

# Critical Reflections on the History of Research on Emperor Jinmu, the First Emperor of Japan: Crossing the Boundaries between the Fields of History and Archaeology

Hirohito TSUJI (辻 博仁)

Postgraduate Researcher, University of East Anglia

[h.tsuji@uea.ac.uk](mailto:h.tsuji@uea.ac.uk)

# Oldest extant books in Japan (myth)

*Kojiki* 古事記

[Records of Ancient Matters]



Edited in 712 (by Yasumaro Ōno 太安萬侶)

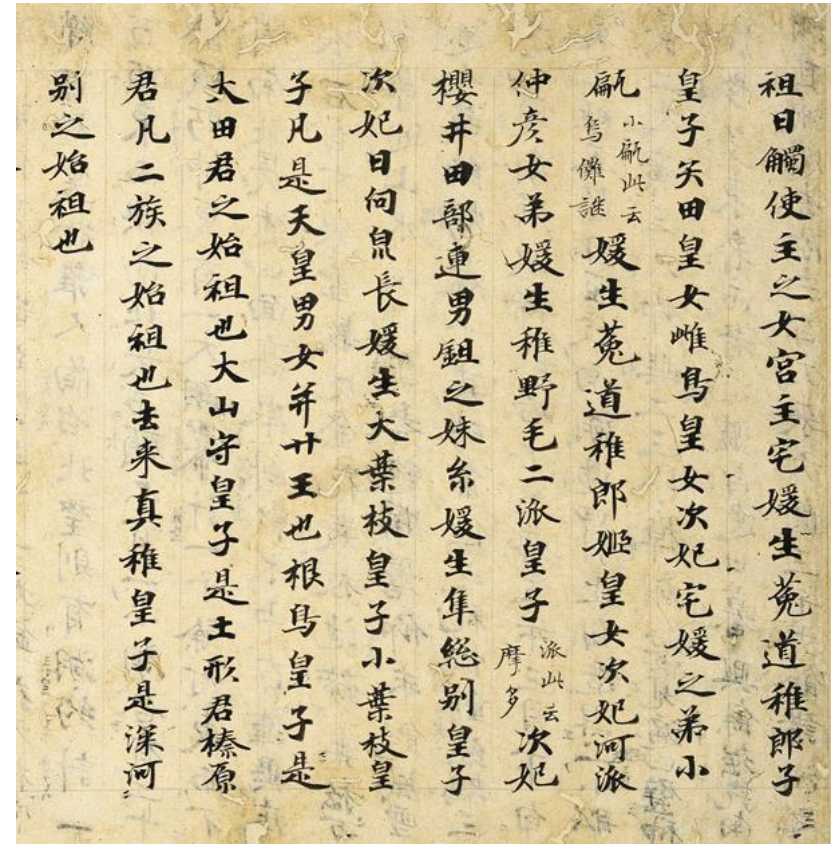
In classical Japanese

Literary flavour book with poems

→ Mainly for Japan

*Nihonshoki* 日本書紀

[The Chronicles of Japan]



Edited in 720 (by Prince Toneri 舍人親王)

In classical Chinese

Full-fledged history book with dd/mm/yyyy

→ Mainly for foreign countries (e.g. Tang)

# Brief biography of Emperor Jinmu



1st Emperor Jinmu

*Jinmu tennō* 神武天皇

Kan Yamato Iwarebiko no Mikoto 神日本磐餘彦尊

- **BC 771** Born
- **BC 667** Started the Eastern Expedition
- **BC 666** Prepared ships and food at Takashima Palace 高島宮 for three years
- **BC 663** Elder brothers were killed in battle. Yatagarasu 八咫鳥 was welcomed into the forces. Destroyed Yasotakeru 八十梟帥, Nagasunehiko 長髓彦 and others.
- **BC 662** Conquered Tsuchigumo 土蜘蛛 and other resistance forces. Began building the Kashihara Palace 橿原宮.
- **BC 661** Married Empress Isuzu-hime 五十鈴姫命.
- **BC 660** Enthroned as the first emperor at Kashihara Palace.
- **BC 585** Death

Source: *Nihon Shoki*

# Re-evaluation for Emperor Jinmu



**Imperial Mausoleum of Emperor Jinmu**  
*Unebi yama no ushitora no sumi no misasagi* 畝傍山東北陵



**Kashihara Grand Shrine**  
*Kashihara jingū* 橿原神宮

# Was Emperor Jinmu a non-existent figure?



Sōkichi Tsuda  
津田左右吉  
(1873-1961)

- It was a myth containing unscientific miracles and supernatural phenomena?
- *Kojiki* and *Nihonshoki* are artificial compilation by the ancient Imperial Court rather than primary resources?
- Unusually long life spans of several early emperors?
- The early some Imperial mausoleums were politically determined after the Meiji era and have contradictory dates?
- Only simple genealogical records survive (not detailed biographies) from 2nd Emperor Suizei 綏靖天皇 to 9th Emperor Kaika 開化天皇?
- Emperor Jinmu's accession date of 1st January (New Years Day) is clearly a fiction?
- Emperor Jinmu's accession year 660 B.C. was in the Jōmon era, but his Eastern Expedition period was clearly in the Yayoi culture?

# Sexagesimal cycle (from China)

## 10 Heavenly Stems

- + Wood 🌲 甲
- - Wood 乙
- + Fire 🔥 丙
- - Fire 丁
- + Earth 🌍 戊
- - Earth 己
- + Metal 🏆 庚
- - Metal 辛
- + Water ☔ 壬
- - Water 癸

## 12 Earthly Branches

- Rat 🐭 子
- Ox 🐮 丑
- Tiger 🐯 寅
- Rabbit 🐰 卯
- Dragon 🐉 辰
- Snake 🐍 巳
- Horse 🐎 午
- Goat 🐐 未
- Monkey 🐵 申
- Rooster 🐓 酉
- Dog 🐕 戌
- Pig 🐷 亥



60 patterns  
十天干  
十二地支

*shí tiān gān shí èr dì zhī/  
jikkān jūnishi*

※ the year of the  
- Metal Rooster (辛酉) every 21  
times is the year in which a  
great revolution

# Inariyama burial-mound sword proved the existence of 21st Emperor Yūryaku 雄略天皇



Front



Reverse

<Front>

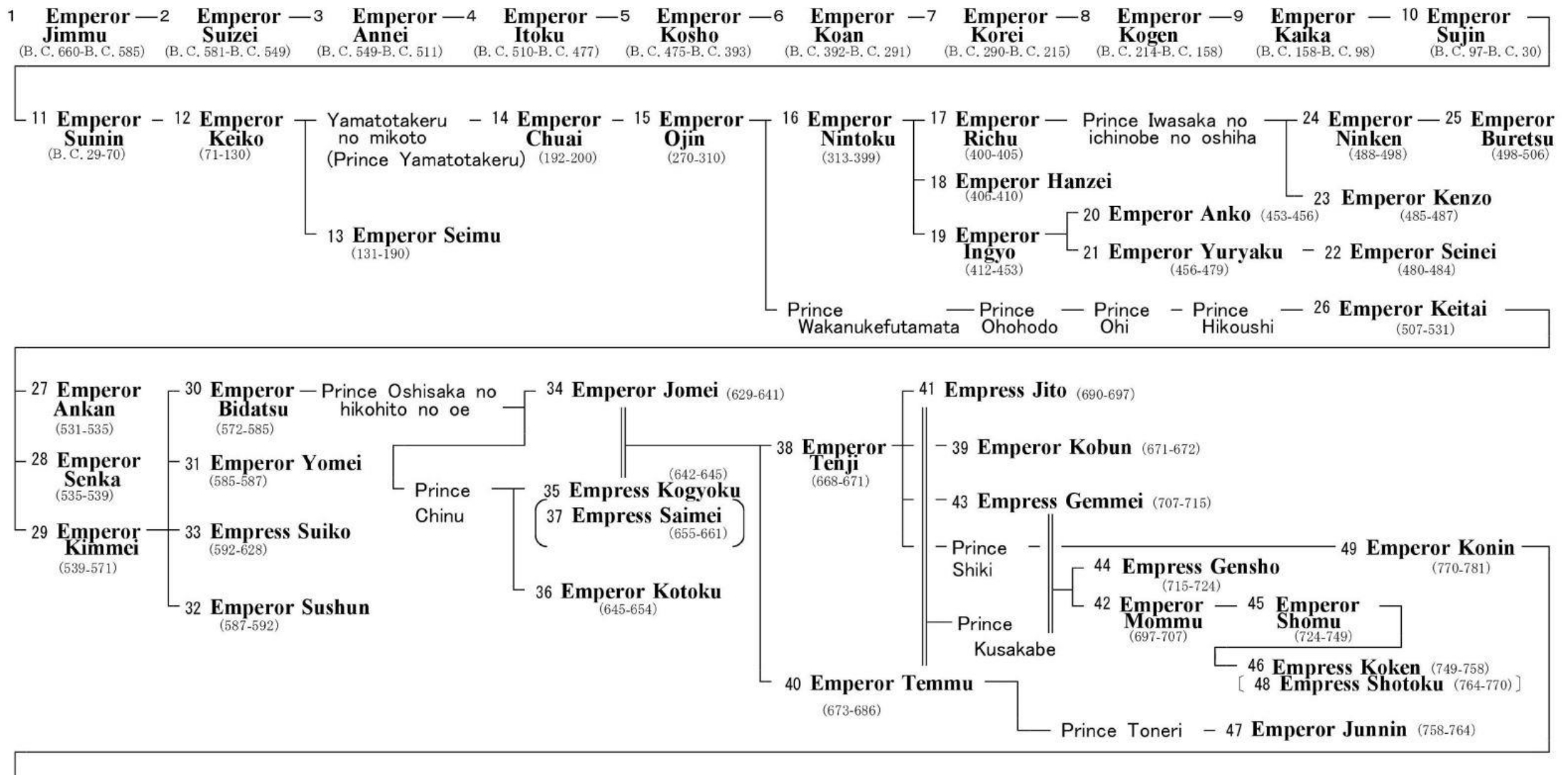
辛亥年七月中、記。乎獲居臣、上祖、名意富比埜。其兒、多加利足尼。其兒、名弓已加利獲居。其兒、名多加披次獲居。其兒、名多沙鬼獲居。其兒。名半弓比。

(Inscribed in the seventh lunar month of the - Metal Pig year: Wo wakë omi: his remote ancestor's name, Öpö piko; his child's name, Takari tsukunie; his child's name, Teyö kari wakë; his child's name, Takapatsi wakë; his child's name, Tasaki wakë; his child's name, Pandepi;)

<Reverse>

其兒、名加差披餘。其兒、名乎獲居臣。世々、爲<sub>レ</sub>杖刀人首<sub>一</sub>、奉事來至<sub>レ</sub>今。獲加多支鹵大王寺、在<sub>レ</sub>斯鬼宮<sub>一</sub>時、吾、左<sub>レ</sub>治<sub>レ</sub>天下<sub>一</sub>、令<sub>レ</sub>作<sub>レ</sub>此百練利刀<sub>一</sub>、記<sub>レ</sub>吾奉事根原<sub>一</sub>也。

(his child's name, Katsapaya; his child's name, Wo wakë omi. From generation unto generation, we have served as the sword-bearers' chiefs, down to the present time. When the great king Waka Takiru [Emperor Yūryaku]'s court was in the Sikī palace, I, assisting in the governance of the realm, caused to be fashioned this well-wrought efficacious sword, recording my origins in service.)



- **Jōmon Period**: About 14,000 BC ~ 3-5 century BC (sedentary hunter-gatherer society)
- **Yayoi Period**: About 3-5 century BC ~ mid 3 century AD (rice farming)
- **Kofun Period**: About mid 3 century ~ 7 century (*kofun* 古墳 building prolifically)



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Thank you for your attention!

ご清聴ありがとうございました。