The Izumo Religious Ceremonies and Izumo Mythology in Ancient Imperial System

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This paper discusses the significance of the ceremony in which the *Izumo no kuni no miyatsuko* ("governor") offers felicitations to the emperor, which is mentioned here and there in the "Shoku Nihonki," as well as in the "Jogan-gishiki" and "Engi shiki."

Research on this ceremony centers on the two main issues of when this ceremony was performed (A) and the significance of the ceremony (B). With regard to A, research focuses on whether this ceremony was performed 1) at the time of the appointment of a new *Izumo no kuni no miyatsuko* or 2) at the time of the succession of an emperor. As for B, research centers on whether the ceremony is a 1) subsumption ceremony performed by the *kuni no miyatsuko* for the emperor; 2) a ceremony in which the *kuni no miyatsuko* offers felicitations to the emperor on his succession; 3) a ceremony that re-enacts an actual ceremony of the mythological reporting to *tenjin* (heavenly gods) of the pacification of the various *kami* by the *Izumo no kuni no miyatsuko oygami*; or 4) a *tamafuri* ceremony performed by the *Izumo no kuni no miyatsuko* for the emperor. While the overwhelming consensus is that it is 1) (1), Motohiko Oura has argued that it is 2) (2), Kazuhiko Seki and Kikuo Morita both claim it is 1) (3), and Akio Kikuchi that it is 1) (4).

In this paper, the author is critical of all of the above and puts forward his own theory. That is to say, the author believes that this ceremony, as it first appeared in 716 and 724, was the prototype of Izumo-religious ceremonies (Izumo-religious ceremonies during the period of the formation of the *ritsuryo* emperor system), and was performed as part of the imperial enthronement ceremony symbolizing the passing of sovereignty from the Okuninushi divinity to the Takamagahara Emperor, and that it began to change from the middle of the 8th century so that in the "Engi shiki" (early 10th century) it had been adapted to a 1) (3) ceremony. As for the former, the author demonstrates the temporal relationships of imperial succession, appointment of *Izumo no kuni no miyatsuko* and Izumo-religious ceremonies and adopts the perspective of the theory of mythology in the "Kojiki" for the ceremony as a ceremonial myth, and for the latter bases his argument on an analysis of the "Izumo no kuni no miyatsuko no kanuyogoto" in the "Engi shiki."

Keywords: Kojiki, Nihonshiki, *Izumo no kuni no miyatsuko no kanuyogoto*, Izumo Mythology, ceremony