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Inhalt

Nachrufe

Peter Pantzer (1942–2025) – ein persönlicher Nachruf (*Harald Meyer*) 3

Michael Weiers (1937–2025) (*Stefan Georg*) 9

Britta-Maria Gruber (1955–2025) (*Ishayahu Landa und Ralph Kauz*) 13

Klaus Sagaster (1933–2025) (*Peter Schwieger*) 15

Artikel

Robert F. Wittkamp 19
How to Commence a Cosmogony: Chinese Encyclopedias,
the Making of the *Nihon shoki*, and Japanese Source Criticism

Benjamin Jeremias Schmidt 55
Die Rolle der Infrajustiz in der Konfliktregulierung des frühneuzeitlichen Japan:
Eine exemplarische Untersuchung anhand von Quellen des Dorfes Ōsone

Dorothee Schaab-Hanke 97
Wie weit kam Christian Wolff mit seiner *Mengzi*-Lektüre?
Zu jenem „anderen Philosophen von großem Ruhm“

Harald Meyer 137
Gesamtdarstellungen und Fragmente der Literaturgeschichte Japans:
Ein historischer Rückblick sowie ideen- und geistesgeschichtlicher Ausblick

Harald Meyer 171
Fragmente der Literaturgeschichte Japans I:
Anfänge der Moderne in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts

Markus Bötefür 213
Vom Duellanten zum Völkerkundler:
Franz Wilhelm Junghuhn auf Sumatra

Hartmut Walravens 231
Anton Schiefner as Albrecht Weber's Correspondent

Hartmut WALRAVENS 239
Der Kunsthistoriker Osvald Sirén (1879–1966) in Korrespondenz mit deutschen Kollegen (1930–1949)

Michael KNÜPPEL 263
Die Dunganen von Miljanfan

Agus R. SARJONO 271
Latest Developments in Indonesian Literature:
The Birth of the Essay Poetry Generation

Berthold DAMSHÄUSER 285
Angkatan Puisi Esai: A *Sui Generis* Literary Generation in Indonesia

Übersetzung

Denny JA 293
„Und Minah wurde doch enthauptet": Ein Essay-Gedicht.
Aus dem Indonesischen und mit einer Vorbemerkung von *Berthold DAMSHÄUSER*

Rezensionen

Liu Wenqing. *Vermischte Gesänge: Eine Studie zu Li Qiaos Gedichtzyklus*. Gossenberg: Ostasien, 2025 (*Volker KLÖPSCH*) 315

Bei der Lektüre von Liu Wenqings Studie *Vermischte Gesänge* notiert (*Manfred DAHMER*) 322

Nurlan Kenzheakhmet. *European-Chinese Imperial Maps and Gazetteers Related to the Kazakh (Qazaq) Khanate and Its Adjacent Regions from the 16th to 19th Centuries*. Gossenberg: Ostasien, 2023 (*Hartmut WALRAVENS*) 324

Wolfgang Schwentkers. *Geschichte Japans*. München: C.H. Beck, 2022 (*Markus BÖTEFÜR*) 329

Kuwayama Yukiko 桑山裕喜子. *Ki* (気)*, Fühlen und Empfinden: Eine linguistische Phänomenologie vorprädikativer Erfahrungsformen*. Baden-Baden: Karl Alber, 2023 (*Hendrik GROTH*) 331

Sung Un Gang. *The Making of Modern Subjects: Public Discourses on Korean Female Spectators in the Early Twentieth Century*. Bielefeld: Transcript, 2024 (*Alexandra FUHR*) 336

IM Hyug Baeg 임혁백 und KU Jae Hoe 구재회. *Mongering North Korean Democracy for Inter-Korean Peace: Democratization in North Korea and Inter-Korean Peace*. Seoul: Korea University Press, 2015 (*Lea FEHRENBACH*) 339

How to Commence a Cosmogony: Chinese Encyclopedias, the Making of the *Nihon shoki*, and Japanese Source Criticism

Robert F. Wittkamp

The *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 ("Chronicles of Japan"), submitted to the court in 720, is regarded as Japan's first "correct history" (*seishi*, Chin. *zhengshi* 正史).[1] Its thirty volumes suggest a lengthy and complex compilation process, and it is clear that they were based on earlier texts.

Building on this foundation, Sakamoto Tarō identifies several key source materials (*shiryō* 資料).[2] He begins by referencing *teiki* 帝紀 and *kyūji* 旧辞, although these terms are only combined in the preface to the *Kojiki* 古事記 ("Record of Ancient Matters", 712). He understands *teiki* as the genealogies of the imperial family, while *kyūji* were old myths and narratives. The subsequent sources cited are the "records of the stories handed down in the families" (*shoshi ni tsutaeta monogatari no kiroku* 諸氏に伝えた物語の記録), "records of the stories handed down in the countryside" (*chihō ni tsutaeta monogatari no kiroku* 地方に伝えた物語の記録), and "official government records" (*seifu no ōyake no kiroku* 政府の公の記録).

The next texts mentioned by Sakamoto encompass "individual manuscripts" (*kojin no shuki / oboegaki* 個人の手記．覚書), "temple histories" (*ji'in no engi* 寺院の縁起), and the "Baekje material" (*Kudara ni kan suru shiryō* 百済に関する資料). Baekje was a kingdom situated on the Korean Peninsula. These texts, collectively known as the *Kudara sansho* 百済三書 (the "three Kudara texts"), are *Kudara ki* 百済記, *Kudara shinsen* 百済新撰, and *Kudara honki* 百済本記. Their names are only recorded in the *Nihon shoki*,[3] but today, the original texts are no longer available.

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1 Since the translation by W.G. Aston (1896), the widely accepted translation of *shoki* from the title is "chronicles". *Merriam-Webster* defines a chronicle as "a historical account of events arranged chronologically, typically without analysis or interpretation." In contrast, the chroniclers at the Chinese courts (*shiguan* 史官 / 史館) documented actual events, which differs from writing historical works. Historiographers possessed the power to select and assess historical events, and "correct history" (see Kōnoshi et al. 2021, 6) was composed after the conclusion of a dynasty; see Hanke 2002, 15.

2 See Sakamoto 2015 [1993].

3 See Yamada 1987 [1979], 55. Given the uncertainty surrounding the place of composition of the three histories, I retain their Japanese titles; for Korean readings, see Bentley 2021, 106.

Sakamoto hypothesizes that other materials from the Korean Peninsula were consulted during the compilation, leaving the question open for future research.

Regarding the "historiographies from China" (*Chūgoku no shisho* 中国の史書) that conclude the overview of the materials, Sakamoto highlights the purpose of embellishing the text with quotations from classical Chinese literature (*junshoku* 潤色). With two exceptions, the Chinese sources of these quotations are not explicitly mentioned.[4] In contrast, the passage that forms the focus of this paper illustrates that Chinese expressions can serve purposes far beyond mere stylistic ornamentation. In this case, the quotations constitute the very foundation upon which the entire cosmogony of the *Nihon shoki* is constructed. This opening section consists of four sentences, all but one element of which are drawn from two Chinese classics. In contemporary source research (*shutten kenkyū* 出典研究), these four sentences have attracted particular attention for their capacity to highlight a fundamental issue: the identification of their sources. Are the quotations taken directly from the original texts, transmitted through annotated editions, or are they mediated through encyclopedic compilations (*leishu*, Jap. *ruisho* 類書)? This question has emerged from recent scholarship and requires a historically grounded analysis to be properly understood.

Chinese Encyclopedias (*leishu*)

Before presenting an overview of the reception history and source criticism related to the opening sentences of the *Nihon shoki* cosmogony, it is essential to clarify the term "encyclopedia". According to a study by Kawase Kazuma 川瀬一馬 (1906–1999), the compilers of the *Nihon shoki* incorporated quotations from over eighty Chinese works.[5] However, contemporary Japanese source research attributes only a small portion of these to direct citations; the majority are considered indirect quotations mediated through encyclopedias. As a result, Ikeda Masahiro emphasizes the importance of examining quotations from classical Chinese literature (*kanseki* 漢籍) to determine whether their sources are found in encyclopedias.[6] The exclusion of encyclopedic sources is a necessary condition for identifying a quotation as originating from an original work. Nevertheless, even if the source of a

4 The *Weizhi* 魏志 and *Jin qiju zhu* 晉起居注 are mentioned in *Nihon shoki*, Volume 9 (Jingū *kōgō* 神功皇后); see Kojima et al. 2012 [1994], vol. II, 464f. For an introduction to "embellishment" (*junshoku*), see Kojima 2015 [1993].

5 For Kawase's study, see Ikeda 2018, 143.

6 See Ikeda 2018, 144.

passage was identified via an encyclopedia, the original source must still be examined within its broader textual context. Current Japanese source research, however, appears primarily concerned with verifying the use of encyclopedic sources, often at the expense of engaging with the original primary texts themselves.

Chinese encyclopedias function as reference works, aiming to organize and present knowledge dispersed across various texts in a systematic and accessible manner through classification or categorization (*lei*, Jap. *rui* 類). As compilations of quotations from classical Chinese literature, their primary purpose was to support writing rather than reading. According to Fu Chenchen, encyclopedias began to serve as aids for text composition only from the Tang period onward. Prior to that, they were primarily used to collect and organize comprehensive knowledge and functioned as political documents.[7] Kojima Noriyuki highlights the fundamental order composed of "thing" or "matter" (*shi*, Jap. *koto* 事) and "text" (*wen*, Jap. *bun* 文).[8] This conceptual framework had already been contemplated in early Chinese literature.

> 先録其事、後叙其文。
> First the matter is written, then the literature is mentioned.[9]

For each thematically structured subject or topic, numerous literary quotations are provided. Martin Kern delineates the hierarchical structure as follows:

> Heaven and seasons, followed by earth and geography, then human affairs (emperors, officials, rituals, literature, and even utensils), and finally, animals and plants.[10]

Kern interprets this systematization as a reflection of the Confucian worldview, which conceives of nature and society as a unified and interconnected whole. The *Nihonkoku genzaisho mokuroku* 日本國見在書目録, compiled in 891 at the Japanese court, catalogs the literary works available at the time, organized into forty distinct categories. Section 30, titled "Zakka" 雑家 ("Different Teachings / Masters"), lists the names of various encyclopedias.[11] The following list presents

7 See Fu 2020, 25.
8 See Kojima 2016 [1962], 114.
9 Dunhuang document P. 3363, quoted from Kojima 2016 [1962], 114.
10 See Kern 2004, 81.
11 See Meicho Kankōkai 1996, 51-56. *Zajia* (Jap. *zakka*) is a term for works that deal with or summarize the Chinese fields of science.

the encyclopedias that are relevant in the present context; these titles are not necessarily included in the Japanese register.[12]

— *Hualin bianlüe* 華林遍略 (Jap. *Karin henryaku*, "The Comprehensive Epitome of the Park of Flowering Groves"), compiled around 524; the 720 volumes are not extant.[13]
— *Xiuwendian yulan* 修文殿御覽 (Jap. *Shūbunden gyoran*, "The Imperial Reader of the Hall of Cultivating Literature"), from the year 572;[14] the 360 volumes are not extant but the work can be traced from the tenth century onwards.
— *Beitang shuchao* 北堂書鈔 (Jap. *Hokudō shoshō*, "Extracts from Books in the Northern Hall") by Yu Shinan 虞世南 (558–638). The 160 volumes were compiled between 605 and 618. The encyclopedia is the oldest surviving work, but there is no evidence of its use in Nara or Heian period.
— *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚 (Jap. *Geimon ruijū* / *ruiju*, "Classified Extracts from Literature"), finished in 624 by Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢 (557–641), 100 volumes; the encyclopedia is still extant.
— *Wensi boyao* 文思博要 (Jap. *Bunshi hakuyō*, "Complete Synopsis of Literature and Thinking"), compiled in 641 with 1200 volumes. The work no longer exists, and there is no evidence that it was known in Japan.
— *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林 (Jap. *Hōen shurin*, "The Pearl Grove in the Dharma Park"), 668, a Buddhist anthology compiled by Shi Daoshi 釋道世 from the temple Ximingsi 西明寺 in Changan; the encyclopedia is still extant.
— *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 (Jap. *Taihei goran*, "Imperial Reader of the Taiping Reign"), published in 984 with 1000 volumes by Li Fang 李昉 (925–996). The encyclopedia, one of the "four big books from the Song Dynasty" (宋四大書), is still extant.

A defining feature of the Chinese encyclopedia is its consistent method of compiling knowledge by drawing upon preexisting encyclopedic sources, referred to in source studies as the textual basis or source text (*lanben*, Jap. *ranpon* 藍本). These encyclopedias are not merely assemblages of quotations from original primary texts – which may no longer exist or may never have been directly consulted.[15] Rather, they represent a layered tradition of citation. The resulting chains of quotations, together with the texts that reference them, form a dense and traceable network of intertextuality that scholarly research endeavors to reconstruct.

12 The English titles (except for *Wensi boyao*) are quoted from Owen 2010.
13 See Ikeda 2018, 144, Fu 2020, 25.
14 See Fu 2020, 24.
15 For the intricate transmission of Chinese literature prior to the Tang Dynasty, see Hanke 2002, 16-59.

According to Ikeda, the *Hualin bianlüe* from 524 served as the source text for three subsequent encyclopedias.[16] Among these, the *Xiuwendian yulan* (572) later became the basis for the *Taiping yulan* (984).[17] Ikeda further explains that while the *Hualin bianlüe* featured extensive textual excerpts (*chōbun* 長文), the three encyclopedias derived from it – except for the *Yiwen leiju* (624) – adopted a more abbreviated format (*tanbun* 短文).[18] However, Ikeda emphasizes that the relationships among these works are more intricate than a simple diachronic or linear progression. During the compilation process, compilers did not rely solely on the *Hualin bianlüe* but also consulted contemporary encyclopedias such as the *Xiuwendian yulan*. As Kern notes, the distinctive value of encyclopedias lies in their ability to preserve fragments from texts that have otherwise been lost to history.[19] These fragments enable the partial reconstruction of such lost works.

The Medieval Discourse and the "Preface Theory"

The *Nihon kōki* 日本後紀 ("Subsequent Annals of Japan"), the third of the "six national histories" (*rikkoku-shi* 六国史), was compiled between 819 and 840 and covers the years 792–833. An entry dated "Kōnin 弘仁 3rd Year [812], 6th Month" records that "readings on the *Nihongi*" (讀日本紀) were conducted.[20] This represents one of the earliest documented instances of *Nihon shoki* readings (*kōsho* 講書 or *kōrei* 講例) at the court – an important development for both the reception history of the text and the study of its sources. These readings were recorded in so-called "Private records" (*shiki* 私記),[21] which survive only in

16 See Ikeda 2018, 147. For a discussion of the political significance of the compilation of the *Xiuwendian yulan* and its relationship to the *Hualin bianlüe*, see Fu 2020. The *Sanguo dianlüe* 三國典略, compiled by Qiu Yue 丘悦 during the Tang period, contends that the *Xiuwendian yulan* is based on the *Hualin bianlüe* and lists various titles supplemented in the *Xiuwendian yulan* alongside the "six canonical books" (*liudian*, Jap. *rikukei* 六經); see Fu 2020, 25.

17 The *Hualin bianlüe (chōbun)* is listed in the bibliographical sections of the *Suishu* 隋書 ("History of the Sui [-Dynasty]", completed in 656) and *Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書 (Old "History of the Tang [-Dynasty]", completed in 945).

18 See Fu 2020, 25 and the table in Sema 2015, 277.

19 See Kern 2004, 82.

20 Of the forty volumes, only ten are still available; quoted from Kuroita 1999 [I], 16. Kuroita 1999 is a collection of three works, the page count of which begins anew with each part; hereafter quoted from Kuroita I and II.

21 The *shiki* genre belongs to the commentary and explanatory secondary literature. In the

fragmentary form but are well known through the *Shaku nihongi* 釋日本紀. Compiled by Urabe Kanekata 卜部兼方 in the late 13th century, this work provides a detailed commentary on the first two volumes of the *Nihon shoki*,[22] which recount the creation of the world and the subjugation of the earth by celestial beings. In the introductory section (*kaidai* 開題), which addresses general interpretive issues, Urabe lists seven *Nihongi kōrei* readings conducted between 721 and 965. His source is an official record from 965 (Kōhō 2nd year),[23] though whether the earliest lecture, dated to 721, actually took place remains a matter of scholarly debate.[24]

These readings mark the beginning of the medieval reception of the *Nihon shoki*, which primarily centers on its first two volumes, the so-called "myths". Kojima describes this interpretive tradition as "Shintō-mysticist interpretations during the Middle Ages" (*chūsei no shintō-teki shinpi shugi-teki kasihaku* 中世の神道的神秘主義的解釈),[25] a subject that has been extensively examined, particularly by Kōnoshi Takamitsu 神野志隆光 (b. 1946). However, the *Nihon shoki* readings also signaled the emergence of source research. The following citations and fragments of dialogue from these courtly readings are preserved in the *Shaku nihongi*:

> [Text excerpt 1] (*Shaku nihongi*) 三五曆記曰。天地渾沌如鷄子。盤古生其中。萬八千歲。天地開闢。陽清爲天。陰濁爲地。盤古在其中。一日九變。神於天。聖於地。(Kuroita 1999 [II], 71)
>
> The *Sanwu liji* says: "Heaven and Earth formed a chaotic mass like an egg. Pangu was born in the middle. 18.000 years, Heaven and Earth separated. Yang, the clear and light part, became Heaven, while Yin, the heavy and gross element, became Earth. Pangu was in their midst. One day, nine changes. The deities are in heaven. The spirits are on earth."

Nihonkoku genzaisho mokuroku, this genre can be found for various work titles. Since the register only lists Chinese titles, it is a Chinese genre.

22 The *Shaku nihongi* provides explanations for each of the thirty volumes. However, only the commentaries on the initial two volumes are characterized by their meticulousness and inclusion of sources.

23 *Kōhō ninen geki kanjin* 康保二年外記勘申; see Kuroita 1999 [II], 14-16.

24 Felt (2023, 41) follows Kōnoshi (1999, 173-179; 2009) and also mentions "six *Nihon shoki* court readings", which he attempts to justify; see Felt 2023, 43. However, both scholars do not take under consideration that Urabe cited from the *Yōrō shiki* 養老私記, the "Private records" from the reading in 721; see Kuroita 1999 [II], 158.

25 See Kojima 2016 [1962], 131.

[Text excerpt 2] (*Shaku nihongi*) 或書。問云。此淮南子文也。彼書靉作歷。[...] 其意如何。答。師説。自及其清陽至地後定廿餘字者。全是淮南子文也。(Kuroita 1999 [II], 71)
In one book, there is a question, saying: "This is text from the *Huainanzi*. In that book, the character 靉 is written 歷 [...]. What does that mean?" Answer. The scholar explains that from "the bright and clear" to "and became the Earth", more than 20 characters are text from the *Huainanzi*.

[Text excerpt 3] (*Shaku nihongi*) 私記曰。師説。生其中已上者序文。(Kuroita 1999 [II], 72)
The *Shiki* says: "The scholar explains that [the beginning] until 'was born among them' [the text] is a preface."

These questions and explanations pertain to the opening four sentences of the *Nihon shoki* cosmogony, as translated by William George Aston:

[Text excerpt 4] (*Nihon shoki*) 古天地未剖、陰陽不分、渾沌如鶏子、溟涬而含牙。及其清陽者薄靉而爲天　重濁者淹滞而爲地、精妙之合搏易、重濁之凝場難。故天先成而地後定。然後神聖生其中焉。(Kōnoshi et al. 2021, 76)
[1] Of old, Heaven and Earth were not yet separated, and the In [Yin] and Yo [Yang] not yet divided[, and t]hey formed a chaotic mass like an egg which was of obscurely defined limits and contained [a] germ [...]. [2] The purer and clearer part was thinly drawn out, and formed Heaven, while the heavier and grosser element settled down and became Earth[, and t]he finer element easily became a united body, but the consolidation of the heavy and gross element was accomplished with difficulty. [3] Heaven was therefore formed first, and Earth was established subsequently. [4] Thereafter Divine Beings were produced between them.[26]

Text excerpt 1 pertains to an extended annotation accompanying the initial five characters of the opening sentence. It references three sources, though only the final one is cited here. Following two brief annotations, Text excerpt 2 appears, offering an additional source from Chinese literature. Text excerpt 3 relates to the final sentence, which clarifies that all characters preceding the concluding particle 焉 (*en*, Chin. *yan*) constitute a "preface" (*jobun*, Chin. *xuwen* 序文). This interpretation – referred to in the present paper as the "preface theory" – had a

26 Aston 1896, vol. I, 1f; the structure was modified to four sentences, as per Japanese text in Kōnoshi et al. 2021, 76.

significant influence on subsequent reception. For instance, Aston includes a footnote in which he explicates the first four sentences:

> These opening sentences of the "Nihongi" have been justly condemned by modern Shinto scholars such as Motowori [Norinaga 1730–1801] and Hirata [Atsutane 1776–1843] as an essay of the Chinese rationalistic type, which has been awkwardly prefixed to the genuine Japanese traditions.[27]

The editors of the Iwanami edition, reframe the "preface theory" as the "general thesis" (*ippan-ron* 一般論) concerning the origin of the world.[28] They argue that this general thesis encompasses the first four sentences of the *Nihon shoki*, a view also adopted by the editors of the Shōgakukan edition, who likewise employ the term "general thesis".[29] In contrast, the editors of the new Kōdansha edition, explicitly reject both the "preface theory" and the "general thesis".[30] While both earlier interpretations introduce a caesura following the fourth sentence, they contend that the *Nihon shoki*'s cosmogony unfolds as a seamless and coherent narrative, structured according to the Yin-Yang dichotomy introduced in the opening lines. Kōnoshi elaborates on this view in his studies,[31] which, in this respect, surpass the interpretive bias of the medieval paradigm.

This essay focuses on source criticism and reception history, while deferring to specialists in the field regarding the Shintō-mysticist interpretations of the medieval period.[32] The first four sentences of the *Nihon shoki* are not examined here to support the "preface theory", but rather because they effectively illustrate the complexities of source research.

Text excerpts 1 and 2 reference two classical Chinese works, which are the subject of the following discussion. The *Sanwu liji* (Jap. *Sango rekki*) 三五暦紀 / 歷紀 / 暦記 ("Three-Five Historical Records") is an anthology of myths and

27 Aston 1896, vol. I, 2, fn. 1 (supplements by R.F.W.); see also his fn. 2. In his German translation, Florenz (2014 [1901], 2f) follows Aston's two footnotes without mentioning him.

28 See Sakamoto et al. 2015 [1993], vol. I, 17.

29 See Kojima et al. 2012 [1994], vol. I, 19.

30 See Kōnoshi et al. 2021, 526.

31 Kōnoshi (1999, 179-182) uses the dialogues of the *Nihon shoki* readings to explain the "fusion of myths" (*shinwa no ichigenka* 神話の一元化) or "the emergence of the new [medieval] *Nihon shoki*", i.e. the medieval reception.

32 For a study on the reception of *Nihon shoki*, see Felt 2023. A valuable introduction to Japanese medieval syncretism in the German language is provided by Scheid 2001, 16- 28.

related narratives, compiled by Xu Zheng 徐整 of the state of Wu 吳 during the Three Kingdoms period (220–280). While ancient Chinese texts such as the *Huainanzi* (see below) have survived in annotated editions, the *Sanwu liji* is known only through citations in encyclopedias and other secondary sources. Its absence from the bibliographical chapters of the *Suishu* suggests that it had already been lost on the Chinese mainland by the seventh century. Moreover, its transmission to the Japanese archipelago appears unlikely, as it is not listed in the *Nihonkoku genzaisho mokuroku* (891), an index of extant works in Japan at the time.[33] If the original text was never transmitted to Japan, the source of the *Sanwu liji* quotation in the *Nihon shoki* remains uncertain. Nevertheless, the work became known in Japanese literary circles during the medieval period. A notable early reference appears in the commentary *Guketsu* (also *Kuketsu*) *geten-shō* 弘決外典鈔, authored in 991 by Prince Tomohira Shinnō 具平親王 (964–1009). Aside from its mention in the *Nihon shoki shiki* 日本書紀私記 (*tei-hon* 丁本), this is the earliest known reference to the *Sanwu liji* in Japanese literature. Text excerpt 5 likely offers insight into how the text came to be known in Japan.

> [Text excerpt 5] (*Guketsu geten-shō*) 御覽云、三五曆紀云、未有天地之時、混沌狀如雞子、溟涬始牙、天如雞子白、地如雞子黃 [...] (Kojima 2016 [1962], 117)
>
> The *Yulan* says that the *Sanwu liji* says: "At the time, when Heaven and Earth had not yet been separated, the condition of the swamp chaos resembled an egg. Within the dark mud, a germ was about to emerge. Heaven was akin to the white of the egg, while Earth was akin to the yellow."

Tomohira cites the *Sanwu liji* from a source identified as *Yulan* (Jap. *Goran*). Kojima, from whom the reference and quotation are taken, interprets this as referring to the encyclopedia *Xiuwendian yulan*.[34] He lists several sources from the Japanese medieval period that mention this work.[35] Although the *Taiping yulan* (984) also includes "*yulan*" in its title, the short temporal gap between the two texts makes it unlikely that Tomohira's citation derives from the *Taiping yulan*. There is also a notable difference between Tomohira's citation and the quotation of the

33 See Takada 2018, 244. For encyclopedias mentioned in *Suishu*, see Kojima 2016 [1962], 115.

34 Kojima 2016 [1962], 117.

35 It is mentioned, for example, in the dictionary *Wamyō ruijū-shō* 倭名類聚抄 (931–938) by Minamoto no Shitagō 源順 (911–983), which Kojima (2016 [1962], 121-123) connects to the *Xiuwendian yulan*.

Sanwu liji found in Text excerpt 1, attributed to Urabe Kanekata. While Urabe's annotation recounts the birth of the Chinese cosmic figure Pangu, this creator deity is absent from Tomohira's version. Instead, Tomohira presents the emergence of the primordial germ. The "Pangu myth" and the "germ mytheme" are mutually exclusive and cannot coexist within the same cosmological framework.

The *Huainanzi*, Jap. *Enanji* (resp. *Wenanji*) 淮南子 ("The Scholars of Huainan"), was compiled in 139 BCE at the behest of Liu An 劉安, King of Huainan, by a group of eminent scholars of the time. This comprehensive compendium, also known as *Huainan honglie* (Jap. *Enan kōretsu*) 淮南鴻烈, reflects a range of philosophical perspectives, though it is generally characterized by a strong affinity with Daoist thought.[36] The Japanese reading *Wenanji* reflects early reception practices, as the pronunciation *we* of the character 淮 follows the older *go-on* 呉音 reading tradition.

The *Huainanzi* consists of twenty thematically organized chapters, titled as "lectures" or "teachings" (*xun* 訓), followed by a concluding section titled "Lüeyao" 略要 ("Summary of the salient points").[37] The *Nihonkoku genzaisho mokuroku* (891) records two editions of the text: one comprising thirty-one volumes and another with twenty-one. The first edition, described as "selected by Liu An, King of Han-Huainan", is accompanied by a commentary attributed to Gao You 高誘 (c. 160–220). The second edition includes a commentary by Xu Shen 許慎 (c. 48–147).[38] All extant printed editions and manuscript copies are derived from these two Han dynasty commentaries. Interestingly, both titles (*Sanwu liji* and *Huainanzi*) were already mentioned during the *Nihon shoki* lectures in discussions of the opening sentences.[39] However, it is doubtful that this knowledge was acquired through direct philological engagement. More likely, it represents transmitted knowledge.

Another significant medieval work worth noting is the *Nihon shoki sanso* 日本書紀纂疏 ("Collected comments on the *Nihon shoki*"), authored by Ichijō Kaneyoshi 一条兼良 (1402–1481) between 1455 and 1457. Like the *Shaku*

36 Ikeda (2012, 14-18) lists almost 50 works (studies and translations) in Western languages dedicated to the *Huainanzi*.

37 For text genesis, name, content, etc., see Kusuyama 1979, 1-15, Ikeda 2012 [1989], 400-442.

38 The *Huainanzi* is listed in the category 30 ("Zakka", Chin. "Zajia") of the register *Nihonkoku genzaisho mokuroku* (891); see Meichō Kankōkai 1996, 52.

39 See Kuroita 1999 [I], 193-195.

nihongi and other medieval commentaries on the *Nihon shoki*, this work focuses primarily on the first two volumes. Ichijō drew upon a wide range of sources, including Chinese and Japanese texts as well as Buddhist scriptures. Kōnoshi identifies the *Nihon shoki sanso* as the representative *Nihon shoki* commentary of the medieval period.[40]

> [Text excerpt 6] (*Nihon shoki sanso*) 三五曆紀曰 未有天地之時 混沌狀如雞子 溟涬始牙 濛鴻 […] 滋萌 歲起攝堤 [寅也] 元氣肇始[41]
> The *Sanwu liji* says: "At the time, when there was neither Heaven nor Earth, [it was] the condition of a chaotic swamp like an egg. In the boundless indifference was a first germ, this endless matter, the sprout slowly grew.[42] The time started in *settei* [that is the tiger],[43] the elemental power began to work."

This quotation from the *Sanwu liji* also describes the initial stages of cosmogony. Both the *Shaku nihongi* and the *Nihon shoki sanso* present the citation as though it derives directly from the original text; however, a significant discrepancy exists between them. While Urabe's version includes the Pangu myth, Ichijō instead presents the germ mytheme. Nevertheless, given Ichijō's overarching interest in a syncretic interpretive approach, he later references the *Sanwu liji* on four additional occasions – each of which incorporates elements of the Pangu myth.[44]

In addition to the previously mentioned works – *Guketsu geten-shō*, *Shaku nihongi*, and *Nihon shoki sanso* – Takada Sōhei cites five other texts from the Japanese Middle Ages, all of which contain quotations from the *Sanwu liji*.[45] These texts are divided into two groups: in one group, the quotations can be

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40 See Kōnoshi 1999, 34f.

41 In the digital copy (kokusho.nijl.ac.jp) of *Nihon shoki sanso*, double pages 30-44 deal with the primordial beginning; for *Sanwu liji* and *Huainanzi* see double pages 32f. The omission concerns a longer annotation.

42 The characters *ya* 牙 (MC [short for Middle Chinese] *ngae*; Jap. *ga*) and *meng* 萌 (MC *meang*; Jap. *bō* / *mō* / *hō*) both have the meaning "germ, to sprout", but also "the common people" (Kroll 2015), which probably does not apply here.

43 Shedi 攝堤 also stands for Jupiter and a certain group of three stars. Kaneyoshi inserts a note and interprets it as *yin* (Jap. *in*) 寅 ("tiger"), one of the *shi'er zhi* (Jap. *jūnishi*) 十二支, the twelve zodiac signs.

44 See Takada 2018, 253, 257-259.

45 See Takada 2018, 249f, 254-260. However, he does not mention the quotations from the "Private records" (*Nihon shoki shiki*) and overlooks another quotation from the *Shaku nihongi*; see Kuroita 1999 [I], 159 (*Nihon shoki shiki*), Kuroita 1999 [II], 80 (*Shaku nihongi*).

cross-referenced with those found in encyclopedias; in the other, such comparison is not possible. Among the five *Sanwu liji* quotations in the *Nihon shoki sanso*, two are not attested in any known encyclopedic sources. Takada addresses this issue in relation to the opening of the *Nihon shoki* cosmogony, essentially positing that these are indirect quotations.

The *Shoki shikkai*

The first comprehensive commentary to provide detailed annotations on all twenty volumes of the *Nihon shoki* was *Nihon shoki tsūshō* 日本書紀通證 (1762), authored by Tanigawa Kotosuga 谷川士清 (1709–1776). His commentary on the opening passage, beginning in the second volume, addresses the entirety of the first section of *Nihon shoki* Volume 1.[46] Tanigawa cites earlier commentaries, referring to them with phrases such as "Kaneyoshi writes" (from Ichijō Kaneyoshi's *Nihon shoki sanso*) or "Masamichi writes" (from *Jindaikan* [*Nihon shoki*] *Kuketsu* 神代巻口訣, 1376, by Inbe no Masamichi 忌部正通), before offering his own interpretations of these earlier views. Tanigawa explores the deeper meanings of individual characters and expressions, noting that the second and third sentences are derived from the *Huainanzi* chapter "Tianwen xun" 天文訓 ("Lecture on the Signs of Heaven"). He cites the *Sanwu liji* three times, presenting the germ mytheme, the Pangu myth, and a passage describing the formation of heaven and earth. These quotations are presented as if drawn directly from the original source. Although Tanigawa references the dialogues from the *Nihon shoki shiki*, he does not cite Urabe's *Shaku Nihongi*. This omission may explain his lack of engagement with the "preface theory", which is articulated by Urabe but absent from Ichijō's more syncretic approach.

In summary, Tanigawa exhibits a deep interest in uncovering the underlying meanings of texts, yet appears less concerned with the precise identification of the sources of individual passages. This approach shifted notably with the publication of the *Shoki shikkai* 書紀集解 in 1785. Kawamura Hidene 河村秀根 (1723–1792), together with his sons Masune 益根 (1756–1819) and Shigene 殷根 (1749–1768),[47]

46 The first two volumes of *Nihon shoki* consist of eleven sections divided by alternative narratives; for the first section, see Tanigawa 1945, 87-93.

47 The names of the two sons are mentioned at the end of the books as *kōtei* 考訂 ("editors"), but according to the information, Shigene was no longer alive when the first book was published. The *Shoki shikkai* is the result of a series of preceding studies conducted by the Kawamura family.

made a significant contribution to source-critical scholarship – an achievement widely regarded as a pivotal milestone in the history of *Nihon shoki* studies.[48]

In the introductory remarks to the *Shoki shikkai*, Kawamura Hidene enumerates the seven *Nihon shoki* readings of the Heian period and also references the "Private records" (*Nihon shoki shiki*). Through this, as well as through quotations from the "Private records" – primarily cited via the *Shaku Nihongi* – he underscores the enduring relevance of medieval interpretive traditions. However, it is clear that the *Shoki shikkai* cannot be equated with medieval commentaries, as their aims differ significantly. The annotations on the first four sentences, presented in the following table,[49] further support this distinction.

No.	*Nihon shoki*	*Shoki shikkai*	Source
1	古天地未剖。陰陽不分。	淮南子俶真訓曰 古天地未剖 陰陽未判 四時未分 萬物未生	*Huainanzi*, [Ch. 2] "Chuzhen xun"
2	渾沌如鶏子。	釋曰三五曆記曰 天地溟涬如鶏子 盤古生其中 ○ 文選洞蕭賦曰 或渾沌而瀁瀁兮 善曰 渾沌不分之貌	*Shaku* [*nihongi*], *Sanwu liji* / *Wenxuan*, "Dongxiao fu", [Li] Shan[50]
3	溟涬而含牙。	潛確居類書玄象部曰 徐整曆紀曰 未有天地之時 混沌如雞子 溟涬始牙 鴻濛滋萌 註曰 混沌自然之氣	*Qianqueju leishu*, "Xuanxiang bu", [*Sanwu*] *liji* by Xu Zheng
4	及其清陽者。薄靡而爲天。	淮南子高誘註曰 薄靡者若塵挨飛揚之貌	*Huainanzi* in Gao You's annotated edition
5	重濁者。淹滯而爲地。	昭十四年博曰 詰姦慝舉淹滯杜預曰 淹滯有才德而未叙者 ○ 按據淮南子 淹疑凝誤	*Chunqiu Zuoshizhuan* / *Huainanzi*
6	精妙之合摶易。	淮南子 精作清博作專 註曰 一作博	*Huainanzi*
7	重濁之凝竭難。	竭原作場 據類聚國史神代一本及淮南子改	*Huainanzi*
8	故天先成而地後定。	淮南子天文訓曰 [80 characters omitted]	*Huainanzi*, [Ch. 1] "Tianwen xun"

48 See Kojima 2016 [1962], 131, Yamada 2018, 10f; Ikeda 2018, 144.

49 Table according to Kawamura 1941, 1f. The punctuation marks and the circles are original, the Japanese readings of the annotated expressions as well as the *kanbun* reading aids in the notes have been omitted.

50 "Li Shan *Wenxuan*" 李善文選 is the annotated edition by Li Shan.

9	然後。神聖	釋曰三五曆記曰 開闢之初有神聖一身十三頭號天皇 ○ 按謂國常立尊也	*Shaku* [*nihongi*], *Sanwu liji*
10	生其中焉。	釋曰私記曰 師説生其中已上者序文	*Shaku* [*nihongi*], [*Nihon shoki*] *Shiki*

The annotations primarily focus on two sources: the *Huainanzi*, dating to the second century BCE, and the *Sanwu liji*, originating from the Three Kingdoms period (220–280). Following the established conventions of Japanese commentary, I will provide a detailed analysis of each individual annotation.

1: The first note is a quotation from the second chapter of the *Huainanzi*, titled "Chuzhen xun" 俶真訓 ("Lecture on the Beginning of Reality"):

> [Text excerpt 7] (*Huainanzi*) 天地未剖、陰陽未判、四時未分、萬物未生。 (Kusuyama 1979, 85)
> Heaven and Earth were not yet divided, Yin and Yang were not yet separated, the four times were not yet differentiated, the 10,000 things were not yet born.

The first two segments of the sentence show two notable deviations from the corresponding parts in the *Nihon shoki* (古 天地未剖 陰陽不分). Specifically, the phrase 古 ("in ancient times") is omitted, and the *Nihon shoki* uses the characters 不分 ("were not separated"), instead of 未判 in the second segment. The latter variation may be attributable to a different manuscript tradition.[51] This raises the question of why the Kawamuras extend the quotation to include references to 四時 (the "four times", i.e. the four seasons) and 萬物 (the "ten thousand things", i.e. all existence), while omitting any explanation of 古 ("in ancient times"). The absence of 古 in the *Huainanzi* is an (onto)logical necessity, as time had not yet come into being. Conversely, this also clarifies why the compilers of the *Nihon shoki* excluded the two segments quoted in the *Shoki shikkai* concerning the origin of time and things: evidently, the notion of "ancient times" held particular significance for them. The insertion of 古 was an ingenious device to elevate the myths into the realm of history. It can be taken as evidence that the compilation of the *Nihon shoki* is based on historical consciousness.[52]

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51 The transmission history of the *Huainanzi* is complicated; see Kusuyama 1979, 14-21. Takada (2018, 243) quotes the beginning of the sentence and the relevant eight characters 天地未剖 陰陽未判 from another print edition, but notes that the characters are identical in three other editions.

52 For "Geschichtsbewusstsein", see Vogelsang 2007, 1, 12; the concept permeates Vogelsang's entire monograph. For the long history of the character 古 in Chinese documents

The quoted passage from the *Huainanzi* is originally preceded by a profound reflection on time and existence, likely influenced by the *Zhuangzi* 莊子. It forms part of an extended sentence that begins with a rhythmic repetition of the characters *you* 有 ("to have", "there is"), *wei* 未 ("not yet"), *chu* 初 ("begin"), and *wu* 無 ("not having", "there is not"), followed by the syntactic particle *zhe* 者, which functions to mark the preceding phrase as the subject of a subsequent explanation ("as for..., it is..."). Kusuyama Haruki 楠山春樹 paraphrases the opening of the chapter and the initial portion of this sentence – marked by the repetition of characters (有未初有未未初有有無者) – within the rhetorical structure: "Not having the not having the not having" (無無無) means the following (者): "Heaven and Earth were not yet divided, Yin and Yang were not yet separated, the four times [...]."[53]

Understanding these sentences poses a significant linguistic and intellectual challenge. The intricate construction of the triple negation, combined with the four components quoted in the *Shoki shikkai*, forms a sentence linked by the particle *zhe* 者 ("as for..., it is..."). However, the original sentence does not end with the reference to time and things; rather, it continues with further complex formulations. In essence, the quotation in the *Nihon shoki* is an isolated excerpt removed from its original context – yet it serves its intended purpose effectively. This rhetorical technique of decontextualization and recontextualization is not a practice for which the compilers of the *Nihon shoki* should be criticized. On the contrary, it exemplifies a broader characteristic of the classical Chinese literary tradition. The quotations reveal that the compilers carefully selected relevant material from various source texts, suggesting a deliberate and purposeful editorial strategy. From the extended sentence in the *Huainanzi*, they omitted the portion introduced by *zhe* 者 replacing it with 古 ("in ancient times", Jap. *inishihe*), and consistently excluded the reference to time *si shi wei fen* 四時未分 ("the four times / seasons were not yet differentiated"). The Kawamuras, in citing the opening of the *Nihon shoki* cosmogony ("in ancient times"), supplement it with references to time and things – yet they do so without further explanation and without addressing the term 古 or the apparent contradiction inherent in the idea of "ancient times" existing before the emergence of time itself.

– particularly in relation to its semantic differentiation from 昔 ("in earlier/old times") and 今 ("now") – see Vogelsang 2007, 138-159.

53 Kusuyama 1979, 85.

2: In the second note, the *Sanwu liji* is referenced in the form of a nested quotation, presented as a block quote: "In *Shaku [nihongi]* it says that in *Sanwu liji* it says that [...]." This type of quoted quotation is not uncommon, particularly within the context of encyclopedic writing. In contrast, the Kawamuras cite only the initial portion of the *Shaku nihongi* quotation discussed earlier (Text excerpt 1). While they mention Pangu, they omit the detail that this Chinese deity is credited with the division of heaven and earth. Furthermore, they overlook the distinction between "gods in heaven" (神於天) and "holy sages on earth" (聖於地). In Japanese readings, the Chinese compound *shensheng* 神聖 is typically rendered as *kami*, effectively merging the two characters into a single expression meaning "god", "deity", or "spirit". The Kawamuras adopt this conventional reading without offering any commentary.

The second source is the rhapsody "Dong xiao fu" 洞簫賦 ("Rhapsody on the Panpipes") from the anthology *Wenxuan* 文選 ("Selections of Refined Literature"), compiled in the 520s by Xiao Tong 蕭統 (501–531) and first annotated by Li Shan 李善 (630–689), which had been well known in Japan since the Nara period (710–794).[54] The note refers to the two characters 渾沌, which Li Shan interprets as representing "the appearance of the undifferentiated" (*bu fen zhi mao* 不分之貌). Li Shan, the most renowned commentator on the *Wenxuan*, completed his annotated edition in 658, and it is likely that the anthology was transmitted to the Japanese archipelago through this commentary. The expression 渾沌 was familiar in ancient Japan, as officials were required to engage with *Wenxuan* texts as part of their scholarly duties.

3: The third annotation pertains to the concluding characters of the opening sentence. The Kawamuras cite the "Xu Zheng [*Sanwu*] *liji*" 徐整曆紀 from the section titled "Mysterious apparitions and strange events" ("Xuanxiang bu" 玄象部) of the *Qianqueju leishu* 潛確居類書, an encyclopedia compiled by Chen Renxi 陳仁錫 (1581–1636), whose style was Qianqueju 潛確居. Although the Kawamuras generally refer to the titles of original texts, their citations of the *Sanwu liji* – also referenced in the ninth note – are drawn exclusively from two sources: the *Shaku nihongi* and the *Qianqueju leishu*. The quotation in question is identical to the one found in the *Nihon shoki sanso* (see Text excerpt 6 above). It forms part of the cosmogony associated with the "germ mytheme", yet the Kawamuras appear unaware of its incompatibility with the "Pangu myth" presented in Annotation 2.

54 English titles by Knechtges 1996, 233. For the rhapsody, see Takahashi 2001, 264-275, Wittkamp 2021, 46; for the *Wenxuan*, see Wittkamp 2021, 6f, 26.

The entire annotation centers on the four characters 溟涬始牙, which encapsulate the germ mytheme, and concludes with Xu Zheng's explanatory note on the term 混沌. While Tanigawa, in his *Nihon shoki tsūshō*, cites the *Sanwu liji* as if quoting directly from the original source, the Kawamuras make no attempt to conceal that their citation is drawn from an encyclopedia. This distinction is critical and warrants renewed attention.

4: The fourth annotation quotes from a note by Gao You on *Huainanzi*. The reference pertains to the two characters 薄靡, to which Gao You elucidates that they signify the "appearance of swirling and rising dust". The corresponding text excerpt is from the *Huainanzi* chapter "Tianwen xun" ("Lecture on the Signs of Heaven"), which is as follows:

> [Text excerpt 8] (*Huainanzi*) 清陽者、薄靡而爲天、重濁者、凝滯而爲地。(Kusuyama 1979, 131)
> The pure and light, it accumulated thinly and became Heaven, the heavy and murky condensed and became the Earth.

In *Nihon shoki*, there is only one deviation (*ning* 凝 vs. 靡) in the last part of the sentence, which is elucidated by the subsequent *Shoki shikkai* annotation. Concerning the origin of the heaven, *Nihon shoki shiki* (*tei-hon*) already provides an explanation of 薄靡而爲天 as follows:

> [Text excerpt 9] (*Nihon shoki shiki*) 問。此文淮南子之文也。彼書靡字作歷。即許慎高誘等注云。薄曆者。縻飛揚之皃也。而此紀改作靡。其意如何。
>
> 師説。自及其清陽至于地後定廿餘字者。全是淮南子文也。而此紀改作靡字者。其由未明。若曆靡両字。其躰相似。淮南子亦有作靡之本乎。但先代舊事本紀全作靡。假名日本紀云太奈比支天と云也。[...](Kuroita 1999 [I], 194)
> Question: This text (薄靡而爲天) is from the *Huainanzi*. That book uses the character 歷 instead of 靡.[55] Specifically, it states that the commentaries by Xu Shen and Gao You write: "The thin changes" means 縻.[56] It is the image of whirling [dust].[57] However, this book corrects the character to "to assemble" (靡). What does that mean?

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55 "靡 MC mjeX [...] 5 accumulate, add up." "歷 MC lek 1 pass through (space) fare past 2 pass through (time), experience, undergo [...]" (Kroll 2015).

56 "MC mje 1 ox's leading rope [...] 2 tie up; fetter; restrain; control, conduct 3 squander, waste; throw off, run throuh, use up" (Kroll 2015).

57 Urabe Kanetaka quotes the excerpt in *Shaku nihongi*, but uses 塵, "dust", i.e. "whirling dust" for this character; see Kuroita 1999 [II], 71.

> The scholar elucidates: "All 20 characters from 'The pure and light' to 'and became Earth' are from the *Huainanzi*. However, this book corrects to 靡. The reason is unclear. Probably the two characters are similar. Maybe there will also be a book from *Huainanzi* with 靡! Be it as it may, in *Sendai kuji hongi* and in other books, everywhere it is written 靡. The *Kana nihongi* reads [the character] *ta-na-hi-ki te*."

Kōnoshi et al. draw attention to the traditional reading (*kokun* 古訓) *tanabii te*, meaning "to move sideways like clouds or mist", which they adopt from their textual base – the printed edition from the ninth year of Kanbun (1669), known as the *Kanbun kyūnen hanpon* 寛文九年版本.[58] They critically observe, however, that the reading should be grounded in the original Chinese text (*kanbun honbun* 漢文本文). The Kawamuras, despite this knowledge, adhere to the conventional reading *tanahii te*.[59] Yet, from the perspective of spatial semantics, particularly the juxtaposition of Heaven and Earth, it is unlikely that what pertains to Heaven would move laterally (*tanabiku*), suggesting a conceptual inconsistency in the traditional interpretation.

5: The first source cited in the fifth annotation remains unclear, though the Kawamuras reference it repeatedly. The character *zhao* 昭 appears to be an abbreviation for the name Zhao Gong 昭公, with *gong* functioning as an honorific title for a high-ranking official. The life of Zhao Gong is recorded in the *Chunqiu Zuoshi zhuan* 春秋左氏傳, a renowned commentary on the history *Chunqiu* 春秋, "Spring and Autumn", which was known in Japan as early as the Nara period.[60] The annotation refers to the two characters 淹滯 in the second sentence (淹滯而爲地), translated as "[the cloudy and heavy] condensed and sank to become the Earth."

In the latter part of the quotation, the *Huainanzi* is cited once again, though this time the reference pertains to a single character. The term 按 means "to study" or "to verify", indicating that the *Huainanzi* was consulted (按據 淮南子). It appears that the Kawamuras had access to a version of the text in which the characters 淹疑 were written, and they noted that 疑 was a scribal error for 凝

58 Kōnoshi et al. 2021, 77, 525.

59 Sakamoto et al. (2015 [1993], vol. I, 16) and Kojima et al. (2012 [1994], vol. II, 19) follow and read *tanabiki te*.

60 See Wittkamp 2021, 74.

(淹疑ハ凝ノ誤). However, in the *Huainanzi*, the sequence of characters is reversed: *ningzhi* 凝滞 (see Annotation 8 below).

6: This annotation addresses the phrase 精妙之合摶易, which Aston translates as "[and] the finer element easily became a united body." The Kawamuras note that in the *Huainanzi*, the character 清 appears as *jing* 精, and 専 as *bo* 博 (淮南子精作清博作専). However, a cited commentary indicates that the second character may also be read as in the *Nihon shoki* (註曰一作博). In the discussion of Annotation 7, it becomes clear that Tanigawa had already drawn comparisons with the *Huainanzi* in his *Nihon shoki tsūshō* (1762), citing four characters that differ between the two texts. Since the Kawamuras do not reference *Nihon shoki tsūshō*, it suggests they may not have consulted this work, despite its publication only two decades earlier. While this may seem surprising, Kojima demonstrates that the *Shoki shikkai* emerged from a long-standing engagement with the *Nihon shoki*, involving a range of preparatory studies.[61]

7: The seventh annotation pertains to the second part of the second sentence, which reads: "the heavy and cloudy solidified only with difficulty" (重濁之凝竭難). The annotation notes that the character 竭 was originally written as *chang* 場 (竭原作場). The extended *Huainanzi* quotation in Annotation 8 includes the character *jie* 竭, which can be translated as "to dry up", "to be exhausted", or "to conclude". The Kawamuras state that they consulted (*kyo* / *yoru* 據) both the *Ruijū* (*Ruiju*) *kokushi* 類聚國史 and the *Huainanzi*, and made an emendation (*kai* / *aratamu* 改) based on the *Huainanzi* (據 類聚國史神代一本及淮南子改). Compiled in 892 by Sugawara no Michizane 菅原道真 (845–903), the *Ruijū kokushi* is a historical work that organizes entries from the official historiographies – beginning with the *Nihon shoki* – in an encyclopedic format. Sugawara also contributed to the compilation of the *Sandai jitsuroku* 三代實錄 (901),[62] which covers the years 858–887 and constitutes the sixth and final installment of the six national histories (*rikkokushi* 六国史). The *Ruijū kokushi* is frequently cited throughout the *Shoki shikkai*.

The Kawamuras do not provide a thorough explanation for the emendation. In Urabe Kanekata's *Shaku nihongi*, the phrase 重濁之凝場難 does not appear;

61 See Kojima 2016 [1962], 27.

62 *Shilu* 實錄 (Jap. *jitsuroku*) is a genre of Chinese historiography with chronological order (*biannianti* 遍年體). The *Sandai jitsuroku* is dedicated to three *tennō* generations (*sandai*).

however, Ichijō Kaneyoshi acknowledges it as a textual basis in his commentary *Nihon shoki sanso*. In *Nihon shoki tsūshō*, Tanigawa conducts a comparative analysis between the passage addressed in Annotations 4 through 8 of the *Shoki shikkai* and the corresponding section in the *Huainanzi*. Notably, he identifies four distinct characters that differ between the two texts.[63] In Tanigawa's version of the *Nihon shoki*, the phrase remains as 重濁之凝場難, suggesting that the emendation to 竭 was introduced in the *Shoki shikkai*. As Kōnoshi et al. observe, the term 場 presents interpretive challenges in the context of reading and comprehension.[64] Consequently, later editions – such as those published by Iwanami and Shōgakukan – adopt the emendation 竭 proposed by the Kawamuras.[65]

In contrast, Kōnoshi et al. refer to "all copies" (*shohon* 諸本) of the *Nihon shoki*, in which the phrase 重濁之凝場難 is recorded.[66] They offer an explanation for this phrase in an annotation. As previously noted, their textual foundation is the printed *Kanbun hanpon* 寛文版本 edition of 1699. They preserve the original notation and provide the reading *kori-tari ha katamari-gatashi* (凝場難), which translates as "solidified only with difficulty". This Japanese reading is identical to that found in *Shoki shikkai*. Accordingly, the Kawamuras modify only the character, retaining the reading (凝竭難), which reveals a weakness in their philological analysis. Emendations or references to variant spellings frequently appear in the subsequent annotations.

8: The eighth note features an extensive quotation from the *Huainanzi* chapter "Lecture on the Signs of Heaven" ("Tianwen xun"). While the Kawamuras in *Shoki shikkai* typically present only brief excerpts from their sources, this particular citation is notable for its exceptional length.

> [Text excerpt 10] (*Shoki shikkai*) 淮南子天文訓曰　道始于虚廓、虚廓生宇宙、宇宙生氣。氣有漢(涯)根、清陽者、薄靡而爲天、重濁者、凝滯而爲地。清妙之合專易、重濁之凝竭難。故天先成而地後定。天地之襲精、爲陰陽、陰陽之專精、爲四時、四時之散精、爲萬物。 (Kusuyama 1979, 130f; Kawamura 1941, 1)

63 Tanigawa 1945, 89.

64 Kōnoshi et al. 2021, 526.

65 Sakamoto et al. 2015 [1993], vol. I, 423 (original text), 518 (annotation), and Kojima et al. 2012 [1994], vol. II, 18. Sakamoto et al. (2015 [1993], vol. I, 518) cite the *Huainanzi* and the *Shoki shikkai* as the basis for their emendation of 竭.

66 Kōnoshi et al. 2021, 76f.

> The *Huainanzi* chapter "Lecture on the Signs of Heaven" says: "The Dao (the way) begins in the infinite expanse, the infinite expanse produces the universe, the universe produces the Ki. In the Ki is contained the difference [of clear and cloudy][67] and the root, and the clear and bright rises and becomes Heaven, and the heavy and cloudy solidifies and becomes the Earth. The accumulation of the bright clear was easy, but the condensation of the dark cloudiness was difficult. Therefore, the Heaven came into being first, and then the Earth was consolidated. The energy of Heaven and Earth interacted with each other and became Yin and Yang, the energy of Yin and Yang specialized and became the four times, and when the four times dissipated, the ten thousand things became."

The first sentence of the *Nihon shoki* cosmogony (Text excerpt 4) draws its initial two segments from the *Huainanzi* chapter titled "On the Initiation of Reality", while the latter two segments are quoted from the *Sanwu liji*. The second and third sentences are taken from the *Huainanzi* chapter "Lecture on the Signs of Heaven". These passages are underlined in the excerpt Text excerpt 10. As previously noted, the *Huainanzi* quotation includes the character *jie* 竭, and the presentation of this extended citation lends support to the emendation proposed in the preceding note. However, this may not have been the sole purpose of the quotation, as it also effectively illustrates the textual relationship between the *Huainanzi* and the *Nihon shoki*. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the Kawamuras cite the *Huainanzi* not only in the first two volumes but also across other volumes of their work.

9: The ninth note refers to 然後神聖, which can be translated as "and after that, the *kami* deities". The Kawamuras adopt the traditional reading of *kami* for the compound 神聖 and once again cite the *Sanwu liji* via the *Shaku nihongi*. However, the actual source of the quotation is not the *Shaku nihongi*, but rather the *Nihon shoki shiki* (*tei-hon*), which addresses the final four sentences of the *Nihon shoki* cosmogony:

> 然後神聖生其中焉[68]
> And subsequently, the deities are born between [Heaven and Earth].

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67 In *Shoki shikkai*, it says 氣有漢根, but 漢 seems to be a mistake in the transcription. In *Huainanzi*, it is 氣有涯根, and following Kusuyama (1979, 131), it was translated as "difference".

68 See Kuroita 1999 [I], 195.

The *Shoki shikkai* quotation states:

> 開闢之初 有神聖 身十三頭 號天皇
> At the beginning of the separation [of Heaven and Earth], there were deities and holy sages. One body, thirteen heads, and the name was Tianhuang [Jap. Tennō].

The purpose of this quotation remains unclear. The central issue lies in the interpretation of the compound 神聖, which is consistently rendered as *kami* in all commentaries. However, as seen in the *Shaku nihongi* (Text excerpt 1), this reading is questionable, since "deities" (神) and "holy sages" (聖) occupy distinct conceptual domains. It is puzzling why the Kawamuras introduce a reference to the origin of "Tennō", particularly without providing commentary or a reading for the compound 天皇 (Chin. *tianhuang*).

The second part of the annotation presents the outcome of the Kawamuras' own reflections (*an* / *shirabu* 按). Based on their analysis, they conclude that the deity with thirteen heads must be Kuni Tokotachi no Mikoto (按謂國常立尊也). This conclusion is further elaborated in a subsequent annotation.

10: The tenth and final annotation to the four cosmogonic sentences aligns with the preface theory, as outlined in the *Shaku nihongi* quotation Text excerpt 3. However, the Kawamuras do not cite *Shaku nihongi* as their source; instead, they refer to "Private records" (*shiki* 私記), to which they likely had access. Nevertheless, the extant text (*tei-hon*) – presented in dialogue form – does not contain the preface theory. Presumably, they omitted the phrase "the *Shaku* says" (釋曰) when citing the original source (釋曰 私記曰); however, it is also possible that they either misinterpreted the source or referenced a text that has since been lost. As previously noted, the unannotated quotation lends support to the validity of the preface theory, which has been recently contested.[69] This impression is further reinforced by the typographical arrangement: the Kawamuras deliberately insert a line break immediately following the quotation, suggesting a thoughtful structural choice.[70] In other words, they treat the four sentences as a distinct unit, separate from the subsequent text.

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69 See Kōnoshi 1999, 175f.

70 Since the notes are written in two lines with smaller characters, the characters were counted through and divided in the middle. This means that the length of the two lines is identical, which emphasizes the line break.

In summary, *Shoki shikkai* occupies a distinctive position in the history of source research, characterized by its adherence to the medieval paradigm and its sustained commitment to that framework. At the same time, it reveals traces of a modern, text-critical philological approach. The medieval orientation is most evident in its uncritical acceptance of the preface theory, while a more analytical stance emerges through instances of textual emendation (*kai* 改). With one exception, the annotations on the initial four sentences of the *Nihon shoki* cosmogony are representative of the broader methodology employed throughout *Shoki shikkai*. The exception lies in its treatment of Japanese literary sources, such as the *Kojiki*, *Sendai kuji hongi* 先代舊事本紀 (cited as *Kujiki* 舊事紀), and the *Man'yōshū* 萬葉集, which are frequently referenced.

Kojima praises the achievements of the *Shoki shikkai* while also criticizing the authors for failing to explicitly cite the encyclopedia *Yiwen leiju* as a direct source.[71] However, the third annotation suggests that the Kawamuras were capable of doing so, even though encyclopedias are rarely mentioned in their commentary. It is nevertheless evident that they were familiar with the genre. They refer repeatedly to the *Qianqueju leishu*,[72] and there are quotations not only from the *Yiwen leiju* (629) and the *Fayuan zhulin* (668),[73] but also, according to Yamada Hideo,[74] from the *Beitang shuchao* (early seventh century).

Clearly, the Kawamuras consulted encyclopedias for research purposes. These works were cited when no primary source could be identified for a given passage or when the encyclopedia offered supplementary information. Encyclopedias served not only as aids in textual composition but also as tools for source identification. This was achieved by associating an expression or part of a sentence with a specific

71 See Kojima 2016 [1962], 131. Sema (2015, 13) offers high praise for the *Shoki shikkai* but criticizes the lack of clarity as to whether a text is cited to substantiate the source or to explain the passage. He further criticizes the inclusion of sources that originated after the *Nihon shoki*, although the Kawamuras (Book 1, double page 13) mention this point in the "general thoughts" (*sōron* 総論). Due to the limited accessibility of the printed edition of *Shoki shikkai*, I have utilized the digitized internet edition available on the National Archives of Japan website (digital.archives.go.jp). This digitalization presents all pages as double-page digital copies.

72 See Book 1, double page 70, or Book 2, double page 47.

73 For the *Yiwen leiju*, see *Shoki shikkai* Book 1, double page 29; for the *Fayuan zhulin*, see Book 2, double page 45 or Book 20, double page 5. A search of all volumes is likely to bring even more evidence to light.

74 See Yamada 1987 [1979], 88.

subject or entity, then consulting the relevant chapter or section and comparing the cited literary sources.[75] Although this process remained labor-intensive, it was significantly more manageable than re-examining the entire corpus of classical Chinese literature. However, in the absence of a systematic methodology, how could the Kawamuras determine whether a quotation originated from an encyclopedia or from a primary source? Notably, the first four sentences of the *Nihon shoki* already reveal the persistent challenges that continue to confront researchers today. Moreover, it is plausible that the Kawamuras were unaware that the *Yiwen leiju* was already known during the Nara period.

The Discovery of the Encyclopedias

In 1962, Kojima Noriyuki 小島憲之 (1913–1998) systematically developed *shutten-ron* 出典論 (source research), explicitly framing it as a methodologically grounded approach within comparative literature.[76] Beyond relying on the reader's memory,[77] Kojima emphasizes the importance of the sources themselves in distinguishing between direct and indirect quotations – that is, between citations drawn directly from literary texts and those mediated through encyclopedias (*leishu*).[78] As a result, Kojima is credited as the "discoverer of the encyclopedia" in Japanese philological studies. Ikeda acknowledges this contribution,[79] along with Kojima's broader philological insights, as his most significant scholarly achievement.

Kojima discusses the *Xiuwendian yulan*, the encyclopedia from the late sixth century, and suggests that later encyclopedias such as the *Taiping yulan* (984) likely drew upon it.[80] He also notes that several Japanese texts cite the *Xiuwendian yulan*, proposing that the encyclopedia was known during the Nara period. However,

75 See Yamada 1987 [1979], 91.

76 On the "comparative method and source research", see Kojima 2016 [1962], 9-24.

77 "Reader's memory" does not appear as a term, but Kojima draws attention to formulations in everyday life that the civil servants learned by heart from the classical Chinese texts laid down in the "Commandments of the Educational Institutions" (*gakuryō* 學令) in preparation for the civil service career. These were then incorporated into the texts as quotation snippets (even longer ones); see Kojima 2016 [1962], 126f, 130, 323-326, 496f and on the "educational institutions" Wittkamp 2021, 22 (according to Dettmer 2010, 121-123).

78 Ikeda (2018, 143) calls the indirect quotation "grandchild quote" (*magobiki* 孫引き).

79 Ikeda 2018, 145.

80 See Kojima 2016 [1962], 117-123.

Kojima's focus on the *Yiwen leiju* reflects a deliberate methodological choice, restricting his comparative analysis to sources that are directly accessible.

Kojima presents his "discovery" through a series of textual examples, frequently referencing the *Shoki shikkai* to critically examine its cited sources. For instance, in clarifying the episode "5th Year, Spring, 2nd Month" in Volume 14 ("Yūryaku" 雄略), the *Shoki shikkai* (Book 9) attributes its citations to two works: *Yanzi chunqiu* 晏子春秋 ("Spring and Autumn of Master Yan"), which recounts the exploits of the legendary Yanzi (d. 500 BCE), and *Xinxu* 新序 ("New Preface"), authored by Liu Xiang 劉向 (c. 79–8) in the first century BCE. However, Kojima convincingly demonstrates that the passage in question is actually a quotation from the encyclopedia *Yiwen leiju*.[81]

Having identified the *Yiwen leiju* as the primary source and referencing three distinct printed editions, Kojima quotes from the initial four sentences of the *Nihon shoki* cosmogony, drawing parallels with the quotation found in the *Yiwen leiju*.[82]

> Text excerpt 11 (*Yiwen leiju*): 徐整三五曆紀曰、天地混沌如雞子 [...] 陽清爲天、陰濁爲地 (Kojima 2016 [1962], 375f)[83]
> Xu Zheng *Sanwu liji* says: "Heaven and Earth were a chaotic mass, like an egg. [...]. The light an clear became Heaven the dark and murky became Earth."

Kojima notes that the phrase 溟涬而含牙 ("and in their chaotic mass there was a germ"), which represents the germ mythem, is absent from the three printed editions of the *Yiwen leiju*. He identifies this as a textual omission.[84] Subsequently, he cites passages from the encyclopedias *Taiping yulan* and *Qianqueju leishu*, both of which are also referenced by the Kawamuras in Annotation 3.

> Text excerpt 12 (*Taiping yulan*): 三五曆紀曰、未有天地之時、混沌狀如雞子、溟涬始牙 [...] (Kojima 2016 [1962], 375f)[85]

81 See Kojima 2016 [1962], 127-129, Kojima et al. 2012 [1994], vol. 3, 162, Aston 1896, vol. I, 344f (English translation). For another demonstration, see Kojima 2016 [1962], 129f.

82 The Chinese print editions differ, among other things, in the page layout.

83 *Yiwen leiju*, "*juan yi Tianbu shang*, *Tian*" 卷一天部上、天 [volume 1, section Heaven 1, Heaven]).

84 It is unclear whether this omission also includes the Pangu myth.

85 *Taiping yulan*, "Tianbu" 天部, "Yuanqi" 元氣 ("section Heaven, Elemental power").

> The *Sanwu liji* says: "At the time, when Heaven and Earth were not yet divided, and the condition of the endless indefinite was like an egg, in the boundless swamp grew a germ […]."
>
> Text excerpt 13 (*Qianqueju leishu*): 潛確居類書玄象部曰 徐整曆紀曰 未有天地之時 混沌如雞子 溟涬始牙 […] (Kojima 2016 [1962], 375f)[86]

In both encyclopedias, the three partial sentences from the *Sanwu liji* that contain the germ mythem are identical. Given that the *Taiping yulan* was compiled in the late 10th century and the *Qianqueju leishu* in the early 17th century, the compilers of the *Nihon shoki* could not have consulted these works. Consequently, Kojima posits that variant editions of the *Yiwen leiju* were in circulation.[87] According to Ikeda, Kojima assumes that passages resembling classical Chinese literature but having no corresponding source in the *Yiwen leiju* are direct quotations.[88] Thus, it remains possible that the compilers of the *Nihon shoki* did not quote directly from the *Yiwen leiju*.

Building on his "*Yiwen leiju* thesis" (*Geibun ruijū-setsu* 藝分類聚説), Kojima proposes a model of textual genesis.[89] He posits the existence of a "main text 'Age of the Gods' in the style of an ur-*Kojiki*" (*gen-Kojiki teki na Shindai-ki no honbun* 原古事記的な神代紀の本文), which was subsequently embellished (*junshoku*) through references to the *Yiwen leiju* and the *Huainanzi*. The concept of an embellished ur-*Kojiki* reflects the influence of the preface theory and the notion of a shared mythological foundation, described as "myth fusion" or "myth stew".[90] Kojima himself has not entirely abandoned what he criticizes as a "Shinto-mystic interpretation of the Middle Ages".[91] Yamada Hideo acknowledges Kojima's scholarly contributions but despite his source research, he urges caution: "We have not yet reached the station at the end of the line."[92] This observation, made in 1979, remains relevant, as contemporary scholarship continues to grapple with the same challenges.

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86 *Qianqueju leishu*, "Xuanxiangbu" 玄象部, "Xingqi" 形氣 ("section Mysterious / Strange appearances").

87 Kojima 2016 [1962], 376.

88 Ikeda 2018, 145.

89 Kojima 2016 [1962], 413f.

90 See Wittkamp 2018.

91 Kojima 2016 [1962], 131.

92 Yamada 1987 [1979], 92.

Post-Kojima Research on Chinese Encyclopedias

In a review of the first volume of Kojima's three-volume study (1962), published just one year later, Shimizu Shigeru 清水茂 (1925–2008) expressed skepticism toward Kojima's "*Yiwen leiju* thesis". Despite this early criticism, Kojima's thesis exerted considerable influence on the field for an extended period. Shimizu's main objection is that Kojima failed to account for the "relations of succession and continuation" (*keishō kankei* 継承関係) among Chinese encyclopedias.[93] He illustrates this point with reference to the commencement of the *Nihon shoki* cosmogony. The concept of "succession and continuation" refers to the practice by which Chinese encyclopedias build upon one another – quoting, copying, condensing, or supplementing earlier entries. Since the mid-1970s, Japanese scholars have increasingly focused their research on uncovering these intertextual relationships. However, the methodological challenges inherent in this approach remain unresolved. While connections to now-lost encyclopedias have been identified, the extent to which this method can be systematically applied continues to be uncertain.

Beginning in 1973, Katsumura Tetsuya 勝村哲也 (1937–2003) emphasized the significance of the *Xiuwendian yulan* (524) in a series of essays. As previously noted, Kojima also addresses this encyclopedia, though he does not regard it as a reliable source, given its long-standing status as a lost text. Katsumura went on to develop his "*Xiuwendian yulan* thesis", which has since been expanded by scholars such as Kōnoshi Takamitsu (1999), Sema Masayuki 瀬間正之 (b. 1958, Sema 2000, 2011), and others. Sema, in particular, explores the possibility that multiple encyclopedias were consulted during the compilation of the *Nihon shoki*. In addition to the titles previously mentioned, he draws attention to the extensive *Hualin bianlüe* (524).[94]

Scholarly attention has consistently focused on the *Xiuwendian yulan*. It has been demonstrated that not only the opening section of the *Nihon shoki* cosmogony, but also its six corresponding alternative versions, exhibit connections to this encyclopedia. However, beginning in 2007, Ikeda Masahiro conducted a series of

93 Summarized after Ikeda 2018, 144-146.

94 Summarized after Takada 2018, 240f. For the bibliographical data, see Takada 2018, 268-271, and for the examinations, see Ikeda 2018, 148f. For a synopsis of Japanese encyclopedia research based on Katsumuras's "*Xiuwendian yulan* thesis", see Sema 2015, 261 (the paper from 2011 is contained in Sema 2015, 260-280).

studies on the *Hualin bianlüe*. Drawing on research in this specialized field, he presents the relationships of succession and continuation among encyclopedias in a diagram, illustrating the complexity of the reconstruction process. He emphasizes that these relationships were not strictly linear, necessitating simplifications in the visual representation.

As mentioned above, Ikeda concludes that the three encyclopedias – *Yiwen leiju* (624), *Wensi boyao* (641), and *Xiuwendian yulan* (572) – were compiled on the basis of the *Hualin bianlüe* (524), and, in turn, the *Xiuwendian yulan* served as a precursor to the *Taiping yulan*. Ikeda further underscores that the close connection between the *Xiuwendian yulan* and the *Taiping yulan* was already recognized and discussed in China during the Song period (960–1279).[95]

In his concluding remarks to the research overview, Takada cautions against disregarding the *Yiwen leiju*, despite its notable divergences.[96] Although he does not elaborate on this position, there are textual passages that indicate their origin in the *Yiwen leiju*. One such example is the episode "Hunt on Mount Kazuraki" (校猟于葛城山), found in the entry for "5th Year, Spring, 2nd Month" in Volume 14 ("Yūryaku") of the *Nihon shoki*. This episode can be divided at the point where a *kayō* 歌謡 song is inserted, serving as a caesura. Kojima identifies the *Yiwen leiju* as the source for the second part, which includes a quotation from the *Zhuangzi* 荘子. The quotations from *Yanzi chunqiu* and *Zhuangzi* are explicitly marked by the editors of the Shōgakukan edition of the *Nihon shoki*.[97] However, given that the *Zhuangzi* was known in Japan, it is plausible that it was also familiar to the editors of the *Nihon shoki*, thereby leaving open the possibility of a direct quotation.[98]

Kojima's analysis was initially widely accepted but was later set aside in favor of the encyclopedias *Hualin bianlüe* and *Xiuwendian yulan*. While Sema reexamines the episode at Mount Kazuraki and seeks to reestablish Kojima's "*Yiwen leiju* thesis",[99] Ikeda demonstrates that the quotations could not have originated from

95 Ikeda 2018, 159.

96 Takada 2018, 242.

97 See Kojima 2016 [1962], 127-129, for the entry from the encyclopedia *Yiwen leiju* (with comparison with the *Shoki shikkai*), Kojima et al. 2012 [1994], vol. 3, 163f. Sema (2015, 271-280) analyzes the second part and compares various encyclopedic sources, ultimately drawing renewed attention to the *Yiwen leiju*.

98 The *Zhuangzi* is listed in the category 25 ("Dōka", Chin. "Daojia" 道家) of the register *Nihonkoku genzaisho mokuroku* (891); see Meichō Kankōkai 1996, 48.

99 Sema 2015, 260-280.

either the *Xiuwendian yulan* or the *Taiping yulan*, the latter of which is based on the former.[100]

Another clue appears in the "Prehistory of the accession to the throne" (*sokui zenki* 即位前記) in the "Book of Kenzō" ("Kenzō ki" 顯宗紀) in Volume 15 of the *Nihon shoki*. Although the editors of the Shōgakukan edition identify the relevant passages, the section's length and the inconsistency of the quotations make the source difficult to determine.[101] However, when the quoted passages are juxtaposed – as Yamada does[102] – and compared with the corresponding entries in the *Yiwen leiju*, the source becomes evident. The quotations from five Chinese classics originate from the section titled "Man", "Yield [the throne]" ("Renbu" 人部, "Rang" 讓).[103] This correspondence is unlikely to be coincidental.[104]

The Sources of the Commencement of the *Nihon shoki* Cosmogony

The opening four sentences of the *Nihon shoki* cosmogony incorporate quotations from two classical Chinese texts: the *Huainanzi* and the *Sanwu liji*. While these connections were already recognized in courtly readings of the *Nihon shoki*, it was the *Shoki shikkai* that concretized them by establishing the following relationships:
A) The first half of the first sentence is derived from the *Huainanzi*.
B) The second half is attributed to the *Sanwu liji*.
C) The second and third sentences are reassigned to the *Huainanzi*.

A: The first two segments of the initial sentence originate from the *Huainanzi* chapter "Lecture on the Beginning of Reality" ("Chuzhen xun"), with the exception of the opening character 古 ("in ancient times"). Takada cites a printed edition of the *Huainanzi* in which only the final character differs, resulting in minimal change in meaning.[105] He also references three other printed editions, which show near-identical wording for this excerpt. By comparing these versions,

100 Ikeda 2018, 151-154.

101 See Kojima et al. 2012 [1994], vol. 3, 230-241. In Kojima 2016 [1962], 130, only a part of the quotations comes into view.

102 See Yamada 1987 [1979], 89f.

103 This reference is also found in Kojima et al. 2012 [1994], but not in Kojima 2016 [1962].

104 The *Shoki shikkai* gives the primary text for each of the passages, and the information coincides with the *Yiwen leiju* in only three sources; see Book 16, double page 10, 15 (identical), 14 (different).

105 Takada 2018, 243.

Takada implies that the passage was quoted directly from the original text, likely because no indirect quotation can be substantiated in the extant encyclopedias. He leaves this question unresolved and proceeds directly to the quotation from the *Sanwu liji*.

B: Expressing skepticism about the *Sanwu liji*'s transmission to the Japanese archipelago, Takada suggests that the quotation may instead originate from an encyclopedia. This question pertains to the final two segments of the first sentence, which contain the egg and germ mythemes. Takada cites five entries from three encyclopedias – *Yiwen leiju*, *Fayuan zhulin*, and *Taiping yulan* – presenting three distinct quotations.[106] Four entries feature the egg mytheme, two of which also include the germ mytheme, while two mention Pangu.[107] Notably, only one entry from the *Taiping yulan* lacks the egg mytheme but contains the germ mytheme. The two segments of the *Nihon shoki* sentence do not correspond unequivocally to any of these sources. Takada uses the germ mytheme to establish a thematic similarity between the encyclopedia entries and the *Nihon shoki* passage. He proposes that the source of the "embellishment" (*junshoku*) is either the *Fayuan zhulin* (668) or the textual basis of the *Taiping yulan* (984), which corresponds to the *Xiuwendian yulan*. Regarding discrepancies in the *Taiping yulan*, Takada speculates that they may result from either differing textual bases or from the same base text, citing two distinct transcripts of the *Sanwu liji*.

C: As previously noted in the Kawamuras' commentaries, the second and third sentences of the *Nihon shoki* cosmogony were derived from the *Huainanzi*, though they contain several character substitutions with similar meanings. Takada cites an annotated printed edition of the *Huainanzi*, called *Huainan honglie jie* 淮南鴻烈解, and compares it with three other printed editions, which are nearly identical except for a single variation. He then draws on two entries from the encyclopedias *Beitang shuchao* and *Taiping yulan* to highlight the distinctive features of the variant characters. Since Takada supports the theory of indirect quotation, his conclusion is necessarily complex. In his summary, he posits that a textual foundation existed for the *Taiping yulan* that was "similar" or even "identical" to

106 Takada 2018, 245f.

107 The *Yiwen yulan* intertwines the egg mytheme with Pangu, while the *Fayuan zhulin* presents the egg mytheme in conjunction with the germ mytheme. This combination is identical to that found in *Nihon shoki*, however, the characters employed in *Fayuan zhulin* differ from those utilized in *Nihon shoki*; for the text passages, see Takada 2018, 245f.

the *Nihon shoki* sentences. However, he notes that this foundation was ultimately not incorporated into the *Taiping yulan*. He reaffirms his view that the commencement of the *Nihon shoki* cosmogony was not directly quoted from the *Huainanzi*, but rather indirectly derived from an encyclopedia. Nonetheless, when examining the full formulation in the *Nihon shoki*, it is equally plausible that the characters were modified during the process of copying from the original text. The fact that Takada traces Part A to the original text and Part C to an encyclopedia leaves the question unresolved.

In the concluding chapter of his comprehensive overview of encyclopedia research, Takada reaffirms his commitment to the *Xiuwendian yulan* theory, expressing skepticism about the actual use of the older *Hualin bianlüe*.[108] Regarding the commencement of the *Nihon shoki* cosmogony – which has served as the central focus of post-Kojima scholarship – Takada definitively excludes the *Yiwen leiju* as a source, a position also supported by Ikeda.[109] However, Takada cautions that if the quotation does not originate from the *Yiwen leiju*, then all citations attributed to it by Kojima must be reexamined. Ikeda further identifies passages that cannot be explained by either the *Yiwen leiju* or the *Xiuwendian yulan*.[110] Although the *Xiuwendian yulan* has emerged as the favored source in post-Kojima research, its relevance can only be tentatively affirmed for the first four sentences of the cosmogony, and further investigation remains pending. In light of these limitations, Ikeda ultimately acknowledges the "*Hualin bianlüe* thesis" – i.e. the encyclopedia compiled in 523/524 – as the textual basis for the *Xiuwendian yulan* and two other encyclopedias. In his conclusion,[111] he posits that contemporary scholarship has arrived at a "thesis of the parallel use of distinct encyclopedias". In contrast, he finds no definitive evidence to support the reliability of the *Xiuwendian yulan* as a direct source.[112]

In 2018, Takada Sōhei and Ikeda Masahiro each published overviews of the same field of research, yet arrived at markedly different conclusions. While Takada advocates for the *Xiuwendian yulan*, Ikeda omits this encyclopedia from his analysis, instead emphasizing the *Hualin bianlüe* and its parallel use alongside the

108 Takada 2018, 260-262.
109 Ikeda 2018, 148-150.
110 Takada 2018, 260-262.
111 Ikeda 2018, 157f.
112 Ikeda 2018, 148.

Yiwen leiju, which he nonetheless describes as an "enigma".[113] Both scholars repeatedly acknowledge that their conclusions are speculative; however, this admission alone does not account for the divergence in their findings. One possible explanation lies in their differing methodological perspectives. Ikeda focuses primarily on the historical interconnections among the encyclopedias, whereas Takada centers his analysis on the reception history of the *Xiuwendian yulan*, which is well documented from the tenth century onward. In both approaches, a degree of speculation is embedded from the outset.

Despite their differences, both scholars share a common objective: to rule out the possibility of direct quotation from an original source. In this regard, Ikeda is more explicit – and arguably more radical – than Takada, who leaves open the question of whether the *Huainanzi* quotation in the first part of the *Nihon shoki*'s opening sentence was directly sourced or not. What is certain, however, is that the commencement of the cosmogony – encompassing the entire Yin-Yang cosmogonic framework, which spans at least the first volume[114] – cannot be characterized as merely a *junshoku* (embellishment). Yet, more than four and a half decades after Yamada Hideo's observation, it appears that the endpoint of this scholarly journey has yet to be reached.

113 Ikeda (2018, 157) posits that the extensive *Hualin bianlüe* did not fully disseminate its content to the Japanese islands, necessitating the assistance of the *Yiwen leiju*. Nevertheless, the *Nihonkoku genzaisho mokuroku* enumerates "620 volumes" (see Meicho Kankōkai 1996, 53), and a larger count is not explicitly known. Ikeda specifically refers to the previously mentioned hunt on Mount Kazurakiyama and suggests that the term "field hunt" (*tianlie* 田猟) was absent from the *Hualin bianlüe*. However, it is pertinent to inquire whether the compilers of *Nihon shoki* were seeking information on this subject or if they pursued a distinct motivation. The episode's primary objective is to characterize Yūryaku, and the narrative of a hunting adventure is inconsequential to this purpose; see Wittkamp 2026.

114 For potential reasons to present the myths in two volumes, see Wittkamp 2020. Yamada (2018, 147-159) contends that the *tenson kōrin* myths (*tenson kōrin shinwa* 天孫降臨神話) from Volume 2 adhere to the Yin and Yang dichotomy. His arguments are consistent but solely based on interpretations of *Shaku nihongi* and *Nihon shoki sanso*.

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