

Mythological Heroes in Korea and Japan

Min Byung-hoon

Department of Japanese Language & Literature, Daejeon University
96-3 Yonggun-Dong, Dong-Gu, Daejeon, 300-716, South Korea
Email: mbh0301@dju.kr

Abstract Despite the cultural similarity and the common historical background of Korea and Japan, the two nations created quite different types of mythological heroes. Comparing the ancient texts such as *Samguk Yusa* in Korea and *Kojiki* in Japan, we find the following differences: 1) Japanese heroes were generally born rather in an ignoble manner without any superhuman character, while Korean equivalents born in an extraordinary manner, with superhuman qualities; 2) Japanese heroes conquered lands and built up their nation with cunning and the help of local people, especially of local women, while Korean equivalents did it with bravery and honesty, usually having loyal subordinate men help him. For example, Susanowo, a builder of pre-Yamato Japan, was born when his father wiped his mucus and did not cease crying all through his youth, while Korean Chumong, the founder of Koguryo, was born out of a giant egg and began to show his extraordinary strength and military skills at the age of seven. The former was expelled from Heaven and got down on Earth where he became a hero, but he conquered the land with cunning and the help of a local woman while the latter bravely fought against enemies and won the wars to be the first king of Koguryo. These differences are important because it is they that mark the fundamental difference in the narrative literature of the two nations.

Key words national myths; heroes; superhuman character; faults; bravery

Many of the scholars who realize a comparative study of Japanese and Korean myths concerning the birth of the nation, tend to take interest in finding out historical relations between the two countries. Obayashi Taryo, one of the most prominent of these scholars, once said ‘if there are similarities in the myths concerning the birth of kingdoms between the Peninsula and the Archipelago, it is probable that there was an intimate relation between the cultures of the ruling classes of both’ (Obayashi 56 – 57). Indeed, ancient Korean and Japanese myths, especially those concerning the birth of nations, have so many common elements that we easily allow ourselves to think of the intimate political and cultural relations between the Peninsula and the Archipelago.

This said, historical approaches are not the only valuable way to a comparative study of the myths of the two countries. Other approaches can be useful in elucidating the essential qualities of each country’s literature. If we focus, for example, on the typology of the mythological heroes or the narrative structure of the two, we will find interesting similarities and differences that may give a hint as to the fundamental char-

acter of each of the two cultures.

For any study of such similarities and differences, the myths registered in *Samguk Yusa* (*The Legends of the Three Kingdoms*, 13th century) and *Kojiki* (*The Record of Ancient Matters*, 712) are the most creditable texts. From these two texts, we find the following similarities: 1) both myths narrate the nation-founders' long-distance journey either in the form of a run-away or an expedition due to persecution or punishment; 2) both include scenes in which the hero's mother or wife was confined in a narrow, enclosed space, which seems to indicate hard trials to be overcome before gaining happiness; 3) both feature heroes as illegitimate or second sons who had no right to become their fathers' successors. These similarities point to links existing between the Peninsula and the Archipelago from prehistoric times.

As the differences are particularly useful in elucidating the nature of narrative in Korean and Japanese literature, it is on these that I would like to focus. It is easy to remark on differences concerning the final destination of the mythological heroes of Korea and Japan,¹ but more important are those that concern each hero's character, manner of birth and process of becoming a hero. I will focus especially on this third difference, pursuing textual comparisons in *Samguk Yusa* and *Kojiki*.

Korean Mythological Heroes

One of the characteristics of ancient Korean myths is that all the heroes who came to found a nation are described to having been born in an extraordinary manner and with superhuman powers that lasted until the end of their lives. They were divine heroes from beginning to end.

Tangun, the founder of the Old Chosun, is a prime example. According to the *Wei-Shu*,² the myth says, Tangun's grandfather Hwan-in, Heavenly King, had a son called Hwan-ung, who descended to earth to found the "City of God". Together with his ministers of clouds, rain and wind, he instituted laws and moral codes and taught human beings various arts, medicine, and agriculture. One day, he met a tigress and a she-bear living in a cave. These two creatures asked him to transform them to human beings. On hearing their request, Hwan-ung ordered them to eat sacred food and remain in the cave for 100 days, but the tigress disobeyed by leaving after only twenty days had passed. She-bear, obeying the king, could finally become a woman as she had wished. Now, as a woman, she wanted a husband and a child. Hwan-ung granted those wishes by marrying her himself and, through him, she had a boy who was named Tangun Wanggom. It is this child who would later become the founder of ancient Chosun.

The myth continues to narrate Tangun's heroic deeds but without further mention of his father Hwan-ung. It tells that Tangun built the capital city of Asadal and founded a nation named Chosun. After moving several times, he returned to Asadal to become a mountain god at the age of 1,908. This unusual longevity is another sign of the hero's extraordinary character.

Similar characteristics can be found in the myth of Hyokkose, the founder of Sil-la Kingdom, who is equally treated in *Samguk Yusa*. The mark of his divine nature is manifest in his extraordinary birth that took place when the six chieftains of Chinhan,

the southeastern part of the Korean Peninsula, gathered to discuss the formation of a united kingdom and selection of a king to rule over it. First, they saw a strange light cast from the sky onto a well called Najong at the foot of Yang Mountain and a white horse bowing down there as if worshipping a god. When one of the chieftains discovered a large purple-colored egg there, the horse ascended to Heaven after a long whinny. Then, a boy emerged from the egg. On seeing the boy, the chieftains did not hesitate to bathe him, and saw his body radiating light. Birds and beasts were dancing; Heaven and Earth were shaking, the sun and the moon were emitting splendid light. The chieftains recognized their king. He was named Hyokkose and became the founder of Silla (Ha and Mintz 49 – 50).

The same myth also narrates the extraordinary birth of King Hyokkose's wife, Aryong, who is said to have been born from the ribs of a dragon (Ha and Mintz 50). This birth is similar to that of the first woman, Eve, in of the Bible, but other features of the story are quite different. Aryong became Hyokkose's wife and co-founder of Silla Kingdom. What is clear in the myth is that the couple who founded the nation were both divine by nature.

In the myth of Chumong, the founder of Koguryo, we again find a story of an extraordinary birth. According to Samguk Yusa, it is in Sam-guk Sagi, the oldest historical book compiled in the 12th century, that his extraordinary birth was narrated. One day, Lady Yuhwa, the daughter of the dragon king, was confined in a dark room by King Kumwa of Tongmyong. But in the room, a strange sunlight entered her and then she gave birth to a giant egg. Out of the egg, came a beautiful boy. That was Chumong, the future founder of Koguryo (Ha and Mintz 49 – 50), which reminds us of the myth of Leda and the swan or Danae and the golden rain of Ancient Greece.

This time again, the hero is hatched from an egg, but Chumong's egg was placed in various precarious situations. Chumong's egg received nothing like the honor that was accorded to that of Hyokkose of Silla. First, King Kumwa tried to feed it to dogs and pigs. When these animals refused it, the king threw it away on a road. Fortunately, the passing horses and cows avoided trampling it and birds even protected it from danger with their wings. All the king's efforts to destroy the egg met with failure, so he decided to return it to Lady Yuhwa. She incubated it till the boy was ready to emerge. The same myth tells that the boy was of incredible beauty. When he was seven years old, he made himself a bow and arrows and showed his marvelous skill of shooting. We further learn that he was a son of Heavenly King who married a daughter of the river dragon god, Habaek (Ha and Mintz 46).

The last example of a myth featuring an extraordinary birth is the one about Suro of Karak-kuk, registered in the second volume of Samguk Yusa. According to this myth, there was a chief ruling over a hundred families and 75,000 people. One day he and his folk heard a strange voice coming from a place called Kuji, Turtle's Back, on the top of North Mountain. The voice announced the coming of a new king, saying: "I have come down from Heaven on an imperial mission to build up a country here. If you dance on the top of the mountain digging the soil, a new king will appear and all of you will celebrate his birth." On hearing this announcement, the chief and

his folk began to dance, chanting the strange words as they were ordered.³ Then, they found golden eggs, which they worshiped. On the following day, six boys hatched from the eggs. One of the boys looked so handsome and brave that they all held him in reverence. The boy was the future King Suro, the founder of Karak-kuk or Kayaguk (Ha and Mintz 158 – 159).

This time again, the hero was born out of the egg like Hyokkose of Silla and Chumong of Koguryo. That his birth had been expected by the people for a long time is a feature more similar to Hyokkose's story than to the others. Notable differences between them are that the King of Silla's birth place is unknown while Suro's is clearly stated. Silla's was the only egg, but Suro's was one of six, corresponding to the six tribes he would rule over. However, the broader features of the stories are the same, namely their extraordinary births and their superhuman natures in body and soul. Korean myths of the nation founders tend to distinguish the heroes by these stories of their extraordinary births and innate superhuman qualities.⁴

Japanese Mythological Heroes

It is interesting to see that, in contrast to Korean mythological heroes, Japanese heroes do not manifest any divine or superhuman nature in their way of being born. Some of them were surely born in an extraordinary manner, but never in ways that indicate any divine or heroic nature. Let us examine a few concrete cases.

Susanowo-no Mikoto, the stormy hero that appears in *Kojiki*, was born from the runny nose of his father Izanagi, the god who gave birth to the Archipelago. While the birth is certainly extraordinary, it cannot be described as an honorably divine one. *Kojiki* tells that when Susanowo-no Mikoto was born, he already had a beard that reached down to his chest, but any hope that the beard might indicate advanced maturity is quickly dashed. His father, Izanagi-no mikoto, apparently did consider him an adult, since he ordered him to rule over the sea.⁵ But the bearded boy cried for his mother who had already passed away to Ne-no Katasu kuni, the land of the dead (Ogihara 73). Such psychological immaturity hardly marks Susanowo-no mikoto as a divine hero. And his behavior grew worse. He cried ceaselessly and demoniacally, pouring out such an abundance of tears that he needed to replenish his supply. Consequently, he dried up not only the green mountains, but the seas and rivers. *Kojiki* adds that by his furious crying, the voices of evil gods began to spread like flies, causing every kind of disasters, which naturally made his father angry. Thus, he was expelled from Heaven. In short, Susanowo-no mikoto is described as a child caught in the terrible twos.

Nevertheless, Susanowo-no mikoto became a hero who opened a new horizon in the Japanese Archipelago. *Kojiki* shows that his heroism started after his fall from Heaven into Izumo. There, by defeating an eight-forked serpent that had been disturbing the local people, he gained respect and popularity, which he had never enjoyed in Heaven. In Izumo, he even met a beautiful woman, married her and had a mansion constructed to live in with her. He became a king with a happy life.

Another mythological hero is Okuni-nushi-no kami, the true founder of Izumo nation. In his case, nothing is written in *Kojiki* about his birth. He is known to have

been a great hero, and *Kojiki* tells it, but we are not given the slightest hint of how he was born. Kamiyama Shunpei says he was a descendant god of the lineage of Nekoku (the land of the dead). His lineage come from Kami-musuhi-no kami (one of the three pillars of Heaven and Izanami-no kami) and her son Susanowo-no mikoto (Kamiyama 10 – 29), but this does not explain his being a hero. Even though Okuni-nushi no kami appears as an important hero in *Kojiki*, we cannot see that he was destined to be a hero from the beginning.

Another example is Hoori-no mikoto, who was a son of Ninigi-no mikoto who came directly from Heaven and of Kono-hana-no sakuya-hime, a princess of Izumo belonging to Ashihara-no nakatsu-kuni (the Country with Plenty of Reeds), an ancient name of the Japanese archipelago. With such parentage, it is not surprising that he would be the king of the united nation of Heaven and Earth.

The circumstances of his birth are, however, quite indecent, not at all suited to a future king. For his father Ninigi-no mikoto doubted the child was his, because Kono-hana-no sakuya-hime, the mother, appeared pregnant after only one encounter with him (Ogihara 134 – 135). Despite the superficial resemblance between Yuhwa's delivery of Chumong of Koguryo and that of Kono-hana-no sakuya-hime to her son both in a narrow room (Ogihara 135), the former's son was born as a superior man to human beings while the latter's as an inferior one. Hoori-no mikoto's inferiority is shown by his being born when the fire the mother had set around herself became weak while his brother Hoderi-no mikoto was born when the fire was strong.⁶ *Kojiki* tells clearly that he was a weak boy in comparison with his brother.⁷

The last example of Japanese mythological hero is Ukaya-Fuki-aezu-no mikoto, son of Hoori-no mikoto (descendant of Heaven-Earth union) and of Toyotama-hime-no mikoto (daughter of the god of the sea). He was to be the king of Heaven-Earth and the Sea alliance. His birth, as described in *Kojiki*, is certainly extraordinary for he was born out of his mother who took the form of huge shark.⁸ But even if so, no other part of the myth on his birth indicates any divine or heroic nature. Here again, we see that Japanese mythological heroes were not born heroes, which stands in contrast to their Korean counterparts.

The Process of Becoming a Hero

It is interesting to see how Japanese mythological heroes born as weak or disobedient beings eventually became real heroes. Generally speaking, they became heroes, even rulers of a new land or founders of a new nation, only after going through many trials, persecutions and wanderings. We could say their hard experiences are a sort of rite of passage, which Korean mythological heroes did not experience at all.

While some Korean heroes also experienced persecution and wandering away from home, these experiences cannot be interpreted as rites of passage; rather, they were suitable occasions for the display of the heroes' extraordinary power or for conquest of a new territory. Trials, if ever they existed in Korean myths, were not a necessary condition for a man to become a hero because Korean heroes were heroes from the beginning of their lives. By contrast, Japanese heroes were not born heroes. Nor did they manifest any extraordinary power in their childhood. They became heroes on-

ly by overcoming trials and tribulations.

Let us remember that Susanowo-no mikoto was a disturbing, disobedient child who was expelled from Heaven by Heavenly gods' unanimous vote, but that once on Earth, he became a hero who had a successful life in a new land. Okuni-nushi-no kami and Hoori-no mikoto became real heroes after having gone through persecutions and wonderings. It is not in their nature to be a hero, but their experience of life made them divine heroes.⁹

Susanowo-no mikoto was expelled twice, first by his father Izanagi-no mikoto and secondly, by the committee of Heaven. But expulsion proved good for him since, once out of Heaven, he became a real hero settled in the country called Izumo and had a happy life there. As for Okuni-nushi-no kami, he suffered his brothers' persecutions and went to Ne-no kuni, the Land of the Dead where he became a hero and finally the ruler of Izumo. Hoori-no mikoto, whose grandson would be Jinmu, the first emperor of Yamato, had similar trials. Ill-treated by his brother Hoderi-no mikoto, he went down to the bottom of the sea where he met a beautiful princess and married her. With the help of his father-in-law, the god of the sea, he could defeat his brother when he returned to Earth. We see that these characters were all born as a miserable, weak or unruly babies who had to face difficulties, but these trials transformed them.

Now, when we compare the manner of nation-making in Korean and Japanese myths, we find an interesting difference. For example, if Koguryo founded by Chumong represents the union of Heaven and River because Chumong was born from a god representing Heaven and a goddess representing River-Dragon, Yamato represents a double union. It represents first the union of Heaven and Earth, and then that of Heaven-Earth and the Sea. The first union was made by the marriage of Hoori-no-mikoto's father, Ninigi-no mikoto from Heaven, and Kono-hana-no sakuya-hime belonging to Earth; and the second by the marriage of Hoori-no-mikoto, representative of Heaven-Earth union and Toyotama-hime representative of Sea world. Let us add that the first emperor of Yamato, Jinmu, was a grandson of Hoori-no mikoto.

As for the complexity of the birth of Yamato in comparison with that of Koguryo, it could be explained by the difference of the geographical situations of the two countries, but that would not be sufficient. There must be other reasons we have not yet figured out.¹⁰

Concerning the parents of Japanese mythological heroes, there is an interesting point to add. Not all of them had two parents. Examples include wild Susanowo-no mikoto whose mother was dead, and violent Yamato Takeru, the conqueror of the South and the East of the Archipelago, whose mother does not appear in the myth at all. As for warmhearted Okuni-nushi-no kami, his father does not appear in the myth, only his mother does. Susanowo-no mikoto and Yamato Takeru were both expelled from their homeland by their fathers symbolizing authority and power; Okuni-nushi-no kami had no father, which indicates the vacancy of the throne. It should be added that neither Susanowo-no mikoto nor Yamato Takeru could be the successor of their fathers, while Okuni-nushi-no kami could occupy the seat of power.

Companions in the Heroic Journey

Another remarkable difference between Korean and Japanese mythological heroes lies in the type of friends or collaborators who helped them become nation-founders. Casting a glance at Korean heroes, we notice that they were accompanied and supported by their followers. Their Japanese counterparts, by contrast, are usually alone. Hwan-ung of the old Chosun was, for example, accompanied and supported by the ministers of wind, rain and clouds when he descended from Heaven to Earth under the recognition of the god of Heaven (Ha and Mintz 32). Chumong of Koguryo had three follower-friends when he ran away from his home land Puyo because his elder brother Taiso conspired with others to kill him.¹¹ On arriving at Modung valley, he got three more and to each he gave a surname for he considered them as gifts from Heaven because of their extraordinary brilliance. It is thanks to them that he enlarged his influence and could finally found Koguryo, a new nation (Ha and Mintz 46). It is true he was a born hero, but without his charismatic charm that attracted his loyal friends and followers, he could not have reached the throne.

Other Korean heroes share this basic pattern. Hyokkose, the founder of Silla, was never alone. When he was born, he was already surrounded by six patriarchs and their peoples who were expecting his birth. Suro, the king of Kara-guk, was not alone, either. At the moment of his birth, he had such a dignity that the local people adored him.

As for Japanese mythological heroes, they were never accompanied during their hard trials as we have seen. Susanowo-no mikoto was born without mother to take care of him, and remained alone when he was expelled from Heaven to live on Earth. When he killed the eight-forked serpent to protect the family of the princess Kushinada, he had nobody to help him. He conquered the land of Izumo all alone. Okuni-nushi-no kami and Hoori-no mikoto suffered and overcame trials on their alone, too. They defeated their enemies without anybody's help.

According to Nihon Shoki (dated 720), Yamato Takeru was accompanied by his followers when he went to the south-western and eastern parts of the Archipelago to enlarge the territories of Yamato, but Kojiki, more mythological and compiled earlier than Nihon Shoki, tells that he went there alone (Sakamoto 84-94). It seems Japanese mythology considers loneliness as a necessary condition for a man to be a real hero.

We should add, however, that the Japanese heroes often encountered local women who helped them in one way or another. Before they conquered a new land, even if they had no people to follow them, they had local women to marry and their wives' fathers, very powerful in the region, welcomed and helped them become a ruler. For example, Suseri-hime who became Okuni-nushi-no kami's wife, was a daughter of Susanowo-no mikoto, the ruler of Ne-no kuni (the Land of the Dead). Toyotama-hime, Hoori-no mikoto's wife, was a daughter of the god of the Sea. Having such women as wives, the heroes could easily possess an enormous political power thanks to collaboration with their fathers-in-law. Such encounters with local wives who had powerful fathers do not exist in Korean mythology where heroes were accompanied by

male followers. Of course, any encounter of a hero with a woman makes a romantic story. If Korean myths mark a manly, historic character, Japanese ones a romantic taste. Songs and poems are naturally more abundant in the Japanese tradition.

Magic or Cunning Strategy

We have seen that during their wonderings, Japanese mythological heroes often encountered women and their powerful fathers, while Korean heroes were accompanied from the beginning by loyal male followers who helped them defeat their enemies. Now, we will see another difference between the two traditions. This difference concerns the hero's way of defeating the enemy. Where Korean heroes conquer face-to-face in an honest way, Japanese heroes make use of magic or cunning strategies.

Let us remember for example the case of Izunagi-no mikoto, the creator of Japanese Archipelago. When he ran away from Yomi-no kuni, the Land of the Dead, where his beloved wife Izanami-no mikoto was, he threw the coronet of dark vine and the comb he wore on his head towards the ugly women chasing after him. Out of the coronet and the comb teeth were born the grapes and the bamboos. Since the ugly women were busy eating them, he could runaway from them (Ogihara 64 – 66). Izunagi-no mikoto was not strong enough to combat his enemies on his own so he made use of magic.

Another example of such strategizing is found in Susanowo-no mikoto's battle against the eight-forked serpent. Instead of combating it face-to-face, he invited it to have sake first so that it got drunk and could not defend itself from his attack. He could make the kill easily because his enemy was drunk. His victory was thanks to a cunning strategy (Ogihara 88).

Ookuni-nushi no kami also used magic to free himself from danger. When he visited Susanowo-no mikoto in Ne-no kuni (the Land of the Dead), he was put into a cave full of snakes, bees and centipedes, but he got rid of them thanks to the magic scarf that the princess Suseri-hime had given him (Ogihara 97). His manner of defeating his brother Yaso-gami, his eternal enemy, was with the sword, the arc and arrows that he had stolen from Susanowo-no mikoto (Ogihara 98-99). We cannot say Ookuni-nushi-no kami, the founder of Izumo nation, got to the throne in a very honorable, heroic way, either.

The same can be said about Hoori-no mikoto, who first provoked a quarrel with his enemy brother Hoderi-no mikoto. When he was attacked, he used the magic gems given by his father-in-law, the god of the sea, and won (Ogihara 144). Yamato Takeru, the most heroic figure in Japanese mythology, is another who used cunning devises to kill his enemies. Disguised as a woman with a sword hidden in his robe, he approached Kumaso Takeru-no mikoto and his brother to kill them with the sword. On his return to Yamato, passing through Izumo, he killed Izumo Takeru-no mikoto, the local ruler. Yet again, he used a trick to kill his enemy.¹² Although some specialists such as Suzuki Hideo point out that Yamato Takeru's cunning way can be viewed as a sign of intelligence, at the same time his dishonesty cannot be denied (Suzuki 4 – 5).

Korean mythological heroes did not make use of such strategies or devises. They

all combated against their enemies with their own, though certainly superhuman, power and fighting skills. When Chumong, King of Koguryo, wanted to subordinate the King of Pullyu and saw that the King did not want to obey him, he decided to compete with him in archery. Since he won the competition, the King of Pullyu surrendered and gave his country to Chumong, who gave a part of his land to the defeated in turn (Ha and Mintz 46). Chumong was always heroic not only in strength but also in morality. Such a hero does not appear in Japanese mythology, as we have seen.

We have seen fundamental differences between Korean and Japanese mythological heroes. One of them is the heroes' way of being born to the world. While Korean heroes are born in an extraordinary way with equally extraordinary countenances and talents, Japanese heroes are born in an ignoble or at least very ordinary manner and manifest no mark of heroism at the moment of birth. Another difference we have seen concerns their way of becoming a hero. If Japanese figures became real heroes, it is only after overcoming a series of hard trials. They are either alone or helped by a woman with magical power who loves them. The Korean counterparts were heroes from the beginning and defeated their enemies with the help of male followers. The third difference concerns the way of their defeating enemies. While Japanese heroes use magic or cunning strategies, Korean ones fought bravely and honestly without any devices. While neither type of mythological hero is better than the other, nor is one the source of the other, Korean and Japanese mythological heroes are strikingly different despite their common basis. To recognize the differences is an important and necessary step to understanding the literature of each tradition, for the basic character of literature comes from ancient mythology.

Notes

1. In the Japanese case, the heroes who went far away almost never returned home while Korean heroes did and constructed a new country there.
2. The text refers to the Wei-Shu, Chinese historical document compiled in the 6th century. To give credibility to itself, it uses the saying "In the Wei-Shu it is written that . . ." The English wording of the phrase is from Ha Tae-Hung and Gratton's translation of *Samguk Yusa* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 2004) 32.
3. The chant was magic. It said, "Turtle, turtle, push out your head." See Ha Tae-Hung and Gratton Mintz, trans. *Samguk Yusa* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 2004) 158.
4. According to Torigoe Kenzaburo, *Kodai Chosen to Wa zoku* (Tokyo: Chuko shinsho, 1992) 13, 16, 18, 62 – 63, Korean myths of heroes hatched from eggs have their origin in the ethnic group Wa or Wo who used to live in Shandong Peninsula, China. He added that they emigrated to the southern part of the Korean Peninsula; some of them even to Japanese Archipelago to form Yayoi culture. His conclusion is that Korean myths of Hyokkose and Suro were originally myths of the Wa heroes, whose original form disappeared due to Chinese civilization that destroyed it. But from our point of view, this kind of hypothesis is not convincing for it fails to explain either why Japanese heroes were not born out of eggs while Korean ones were or why Korean heroes looked like Chinese brave men and Japanese did ones not.
5. Yoshida Atsuhiko pointed out Izanagi's consideration of his three noble children including Susanowo as adults. See Yoshida Atsuhiko, *Nihon Shinwa-no tokushoku* (Tokyo: Seidosha, 1989) 125

- 126.

6. According to Yoshii Iwao, fire was the symbol of a magical power that mountain gods were believed to possess. Such a belief was held by slash and burn farmers.

7. Okuni-nushi-no kami, whose birth is not described at all in *Kojiki*, was weak, too. For he was a kind of slave to his brother Yaso gami. He suffered persecutions more than once like Hoori-no mikoto.

8. *Kojiki* relates the hero's birth as follows: 'the princess Toyotama-hime-no mikoto, said "I cannot give birth to a child in the sea because he is descendant of Heaven. That is why I have come up to the Earth." Then she began to build up a hut on the shore with cormorants' feathers and thatch, where she was going to give birth. But before building it completely, she felt the baby was coming out. So she entered the shelter quickly and said to her husband Hoori-no mikoto, "You know anybody from another world has to be in the original form at the moment of giving birth. So I will take my original form that I beg you not to see." But Hoori-no mikoto, unable to understand what she meant, caught a glimpse of her giving birth and was astonished at the sight. For she was no more a human being but a huge shark crawling on the ground. Hoori-no mikoto could not help being horrified and ran away from there. . . See Ogihara Asao, ed., *Nihon Koten Bungaku Zenshu*, Vol. 1 (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1994) 145.

9. Japanese mythological heroes and their process of becoming a hero left a deep trace on literature. The mono-gatari genre in the Heian and other periods succeeded the theme and the type that the ancient myths had developed. It would be interesting to make up a thematic and typological genealogy starting from *Kojiki* to modern novels. See Min Byung-hoon, "Monogatariuei Yurilon -Pakhewa Tomangeui Simcheung-" *Ilboneomunhak* 40, 2009.

10. It may be that Japanese mythology tried to put more emphasis on the unity of all the territories Yamato possessed.

11. In Lee Kyopo's epic poetry: Tong-myong Wang-pyon (1193), his escape is not described as a lonely journey, either, but an accompanied one. The author who was a famous poet of Koryo Dynasty, says that Chumong did not escape under pressure, but departed of his free will.

12. Yamato Takeru secretly changed Izumo Takeru's sword for a false one. See Ogihara Asao, Ed. *Nihon Koten Bungaku Zenshu*, Vol. 1 (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1994) 216.

Works Cited

- Ha, Tae-Hung and Gratton Mintz, trans. *Samguk Yusa*. Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 2004.
- Kamiyama, Shunpei. "Kojiki no shinto-fu." *Kamigami no taikai*. Tokyo: Chuo-koron, 1972.
- Lee, Kyopo. *Tong-myong Wang-pyon*. Seoul: Eulyumunhwasa, 1974.
- Min, Byung-hoon. "Monogatariuei Yurilon -Pakhewa Tomangeui Simcheung-" *Ilboneomunhak* 40. Seoul: Hangukilboneomunhakhoe, 2009.
- Obayashi, Taryo. "Nihon shinwa to Chosen shinwa: shihaisha bunka wo chushin toshite." Tokyo: Koza Nihon Bungaku Shinwa Ge, 1977.
- Ogihara, Asao. "Kojiki." *Nihon Koten Bungaku Zenshu*. Vol. 1. Ed. Ogihara Asao. Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1994.
- Sakamoto, Taro. *Nihon Shoki*. Ed. Sakamoto Taro. Vol. 2. Tokyo: Iwanami, 1994.
- Suzuki, Hideo. *Oo-no uta -Kodai Kayoo ron*. Tokyo: Chikuma shobo, 1999.
- Torigoe, Kenzaburo. *Kodai Chosen to Wa zoku*. Tokyo: Chuko shinsho, 1992.
- Yoshida, Atsuhiko. *Nihon Shinwa-no tokushoku*. Tokyo: Seidosha, 1989.
- Yoshii, Iwao. "Umi-hiko Yama-hiko no Shinwa to Keifu." *Kooza Nihon Bungaku Shinwa*. Vol. 1. Tokyo: Shibundo, 1977.