of Gango-ji. Several other bits of evidence support this presumption. It is easier to identify the roots of this figure if we start with the hair of the demon that became the treasure of Gangoji. Hair, in the Japanese as well as the universal context, is considered to be charged with sacred power because the way it grows is associated with the libido (Leach 1958). In fact, there are many temple names in traditional Japan that have the word for hair (*mo*) as one of their components. In the case of Gangoji, the hair of the demon (*oni*) was a source of sacred power that contained elements of libidinal, chaotic and negative connotations. We can assume that this negative element was a transformation of the power of the thunder god who had been neutralized and pushed to the negative side to be used as a negentropy to assure the numinosity of Gangoji. The spirit of the demon-slave can be equated, then, with the god who visited the human world to manifest his presence by marrying a priest's daughter, and who, in later ages, became the demon who ate the girl (as in Story No. 3, Vol. V).

Kurobe maintains that the evil slave could have been an object of human sacrifice who was buried alive on the occasion of the founding of Gangoji. (Kurobe; 1977: p.128). But why did it have to be at a crossroads? Matsuura makes some suggestions about this in his notes on the *Ryoiki* text. He points to the existence in present day folklore of the notion of abandoning something at the crossroads in the name of *yaku-otoshi* or sending away evil (Matsuura 1973: 30). The evil slave that reflected the image of the thunder god--the earth spirit of the place where Gangoji was built--had to be buried here, at least in the story, to establish the border line between the ruling doctrine of Buddhism and the logic of the preceding belief in an earth spirit. It is much easier to understand the equation of Dojo-hoshi to the spirit of the evil slave if we under-

stand the latter as an ambiguous being that represents an intermediary stage between the thunder god and the negative element, without, however, losing its character of *numinosus*.

It may be clear that these thunder gods are the descendants of the Yato-no-kami that was expelled by Matachi to establish order. In Hitachi-fudoki, the Yato-nokami was the symbolic expression of nature-chaos that we banished from the domain of culture-order. However, in the Gango-ji version presented in the *Ryoiki*, the temple representing culture-order tried to introduce the thunder-serpent into the orderly sphere. The aim was to utilize the thunder-serpent god as a kind of negentropy which could vitalize the divine power of the temple itself.

Now we can see the clear difference between the Matachi version in the *Hitashi-Fudoki* and the Dojo-hoshi version in the *Ryoiki*. Whereas in the former the entropy-chaos (nature) was expelled for the establishment of information-order (culture), in the *Ryoiki* the element of chaos was intentionally reintroduced for the sake of strengthening the domain of order, represented by the temple. Here we must note that the domain of culture-order had been well-consolidated before attempts were made to reintegrate the negative element and turn it into a positive force. Kyokai, in adopting this version, reveals the self-confidence of a temple that had won its battle with the indigenous cult of the thunder god, thanks to the universal doctrine of the Buddhist order.

Story No. 4 in Volume 2 of the *Ryoiki* tells the story of a granddaughter of Dojo-hoshi, who lived in the Katao village of Owari province. It describes how she defeated and punished a powerful woman who engaged in criminal activity at the market of Ogawa, Katagata District, in Mino Province, which borders on Owari.

4 (Vol.2)

*On a Contest Between Women of Extraordinary strength*<sup>1</sup>

In the reign of Emperor Shomu there was a woman of extraordinary strength in Ogawa Marker, Katakata district, Mino province 三野國片縣郡小川市.<sup>2</sup> She was large, and her name was Mino-no-Kitsune 三野狐<sup>3</sup> (the fourth generation of the one whose mother was Mino-no-Kitsune). Her strength equaled that of one hundred men. Living within the marketplace of Ogawa and taking pride in her strength, she used to rob passing merchants of their goods by force.

At that time there was another woman of great strength in the village of Katawa, Aichi district, Owari province 尾張國愛智郡片輪里.<sup>4</sup> She was small (a granddaughter of the Venerable Dojo who once lived at Gango-ji).<sup>5</sup> As she heard that Mino-no-Kitsune robbed passersby of their goods, she sought to challenge her by loading two hundred and fifty bushels<sup>6</sup> of clams on a boat, and anchoring next to the market. In addition, she prepared and loaded on a boat twenty pliable vine whips.

Kitsune came to the boat, seized all the clams, and had them sold. "Where did you come from?" She asked the owner of the clams, but she got no reply. She repeated the question, but again got no answer. After Kitsune had repeated the same question four times, the owner answered, "I don't know where I came from." Kitsune, insulted, rose to hit her. Thereupon the other woman seized Kitsune's two hands and whipped her once. The whip cut the flesh. Then she used another whip which also cut the flesh. Presently ten whips had cut

the flesh.

Kitsune said, "I give up! I am sorry for what I have done." The other woman, whose strength was obviously greater than Kitsune's, insisted, "From now on you shall not live in this market. If you dare do so, I will beat you to death." Completely subdued, Kitsune did not live in the market or steal again, and people in the market rejoiced over the restoration of peace.

There has always been someone in the world with great physical power. Indeed, we know such power is attained as a result of something in past lives.<sup>7</sup>

There is another version of the granddaughter of the venerable Dojo in Story No. 27 of Volume 2, which follows:

27 (Vol.2)

*On a Woman of Great Strength*<sup>1</sup>

Owari-no-Sukune-Kukuri 尾張宿禰久玖利<sup>2</sup> was a governor of Nakashima district, Owari province 尾張國中嶋郡,<sup>3</sup> in the reign of Emperor Shomu. His wife came from the village of Katawa in Aichi district 愛知郡片菟里<sup>4</sup> of the same province (a granddaughter of the Venerable Dojo of Gango-ji).<sup>5</sup> She was faithful to her husband, and as gentle and delicate as glossed silk cloth. Once she wove fine hemp for her husband's robe. Its color and patten were exquisite.

At that time the lord<sup>6</sup> who ruled that province was Wakasakurabe-no-Tau 雅櫻部任.<sup>7</sup> When the lord saw the beautiful robe on the district governor, he stripped him of it, saying, "It is too good for you to wear," and would not return it. When the district governor's wife asked him what had

happened to the robe, he said to her, "My lord took it away." Then the wife asked him, saying, "Do you miss it?" He replied, "Yes, I miss it very much."

Thereupon, the wife went to see the lord and implored, "I beg you to give the robe to me." The lord said, "What a crazy woman! Drive her away." Then, with two fingers, she picked up the bench where the lord was sitting, carried it outside the provincial office<sup>8</sup> with the lord on it, and tore into pieces the hem of his robe, still imploring, "I beg you to give the robe to me!" The lord was so terrified and embarrassed that he returned it to her. She brought it back home and, after cleaning it, folded it and put it away. She could crush a piece of bamboo into strips as fine as silk threads. At that the parents of the district governor were so terrified that they told their son, "Because of you wife you will incur the enmity of the lord and have some trouble," and they continued in panic, "She behaved like that even to the lord. If he decides to punish her for offense, what shall we do? We cannot make our living." Therefore, they sent her back to her parents and abandoned her.<sup>9</sup>

Some time after that she happened to go out to the Kusatsu River 草津川<sup>10</sup> in the village to wash clothes. A merchant passed in front of her on a big boat heavily loaded with goods. The captain of the boat saw and teased her, treating her lightly. "Be quiet!" she said to him. "Those who play tricks on others get slapped on the cheek!" Angry at that, the captain stopped the boat and hit her, but she did not feel the pain. She drew the boat half way up the beach, leaving its stern sunk in the water. The captain hired men who lived near the ferry to lift the cargo out and then reload it in the

boat. She said, "Because he had no manners, I pulled the boat up. Why do you people humiliate a humble woman like me?" She again dragged the loaded boat for about half a furlong. The sailors were struck with such awe that they knelt and said, "We were wrong. We are sorry." Therefore she forgave them. Even five hundred men could not pull the boat, and so it was evident that she had greater strength than five hundred men.

One scripture<sup>11</sup> has a passage to this effect: "If you make and offer rice cakes to the Three Treasures, you will get the strength of Narayama,<sup>12</sup> who was as strong as diamond..." Accordingly we learn that this woman was endowed with such strength because of having made big rice cakes to offer to the monks of the Three Treasures in her past life.

We can read Story No.27 in several different ways. First, the interpretation which seems to be the author's, is that this is the story of a woman who was endowed with extraordinary strength as a result of having made a rice cake for the monks of the Three Treasures in her past life. Noboru Miyata, a folklorist, mentions that these stories show that women were considered the guardians of the strong in ancient Japan. Miyata is following a suggestion made by Kunio Yanagita in *Imoto no Chikara*. There may be some truth to this, as long as we understand the word "strength" to mean "impregnated with cosmic significance."

Kyoko Nakamura has commented on the general importance of women in the *Ryoiki*. In Buddhist teachings, the status of woman was exceedingly low. But after examining the stories of women in the *Ryoiki*, Nakamura makes this statement: "In the ancient Japanese tradition, woman had particular importance as symbols of cosmic power, a role exemplified in her procreative func-

tion. Buddhism added the ethical significance of motherly love to the symbolism of women." (Nakamura, K. 1973 : 70).

Another interpretation of this tale can emphasize the ritual structure buried at a deep level of the story. The story consists of two parts: first, we have the story of a woman strong enough to get angry at the male superior who took away the clothes her husband wore, and to get them back; second, we have the story of a woman who, when teased by the captain of the ship sailing by her, pulled the boat over to the riverside and punished him. According to Moriya, the first part of the story describes a ritual situation in which the priestess wove the cloth of her husband, who is an incarnation of the god. He also points out that the second story manifests a mythical structure in which a violent god threatens the villagers who transgress into his territory. (See Tokura, Y. "Shotoku-Taishi-den" (The Biography of Prince Shotoku) in Yamaji, H. and Kunito, F, eds.; 1977). This knowledge makes us able to perceive a vertical structure, rooted in the mythical and ritual world of imagination, contained in this story about a miraculous demonstration of divine power.

\* \* \*

We have seen that the following series of Dojo-hoshi stories in the Ryoiki is noteworthy:

- Vol. I, No.1.       The story of Chisako-be who captured the Thunder God by order of the king.
- Vol. I, No.2.       On taking a fox as wife and bringing forth a child.
- Vol. I, No.3.       On a boy of great physical strength whose birth

- was given by the Thunder's blessing.
- Vol. II, No.4. On a contest between women of extraordinary strength.
- Vol. II, No.27. On a woman of great strength.

These stories contain some of the best examples of the integration of narrative forms in the *Ryoiki*. Furthermore, this series of stories strikingly reveals the *Ryoiki* author's extensive use of intertextual materials. I use the term intertextuality as Julia Kristeva defines it: every text is an absorption and transformation of another "text." In the case of the *Ryoiki*, we have not only a narrative but a ritual "text." Roger Fowler's redefinition of intertextuality is also helpful here: Fowler writes that "intertextuality is the idea that a work is made up from scraps of earlier writings, metaphorically like a palimpsest, a re-used parchment with the half-erased traces of the previous text showing through the lines of new writing. (Fowler, R.; 1977: 124).

By now the role played by the *Ryoiki* as a mediation between metaphoric and metonymic phases of language is clear. Northrop Frye has defined these two phases in his *Great Code--the Bible and Literature* (1982).

In the first, or metaphorical, phase of language the unifying element of verbal expression is the "god" or personal nature-spirit. (P. 15).

In the metaphoric phase, where the world is held together by the plurality of gods, there is often assumed to be a corresponding plurality of psychic forces that disintegrate or separate at death." (p. 19).

"The first phase of language (metaphorical), as Vico indicates, is inherently poetic." (p. 22).

“Poetry...keeps alive the metaphorical use of language and its habit of thinking in the identity relations suggested by the ‘this is that’ structure of metaphor.” (p. 25). In metaphorical language the central conception which unifies human thought and imagination is the conception of a popularity of gods, or the embodiment of the identity of personality and nature. In metonymic language this unifying conception becomes a monotheistic “God,” a transcendent reality or perfect being that all verbal analogy points to, (p. 9). In proportion as metonymic thinking and its monotheistic God developed, man came to be thought of as a single “soul” and a body, related by the metaphor of “in.” (p. 19). As for metonymy, Frye defines it in the following way; to avoid confusion:

“It seems to me that there are three major senses in which the word ‘metonymic’ can be used. First, it is a figure of speech in which an image is ‘put for’ another image: this is really a species of metaphor. Second, it is a mode of analogical thinking and writing in which the verbal expression is ‘put for’ something that by definition transcends adequate verbal expression: this is roughly the sense in which I use it.” (P. 15).

With the help of Frye’s ideas, we can posit that it was the transition from metaphoric to the metonymic phase that we see in the *Nihon Ryoiki*. Thanks to the fact that the author lived half in the mythical world of the imagination, he did not harshly reject metaphorical language, but rather integrated it into the Dojo-hoshi series. Perhaps he realized that he could animate the minds of the people listening to his stories better by making use of the metaphoric language. Through the metaphoric language, with its basis in the poetic imagination, the Buddhist evangelist could reach a deeper

layer of the listener's consciousness.

Fry uses the conception of myth in a second sense. He explains:

"The verbal culture of prediscursive society will consist largely of stories, but among those stories there grows up a specialization in social function that effects some stories more than others. Certain stories seem to me to have a peculiar significance: they are the stories that tell a society what it is important to know, whether about its gods, its history, its laws, or its class structure. These stories may be called myth in a secondary sense, a sense that distinguishes them from folktales--stories told for entertainment or other less central purposes. They thus became 'sacred' as distinct from 'profane' stories." (pp. 32-33).

Most of the stories collected for the purpose of evangelizing in the *Ryoiki* can also be called myth in this second sense.

Although the world described in the *Ryoiki* was far removed from the world of the Buddhist ideology propagated in the larger temples of the day, it was nevertheless a canonical form of expression. Fortuitously, this canonical status of the work was not achieved at the expense of total elimination from its discourse of the marginalized, mythical style which had become more or less discredited in the official world. Because of this felicitous integration of metaphoric and metonymic language in the *Nihon Ryoiki*, the metaphoric mode was preserved and was able to deeply influence the narrative literature of ancient Japan.

\*Kurosawa is of the opinion that Dojo-hoshi might have been associated rather with *ko-be* than *chiisako-be*, because the *ko-be* had closer contact with Owari province, whence Dojo-bo was derived. (Kurosawa, p.1005). Also, K.Kurano (pp.87-90), observes that there is no myth that tells the origin of the separation of heaven and earth as the result of a giant god's activity in the main island. However, the myth of *Amanchi* in Okinawa suggests that a similar type of myth existed at some time in Japan.

\*Kurobe writes that there was a place called Dojo to the south of Asuka. This place was called Dojo because Dojo-hoshi was enshrined there. Dojo was, according, to Kurobe, the earth spirit of Asuka and the water god of the Asuka River.

\*It is interesting to note that Chiisako-be also had a close association with the Hata clan, of Korean origin, and was in charge of the thunder god through the mulberry tree. Some scholars say that Kyokai had a close relation with the Ohtomo clan, which had much contact with clans of Korean origin.

## REFERENCES

### Japanese Language

Harada.K.; *Nihon Ryoiki Hensansha no Shuhen to Sono Seiri* (The Editor of the Nihon Ryoiki and his Surroundings) in *Nihon Bungaku Kenkyu Shiryo Sosho: Setsuwa Bungaku*, Tokyo, 1972.

Ienaga, S.; *Nihon-shisishi ni okeru Hitei no Ronri no Hattatsu* (The Development of the Logic of Negativity in the Intellectual History of Japan), 1969.

Imai, M.; "Zaiakukan no seritsu" (The Formation of the Consciousness of Sin) in Hirokawa, K. *Shinwa, Kinki, Hyohaku* (Myth,

- Taboo, Wandering*), Tokyo, 1976.
- Itabashi, R.; *Shaba no Bungaku* (The Literature of the Profane World), Bungaku, November, 1946.
- Kaminoshi, T.; "Nihon Ryoiki no Seiritsu Josetsu" (The Problem of the origin of the Nihon Roiki) in *Kokugo to kokubungaku*, May 1976.
- Konno, S.; "Gangoji no Ohtsuki to Dojo-boshi" in *Senshu-Kokubun*, No. 9, 1967.
- Nakamura, K.; *Ryoi no Sekai* (The World of the Miraculous), Tokyo, 1967.
- Masuda, K.; "Nihon Ryoiki no hoho" (Method in the Nihon Ryoiki), in Masuda, *Setsuwa Bungaku to Emaki* (Narrative Literature and Picture Scrolls), Tokyo, 1965.
- Moriya, T.; *Nihon Ryoiki no Kenkyu*, Tokyo, 1974.  
*Zoku Nihon Ryoiki no Kenkyu* (Vol. II), Tokyo, 1978.
- Shida, J.; *Nihon Ryoiki to sono Shakai* (Nihon Ryoiki and its Society), Tokyo, 1978.
- Takatori, M.; *Ryoiki no Rekishi-ishiki* (The Historical Consciousness of the Ryoiki), Bunkyo-shigaku, Vol.9, No.2. 1961.
- Tsuyuku, G.; "Kyokosei Yutakana Nihon Ryoiki" (The *Nihon Ryoiki*, Rich in Fictionality), in *Jodai Bungaku Kenkyu Kaiho*, November, 1964.
- Miyaji, T.; "Kaminari-otoraeta hanashi (The Story of Capturing the Thunder God), *Nihon Bungaku Ronkyu*, No. 20, 1961.
- Yamaji, H.; and Kuniyigashi, F. eds. *Nihon Ryoiki* (The Study of Nihon Ryoiki), Tokyo.
- Yamaguchi, Masao; *Bunka to Ryogisei*, Iwanami Press, Tokyo, 1974.

English Language

Fowler, R.; *Linguistics and the Novel*, London, 1977.

Frye, N.; *The Great Code-The Bible and Literature*, London, 1982.

Leach, E.R.; *The Magical Hair* J.R.A.I.,LXXXVIII 1958.

Nakamura, K.M.; *Miraculous Stories from the Japanese Buddhist Tradition*, Cambridge, Mass., 1973.

Symposium on Buddhism and Japanese Literature, Cornell University, June, 1983

Yomaguchi, M.; *Nature and Culture in Fudoki*, unpublished translation of Chap. 1 in "Culture & Ambiguity" of Yamaguchi, 1974, by Jean Hart.