

ROYALTY ON THE RUN: THE LEGEND OF PRINCES OKE AND WOKE RECONSTRUCTED

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Introduction

The legend of Oke and Woke recounts the story of two fifth-century Yamato princes who flee to the province of Harima following the assassination of their father. The tale follows the princes' time as refugees disguised as servants, the revealing of their identity to the provincial governor and their reinstatement to the court. Variants of the tale appear in three eighth-century Japanese texts: *Kojiki* (Records of Ancient Matters, 712 AD), *Harima no Kuni Fudoki* (Topography of Harima Province, c.714) and *Nihon Shoki* (Chronicles of Japan, 720).¹ Each of the three texts presents its own version of the legend, none of which necessarily discredits the versions of the other texts. Likewise, neither can any of the three versions claim to be the original: the extant records all date from around 150 years after the described events; however, they must have been subject to oral transmission prior to their recording in writing.

Despite the variance in the versions, it is possible to analyse the events recorded in the texts by means of comparison and contrast with the alternative accounts. Philippi notes, “[*Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*] often echo, complement and elucidate each other”, adding that the two accounts should be read together.² Ebersole presents a “triangulation” reading strategy for his analysis of variant versions of Japanese history as found in three records.³ This strategy looks to each version in turn to understand its counterpart versions in a “ceaseless dialectic”.⁴

This paper aims to compare, contrast and analyse the variants of this legend as they appear in *Kojiki*, *Nihon Shoki* and *Harima no Kuni Fudoki* and, using Ebersole's triangulation strategy, to reconcile the variants with each other to establish a plausible

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1 For a comparative outline of the elements in these myths, refer to Appendix 1. Also see Iizumi, 2002, pp. 401-416.

2 Philippi, 1969, p. 15.

3 *Kojiki, Nihon Shoki and Manyōshū*. Ebersole, 1989, p. 11.

4 Ebersole, 1989, p. 11.

historic account. Ultimately I present a reconstructed version of the legend based on the analysis of all three accounts.

The Beginning: the Death of the Princes' Father

The legend unanimously begins with the murder of Ichibe-no-Oshiha,⁵ the princes' father. According to *Nihon Shoki*, this was in the third year of Ankō, i.e. 456 AD.⁶ This date is not given in the other accounts; however, the events surrounding this tale match those in the *Kojiki* account. The date also falls within the bounds of credible historical chronology, thus is a reasonably reliable temporal reference.⁷

Kojiki and *Nihon Shoki* set the political stage for the tale with an account of the events that occurred in 456: Emperor Ankō had been murdered, although not before naming his cousin, Ichibe-no-Oshiha, as his successor.⁸ In a bid to secure the throne for himself, Ankō's brother Yūryaku⁹ then murdered Ichibe-no-Oshiha. There may be evidence to suggest that Ichibe-no-Oshiha had already ascended the throne before his death, or at least chaired the government,¹⁰ the omission of which in the official records may have been the work of later editors.¹¹ Tilley observes a trend in Christology from the study of a "historic" Jesus – based on empirical history – to the study of a "historical" Jesus – based on what Christ's followers believed Him to be.¹² The *Nihon Shoki* compilers could have followed a similar trend to record a biased reconstruction, rather than a strictly empirical history. Reischauer notably points out,

*When studying Japanese mythology one should also remember that it was written down in the Kojiki and Nihonshoki by men who were using it to explain and to justify the dominant position in society that the Imperial Family ... had assumed.*¹³

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- 5 Ichi-no-be-no-Oshi-ha-no-miko. Philippi translates *ichi-no-be* as 'market-side', inferring a location connected to this individual, also providing possible modern counterparts. 1969, p. 479. Of these I would tend towards a locality in Isonokami, Tenri-shi, Nara-ken. The *ha* of *oshi-ha* almost certainly means 'tooth'; *Kojiki* refers to the peculiarity of this individual's teeth. Philippi, 1969, p. 377. A tentative translation could be 'buck-teeth', with *oshi* meaning 'to press'.
 - 6 Aston, 1896, I, p. 378. Yoshinari, 1989, p. 406.
 - 7 Kidder notes that the dates found in ancient Japanese chronicles become "progressively more exact" from the early fifth century. Kidder, 1959, p. 135. Also see Chamberlain, 1882, Appendix, p. 28.
 - 8 Aston, 1896, I, p. 336.
 - 9 With the obvious exceptions of princes Oke and Woke, I have used the Chinese-style posthumous names for most of the persons mentioned in this paper wherever possible due to their relative brevity, uniformity and familiarity among scholars.
 - 10 Ebersole, 1989, p. 298; Philippi, 1969, p. 480.
 - 11 Palmer, personal communication.
 - 12 Tilley, 2007.
 - 13 Reischauer, 1937, p. 7.

While *Nihon Shoki* admits “the Empire censured [Yūryaku], and called him ‘The greatly wicked Emperor,’”¹⁴ he was still portrayed as the legitimate ruler as far as the *Nihon Shoki* compilers were concerned. Kidder notes that one of the reasons for recording the old stories in written form was to put the “stamp of continuity on the imperial line”.¹⁵ Had Yūryaku been recorded as having committed treason by regicide, this surely would have cast aspersions on the legitimacy of his reign, thus the “stamp of continuity” in the imperial genealogy would have lost its validity. The *Kojiki* account even suggests that Yūryaku had not premeditated his cousin’s death, but that his servants deceived him by falsely accusing Ichibe-no-Oshiha of treasonous intentions.¹⁶ Starrs suggests that *Kojiki* was “designed more for domestic consumption and for bolstering the status of the imperial family at home” and thus it plays down Yūryaku’s treasonous act of murder.¹⁷ However, ultimately, one thing that the compilers must have overlooked, or deliberately disregarded, is the unanimity of all three accounts in a reference to Ichibe-no-Oshiha having reigned over Yamato, as I will mention later.

The Flight of the Princes

Thus begins the tale proper. In all three accounts, the boy-princes Oke and Woke fled from the Yamato court – most likely to have been at Isonokami in Yamanobe, Yamato¹⁸ – at the news of their father’s murder. None of the accounts explicitly gives ages for the princes at this time; however, a calculation according to the 1877 *Digest of the Imperial Pedigree*¹⁹ makes Oke eight years old at the time.²⁰ The *Digest* does not offer an age for Woke; however, he is recorded as the younger of the two. Their names also suggest this: the prefixes *ō* and *wo* mean “large” and “small” respectively.²¹ Palmer suggests that they might have been twins,²² which is certainly plausible.

All three accounts name Harima province as the princes’ destination; however, the accounts differ slightly as to how they got there. *Fudoki* records that they were taken first to Harima, then wandered from place to place, eventually finding refuge; *Nihon Shoki* records that they travelled there via the Yosa district in Tamba province; *Kojiki* first mentions an incident in Yamashiro province. However, in an Ebersoleian “ceaseless dialectic” – combined with some basic historical geography – these accounts do in fact complement one another.

14 Aston, 1896, I, p. 340.

15 Kidder, 1959, p. 131.

16 Philippi, 1969, p. 347; Chamberlain, 1882, p. 386; Aoki *et al.* 1982, p. 267.

17 Starrs, 2005, p. 32.

18 The palace of Ankō. See Brown & Ishida, 1979, p. 258. Modern Isonokami, Tenri-shi, Nara-ken. Philippi, 1969, p. 461.

19 Cited in Chamberlain, 1882, Appendix, p. 28-29.

20 Oke lived 50 years and died in 498 AD; thus, in 456 he was eight years old.

21 Chamberlain translates the final syllable *ke* as “basket”; he appears to be the only commentator to have attempted to put a meaning to it in English. Chamberlain, 1882, p. 387.

22 Palmer, Forthcoming, p. 5.

Kojiki reports that the princes stopped at Karibawi in Yamashiro to eat their provisions. Yamashiro was a neighbouring province to the north of Yamato; the Karibawi district lay very close to the Yamato border.²³ While Harima ultimately lay to the west of Yamato, across the provinces of Kawachi and Settsu, the *Nihon Shoki* includes the northern province of Tamba in the princes' route. This explains the initial northerly direction of the princes' flight, and corroborates their passing through Yamashiro.

Kojiki continues with the princes crossing the river Kusuba. According to Philippi, Kusuba is not the name of an actual river, but rather the name of a ford that crossed the Yodo River in the northernmost part of Kawachi province;²⁴ this was very close to the borders of Settsu and Yamashiro provinces. While Chamberlain notes, "the stream is a small one in the eastern part of the province of Kahachi,"²⁵ it must be noted that this tale was already nearly 1500 years old in Chamberlain's time. A reconstructed map based on *Manyōshū* shows a much higher water level in Osaka Bay and a very much wider Yodo River;²⁶ thus the necessity to cross at the Kusuba ford in Kawachi.²⁷

Interestingly, the name "Kusuba" appears only once more in *Kojiki*, in the recounting of what is probably a folk etymology, although it also appears in *Nihon Shoki*. In these accounts, "Kusuba" is said to be the location where an army "fled in fear and their excrements were voided on their breeches;"²⁸ the name said to have derived from a contraction of *kuso-bakama* or "excrement-breeches." It is plausible, through word association – a device not uncommon in oral tradition – that the mention of Kusuba was an allusion to "fleeing in fear."²⁹ In reality, however, the name is more likely to have derived from *kusu-ha* or "camphor-leaf", as Philippi notes,³⁰ and there is no reason why the reference cannot be purely geographical.³¹

Kojiki then indicates that the princes fled across the river from Yamashiro directly into Harima. However, it is necessary to point out that Yamashiro shared no borders with Harima: for the princes to flee from Yamashiro to Harima, it would have been necessary for them to cross either Tamba or Settsu province first. As there is no mention

23 Philippi identifies Karibawi as either modern Sōraku-gun or Tsuzuki-gun, Kyōto-fu. 1969, p. 492.

24 Philippi, 1969, p. 509.

25 Chamberlain 1882, p. 224.

26 Kojima *et al.* 1971, p. 10-12. The earliest *Manyōshū* poems are contemporary with Yūryaku.

27 Kusuba appears as 楠葉 *kuzuha* in a collection of maps reprinted from the early 19th century. See Ishikawa, 1989, p. 43.

28 Aston, 1896, I, p. 158. See also Philippi, 1969, p. 207.

29 For other references to wordplay and oral tradition see Palmer, 2007, p. 230.

30 Philippi, 1969, p. 509.

31 The *Kadokawa Nihon Chimei Daijiten* acknowledges *Kojiki*'s toponymy in connection with modern-day Kuzuha. See Takeuchi *et al.* 1991, p. 425.

in any of the accounts of them crossing Settsu province on their outward journey,³² it appears that they must have travelled via Tamba province, as *Nihon Shoki* records; thus, the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki* accounts actually implicitly corroborate one another, despite first appearances.

Persons Encountered

In the *Nihon Shoki* and *Fudoki* versions, the princes were aided in their flight by a court official named Omi, *muraji*³³ of the Kusaka-be, a “large imperially-owned corporation”.³⁴ *Nihon Shoki* ascribes to Omi the additional rank of *toneri*, a kind of royal personal attendant.³⁵ Both accounts also indicate that at some point Omi left them to their own fate. In the *Fudoki* version, he took them as far as a rocky hideout in the village of Shijimi in Harima; from there he burnt all their possessions and let loose their horses.³⁶ *Nihon Shoki* also records that Omi ended up in a rock shelter in Harima province; however, in this version he left his son Adahiko with the princes while he fled to Harima alone, changing his name to Tatoku. Both accounts report that he then took his own life. *Fudoki* reports that the reason for his suicide was his awareness of having committed a grave offence;³⁷ *Nihon Shoki* indicates that he was afraid of being put to death.³⁸

Omi does not appear in the *Kojiki* account; instead, the princes encountered an anti-hero – an old boarherd who stole their provisions. The details of this encounter in Yamashiro would have occurred before *Nihon Shoki* takes up the discourse beginning at Tamba; the *Fudoki* account mentions only the events that took place in Harima. Thus it

32 *Nihon Shoki* mentions the princes “arrived” in Settsu on their return journey. This indicates Settsu (later amalgamated into the Kinai [home provinces] region) was under imperial jurisdiction, thus giving justification for the princes’ avoiding it in their escape and travelling instead via Tamba (which remained outside the Kinai region).

33 A hereditary title held by families of high rank. Philippi, 1969, p. 525. Reischauer gives “deity chieftain” as a translation of *muraji*. Reischauer, 1937, p. 11.

34 Philippi, 1969, p. 508. It is likely that the Kusaka-be mentioned here was the Waka-kusaka-be, a privately-owned group of commoners established by Emperor Nintoku (Yūryaku’s grandfather) and belonging to Waka-kusaka-no-miko, daughter of Nintoku and a wife of Yūryaku. See Philippi, 1969, pp. 302, 349. Piggott notes that the *muraji* of the Kusaka-be served permanently at court in a liaison position between Yūryaku and the Kusaka-be. Piggott, 1997, p. 58.

35 Aston, 1896, I, p. 378. *Toneri* were low-ranking male court attendants who served the emperor or princes, often sent to court when very young as tokens of loyalty from their families. Aoki 1997 p. 181, n. 50; Philippi 1969, p. 611. Consequently, Omi would have been intimately acquainted with the princes and probably their father as well.

36 Aoki, 1997, p. 229; Palmer, Forthcoming, pp. 1, 7; Akimoto, 1958, p. 348.

37 Aoki, 1997, pp. 229-230. Aoki adds that the offence was against the new ruler (Yūryaku), protecting contenders to the throne.

38 Aston, 1896, I, p. 378. These two rationales do not preclude each other: a grave offence against the new ruler would certainly have qualified Omi to be put to death, given Yūryaku’s track record. In aiding the princes, Omi was affirming his allegiance to the assassinated Ichibe-no-Oshiha and against Yūryaku.

is not unreasonable to accept the veracity of this encounter, given that the *Nihon Shoki* account supports the princes' passage through Yamashiro. The absence of Omi in the *Kojiki* account could possibly corroborate the *Nihon Shoki* account, which indicates Omi left the princes before arriving in Harima.

Refuge and Revelry

In all accounts, the princes eventually found themselves in the province of Harima. As previously mentioned, the *Fudoki* version records that they found refuge in a rock shelter in the village of Shijimi; according to Sakamoto *et al.*, this is the same rock shelter mentioned in *Nihon Shoki*, where Omi killed himself.³⁹ If Omi had left the princes before their arrival in Harima, as surmised, it must have been more than mere coincidence that they ended up in the same rock shelter. *Nihon Shoki* reports that Adahiko, the son of Omi, "did not leave them, but remained constant to his duty as their vassal."⁴⁰ If Omi fled to Harima alone, it must have been Adahiko, not Omi, who guided the princes to this place of refuge. The *Fudoki* account could have fused Omi and Adahiko into one character; this is possibly a consequence of oral transmission.

Nihon Shoki agrees with *Fudoki* that the princes finally found refuge in the village of Shijimi, in Harima province. The *Kojiki* account does not negate this; simply indicating that they found refuge with a native of Harima by the name of 'Shizhimu.' Chamberlain notes that Shizhimu is "properly the name of a village, it is here used as the name of a man", also adding "Shizhimi" as a variation.⁴¹ Philippi also notes, "It is quite possible that the place name was confused with the individual's name in the *Kojiki*."⁴² Conversely, Aoki *et al.* indicate that "Shizumu" is a personal name derived from a placename,⁴³ also stating that the *Fudoki* Itomi is a mistaken version of Hosome⁴⁴ – the name given him by *Nihon Shoki*. However, it is reasonable to presume that the *Fudoki* "Itomi" is the more correct name, as he appears to have been a prominent man in this province. Additionally, the *Nihon Shoki* "Hosome" may have been a nickname – "narrow-eyes" – rather than a true personal name.⁴⁵

Fudoki ranks Itomi as village chief of Shijimi; *Nihon Shoki* ranks him as the *miyatsuko* of the Oshinomi-be, and *obito* of the Shijimi granaries. Aoki *et al.* indicate

39 Sakamoto *et al.* 1967, p. 510.

40 Aston, 1896, I, p. 379.

41 Chamberlain, 1882, p. 387.

42 Philippi, 1969, p. 588.

43 Aoki *et al.* 1982, p. 268.

44 Aoki *et al.* 1982, p. 461.

45 Contemporaries of Itomi certainly had such nicknames: Shiraga "white hair", and Oshiha "Buck-teeth"; however, in both of these instances the nickname was also used as the personal name. See Philippi, 1969, pp. 349, 324. Palmer also suggests the possibility of a manuscript copyist's error: it is possible that a copyist has miscopied 糸目 *ito-me* as 細目 *hoso-me*. Palmer, personal communication. Also see Palmer, 2007, p. 225.

that he is thought to have held both roles simultaneously.⁴⁶ It is reasonable that the *Fudoki*, being a provincial account, ranks him according to his community role, while *Nihon Shoki*, an imperial account, ranks him according to his courtly role.

All accounts agree that the princes took on menial roles in the service of this man; *Fudoki* and *Nihon Shoki* have them as servants, while *Kojiki* specifically names them as grooms and cowherds, i.e. responsible for horses and cattle, possibly corroborated by Oke's lament in the *Nihon Shoki* account:

*We, the grandsons of the Emperor Izahowake, are a man's drudges, and feed his horses and kine.*⁴⁷

It was while in service to Itomi that the princes finally revealed their identity; all accounts agree on the manner and opportunity in which they did so, although the timing differs. Yūryaku, their father's murderer, died in 479 and was succeeded by his son Seinei in the following year. *Nihon Shoki* insists that the princes revealed their identity during the reign of Seinei; however this is not corroborated in the other accounts. It is more likely that it was after the death of Seinei – who died childless in 484 – that the princes finally revealed themselves, as will be discussed later.⁴⁸

All accounts concur that Wodate, the governor of Harima province, attended a celebration held at the place where the princes were in hiding. *Nihon Shoki* indicates that this celebration was linked to Seinei's *Daijōsai* ceremony – the ceremonial rice-harvest festival on the ascending of a new monarch to the throne; however, if, as will be mentioned later, this occurred after the death of Seinei, then this cannot be the case, and the connection to Seinei must be a fabricated addition to the *Nihon Shoki* text. Ebersole notes, "it is unclear whether this detail was added or simply brought to the fore."⁴⁹

Nihon Shoki and *Fudoki* give the princes torch-bearing roles at the celebration; *Kojiki* records them tending the fire. All accounts indicate that they were made to perform in some way; however, the three accounts are unclear as to who asked them to perform and who performed first. Perhaps *Nihon Shoki* explains the reason for the disparity in accounts at this point:

*The night had become profound, and the revel was at its height.*⁵⁰

46 Aoki *et al.* 1982, p. 461. The rank of *obito* was a hereditary title borne by families of relatively low rank, including those in charge of the royal granaries; a title thus bestowed by the court. Philippi, 1969, p. 534. *Miyatsuko* was also a hereditary title, borne by heads of corporations. The Oshinomi-be had branches in various localities; thus it is possible that the title was granted locally to distinguish prominent families rather than granted by the court. Philippi, 1969, pp. 523, 556.

47 Aston, 1896, I, p. 379.

48 Dates are taken from Yoshinari, 1989, pp. 408-409.

49 Ebersole, 1989, p. 122.

50 Aston, 1896, I, p. 380.

A more modern rendering might read, “The night was deep and the drinking was in full swing.”⁵¹ The accounts agree that the princes initially deferred to one another as to who would perform first;⁵² all three accounts also agree that it was the younger brother Woke who ultimately revealed their identity in song.

Revelation and Response

While the content of the actual song that Woke sang differs in all three accounts,⁵³ all agree on two interesting points: (1) that the princes are sons of Ichibe-no-Oshiha; and (2) that Ichibe-no-Oshiha had ruled Yamato. For all the re-writing of history that may have taken place, the compilers appear to have neglected to expunge this reference to Ichinobe’s reign from these records. Starrs notes,

*The compilers were not always as successful ... in reshaping the raw material to serve their ideological purposes.*⁵⁴

Thus, as previously mentioned, this evidence suggests that the princes’ father indeed ruled Yamato, a fact which the compilers of the national chronicles appear to have attempted to suppress.

The people’s astonished response to Woke’s revelation of their identity is unanimous across all accounts. *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki* indicate that Wodate was astonished and left his seat; either he fell off his chair or leapt to his feet. *Fudoki* reports that the people rushed outside; this may be due to Wodate dismissing the gathering at that point, as *Kojiki* indicates. *Kojiki* goes on to say that Wodate sat the princes on his knees, a rather unlikely scenario, as by then they would have already been in their thirties.⁵⁵ Philippi suspects that this reference to the princes as children is “probably another *Kojiki* story of miraculous childhood rather than actual fact.”⁵⁶ An illustrated version of *Kojiki*⁵⁷ also appears to have overlooked this point, depicting the princes as children at the time of their discovery.⁵⁸

51 夜深酒酣. My own translation from Sakamoto *et al.* 1967, p. 511.

52 In all three accounts this alludes to a later event in their lives: in *Nihon Shoki* and *Kojiki*, the princes later defer to each other in the matter of acceding to the throne; in *Fudoki*, the princes defer to each other in response to a woman who has agreed to marry [one of] them.

53 The contents of the songs in all three accounts are probably later embellishments to the tale during its oral transmission phase, the original content long forgotten except for these two main points. For the comparative elements in Aoki, Chamberlain and Aston’s translations, refer to Appendix 1.

54 Starrs, 2005, p. 33.

55 *Nihon Shoki* indicates that it was either the first or second year of Seinei, 480/481 AD, that the princes finally found opportunity to reveal their identity; *Kojiki* indicates it was only after the death of Seinei (484 AD) that they revealed their identity; thus, at least 25 years must have passed.

56 Philippi, 1969, p. 372ff.

57 Torigoe, 1990, pp. 302-3.

58 Of course, the illustrator is being faithful to the *Kojiki* text.

The news of the princes' discovery reached the court. *Fudoki* and *Nihon Shoki* indicate that it was Wodate himself who personally carried the news back to court; *Kojiki* records that he sent word to court while undertaking the care of the princes personally. Again, this is not necessarily contradictory: he would have had to return to court eventually; perhaps he first sent word then personally followed it up once he was sure the princes would be taken care of.

The imperial response is unanimous in all accounts: the court was pleased at the news, and sent for the princes. *Nihon Shoki* records that it was Emperor Seinei, their second cousin, who sent for them; *Fudoki* names their mother Tashiraga as the one who sent for them, while the *Kojiki* account has their aunt Ihitooyo receive them back to the palace. This Ihitooyo is more likely in fact to have been their sister: *Nihon Shoki* records that they had a sister of the same name who held court during the interregnum between the death of Seinei and the ascension of Woke to the throne as Emperor Kenzō following Seinei's final interment. Jien, the thirteenth century Japanese historian, in his interpretative history of Japan, *Gukanshō*, also appears to have accepted that Ihitooyo was their sister, not their aunt.⁵⁹

As *Nihon Shoki* is the only account that mentions Seinei in connection with this story, his inclusion may have been the work of the *Nihon Shoki* editors. While it is likely Seinei remembered his second cousins from his childhood – being only about five years their senior⁶⁰ – there is no evidence in the other accounts to suggest any fondness toward them on his part. Indeed, even according to *Nihon Shoki* the princes had had five years since the death of Yūryaku in which to make their identity known. It seems more than pure coincidence that they reappeared in the year of Seinei's death. Seinei – the last of Yūryaku's lineage – died childless and the governance of the court fell to Ihitooyo – one of Ichibe-no-Oshiha's faction. It certainly makes more sense that the princes felt that the coast was clear to reveal their identity once they knew it was their sister on the seat of power, rather than the son of their father's murderer. *Fudoki* reports their mother Tashiraga as the one who summons them to court; however, *Nihon Shoki* gives the name of the princes' mother as Hayehime; this is also the name given for Emperor Ninken's mother in *Nihon Kokugo Daijiten*.⁶¹ As the "Tashiraga" mentioned in *Fudoki* is not corroborated by the other accounts, she may have been confused in the *Fudoki* narrative with *Kojiki*'s "Tashiraka", the daughter of Oke.⁶² It is again necessary to point out that the *fudoki* were compiled based on local oral history rather than imperial records. The important point from the *Fudoki* account seems to be that it was a close female relative in court who summoned the princes back to Yamato, and certainly not Seinei; thus casting doubt on the *Nihon Shoki* account in this point, and reinforcing the *Kojiki* record that this took place after Seinei's death.

59 Brown & Ishida, 1979, p. 24. Admittedly, Jien may have simply taken the *Nihon Shoki* version as gospel, rather than paid any thought to other possibilities.

60 According to the *Digest of the Imperial Pedigree*. Chamberlain, 1882, Appendix, p. 28.

61 Entry for Ninken Tennō, *Nihon Kokugo Daijiten*, Vol. 15, p. 548.

62 Chamberlain, 1882, p. 423; Philippi, 1969, pp. 382,384. Piggott also notes that a genealogy of fifth-century rulers was not compiled until the late sixth century. Piggott, 1997, p. 46.

To finish, *Fudoki* reports that the princes returned to Harima and built several palaces and granaries. *Nihon Shoki* corroborates this report, recording the names of the palaces in the respective entries for each of the princes.

Conclusion and Reconstruction

While none of the three versions of this legend necessarily discredits any of the others, neither can any one version claim to relate the whole story. With a careful analysis of all three versions in collaboration and a close look at contemporary history, it is possible to reconcile all three accounts and confidently shed fresh light on what lies beneath their surface. While the actual events cannot be verified, the Ebersoleian “ceaseless dialectic” certainly allows a greater elucidation and reconciliation of previously seemingly contradictory variants of this legend. The following is my reconstruction of the legend, based on the above analysis.

In 456 AD, Yūryaku assassinated his cousin, Ichibe-no-Oshiha, ruler of Yamato and father of Princes Oke and Woke. The princes, then only about eight years of age, fled from Yamato province, aided by a court official named Omi, head of the Kusakabe, and his son, Adahiko. Omi left the princes in Adahiko’s care and, changing his name, fled to a prearranged meeting point: a rocky hideout in the village of Shijimi, in Harima province. The princes and Adahiko crossed the Yamato border north into the Karibawi district of Yamashiro province, where they encountered a malevolent pig farmer who stole their provisions. Fleeing from this villain, they continued northward, attempting to evade the districts most strongly under Yūryaku’s control: they crossed the Yodo River at the Kusuba ford in Kawachi, and followed the Yamashiro-Settsu border into Tamba province. From there they headed southwest into Harima, arriving at the rock shelter in Shijimi, to find Omi had killed himself. Following this, they entered the service of “Narrow-Eyed” Itomi, the village chief of Shijimi, head of the Oshinomibe, in charge of the royal granaries in Shijimi, under the guise of livestock hands.

More than twenty-five years later, after the death of the childless Seinei, Yūryaku’s son, the princes’ sister Ihitoyo was appointed interregnum ruler at Court in the presumed absence of further legitimate male heirs. Wodate, the governor of Harima, attended a celebration held by Itomi, where the princes were made to perform. Woke took this opportunity to reveal their identity to Wodate in song, as heirs of the assassinated monarch Ichibe-no-Oshiha, to the great astonishment of all present. Wodate leapt from his chair and at that point dismissed the crowd. He took the news back to the princes’ sister Ihitoyo, head of the court, who rejoiced and sent for the princes. The brothers returned to Yamato and were reinstated to Court: Woke was crowned Emperor Kenzō, and Oke was established as Crown Prince and later crowned as Emperor Ninken. Once re-established at Court, the princes maintained their links with Harima and built residences there.

Appendix 1. Table of Comparison between Legend Variants

	<i>Harima no Kuni Fudoki</i>	<i>Kojiki</i>	<i>Nihon Shoki</i>
Story begins with:	Father's murder in Ōmi	Father's murder by his cousin in Ōmi	Father's murder by his cousin in Ōmi
When:			Ankō 3 = 456AD
Princes flee to:	Shijimi in Minagi, Harima		Yosa in Tamba
Assisted by:	Omi of the Kusakabe no Muraji		Toneri Omi, Kusakabe no Muraji and son Adahiko
Hid at:	rock shelter		
Omi:	Erased evidence and killed himself		Changed his name to Tatoku, fled to cave at Mt Shijimi in Harima and killed himself
Boys eat at:		Karibawi in Yamashiro	
Provisions seized by:		old tattooed boarherd from Yamashiro	
Princes' flee:	changing refuge repeatedly	across Kusuba River to Harima	to Akashi in Harima
Seek refuge with:	Itomi, village chief of Shijimi	Shizhimu, native of Harima	Hosone, Oshinomi Be no Miyakko, Obito of the Shijimi granaries
Disguise:	Disguised themselves as servants	worked as grooms [horses] and cowherds [kine]	changed names to Tamba no Waraha
Duties at celebration:	princes held the torches, burnt light in courtyard	firetending boys by the hearth	sit beside cooking place and hold light to left and right

Appendix 1. — continued

	<i>Harima no Kuni Fudoki</i>	<i>Kojiki</i>	<i>Nihon Shoki</i>
Asked to perform by:			Hosome praises them to Wodate
Performed first:	Itomi	“made to dance”	Wodate
Identity revealed by:	Woke	Oke danced first	Oke danced first
Response:	Woke	Woke	Woke
	Everyone rushed out to pay respects. Wodate was there, confirmed their identity	Wodate astonished; falls off chair dismissed all in room, sat boys on his knees	Wodate astonished, left his seat
News sent out by:	Wodate himself	Wodate indirectly	Wodate himself
Imperial response:	Wodate fetched princes, sent by mother Tashiraga	Aunt Ipi tōyō nō miko heard and rejoiced; sent for them	Emp. Seinei rejoiced; Wodate met princes at Akashi
Conclusion:	Princes return to Shijimi Construct palaces Takano, Wono, Kahamura and Ikeno. Granaries built in Miyake and Mikurawo		Woke: Palaces at Wono and Ikeno. Oke: Palaces at Kahamura and Takano.

Comparative Elements from the Song of Woke.

<i>Harima no Kuni Fudoki</i>	<i>Kojiki</i>	<i>Nihon Shoki</i>
<p>He who governed the realm In green fenced Yamato was Ichinohe; but his descendants, Alas, are servants!</p>	<p>Beggarly descendants of King Ichinobe-no-oshiha, august child of the Heavenly Sovereign Izaho-wake, who ruled the Empire</p>	<p>Of him who in the Palace of Ichinobe Governed all under Heaven, The myriad Heavens, The myriad lands — Of Oshtha no Mikoto The august children are we.</p>

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