

Interoffice

AC 1048-3

To: Dr. Hoeh

DEPT Editorial

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From: Keith Stump

DEPT

Subject: Japan & Tarshish

In following up on our brief conversation last week regarding Japanese origins, I came across the information summarized below. You have probably already encountered this material, but it was new to me. In any case, here it is:

The Nihongi speaks of a three-legged crow called the Yata-garasu (equivalent to the Chinese Yang-wu or Sun Crow). This supernatural bird reputedly led Jimmu Tenno, first emperor of Japan, in his migrations. Here it is, as represented in W.G. Aston's 1896 translation of the Nihongi:



In searching for similar symbols outside of China and Japan, I found only one area where corresponding images were anciently employed -- the region of Lycia and Pamphylia in southern Asia Minor. Though not in precisely the same form as the Japanese representation, the images are clearly that of a bird with three legs. To illustrate, here are two coins of Aspendus, an ancient city of Pamphylia. They are reproduced from page 181 of The Migration of Symbols (1894) by Count Goblet D'Alviella:



The design called the triskelion (Greek, "three legs") -- consisting of three curved branches or three bent legs or arms radiating from a center on a solar face -- is found throughout the ancient Greek world (Javan). It is clearly a symbol associated with Javan. It is seen here, for example, on a Greek shield:



But the only place where the three legs are associated with a bird is in Lycia and Pamphylia. As you know, Lycia and Pamphylia are coastal regions in the south of Asia Minor, just west of Cilicia. Cilician immigrants settled in Pamphylia and Lycia. Herodotus says that Lycia, Pamphylia and Cilicia were military allies. As Josephus mentions, the Cilicians were descendants of Javan's son Tarshish. ("Tharsus [Tarshish] gave name to the Tharsians; for so was Cilicia of old called.")

The fact that the 3 legged symbol is associated with a bird only in this region inhabited by Tarshish lends strong support to the Spanish tradition that Japan is the "Tarshish of the Orient."

(Also, scholars unanimously agree that the triskelion is a sun symbol. The Nihongi states that the Yata-garasu lives in the sun. The bird standing by the triskelion [sun] in the above-pictured coin of Aspendus conveys that very idea.)

Now some speculation: Jimmu Tenno -- of the line of Tarshish? -- may have had the triskelion/bird image on his banner as a "coat of arms" of the house of Tarshish. As was often done during royal travels, such a banner might have been carried before his train -- "leading the way," as the Yata-garasu was said to have done.

It is quite conceivable that a banner depicting a bird standing next to three legs (as seen on the coins of Aspendus) might have been remembered in later tradition as a bird with three legs.

On a related matter: The Nihongi says that Jimmu Tenno was a descendant of a man named Ninigi. This Ninigi is commonly referred to in Japanese mythology as "the Celestial Grandson" or "Heavenly Grandchild," as he was the grandson of the revered Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess.

Since Javan was a grandson of Noah, this Ninigi could have been Javan -- and his grandmother Amaterasu the wife of Noah (Naamah). Moreover, the Nihongi says that Ninigi had four sons -- just as Javan had four sons. From one of those four sons (Tarshish?) ultimately sprang Jimmu Tenno.

Further, the Nihongi says that Amaterasu (Naamah?) was the daughter of the god Izanagi. Izanagi and his sister-wife Izanami were "the seventh generation of brother and sister gods to appear after heaven and earth separated out of chaos." If we take this statement at face value, a possible biblical tie-in immediately presents itself.

In the Bible, the seventh generation following Creation was that of Lamech and his wife Zillah, the parents of Naamah. This suggests that the triad Izanagi-Izanami-Amaterasu may be the Japanese version of Lamech-Zillah-Naamah of Genesis 4.

(continued)

Aside from this "coincidence" of the 7th generation, a chronological consideration adds further support:

The Nihongi states that over 1,792,470 years transpired from the time of Ninigi (Javan?) to the time of Jimmu Tenno (c. 667 B.C.). ("From the date when our Heavenly Ancestor [Ninigi] descended until now is over 1,792,470 years," Jimmu declares to his people in 667 B.C., according to the chronology of Book III of the Nihongi.) Such a figure is, of course, preposterous if actual years are intended. The insertion of such a figure, as Dr. Aston suggests, was undoubtedly in imitation of the great number of years ascribed to the reigns of the early Chinese monarchs.

But how might such a precise figure have been arrived at? Japanese calendar-makers recognized a 1,260-year cycle. (The Japanese find significance, for example, in the fact that there were 1,260 years from the foundation of the Japanese Empire by Jimmu Tenno in 660 B.C. to the height of the reign of the great Empress Suiko Tenno in A.D. 601.)

It occurred to me that the chroniclers of the Nihongi might have chosen 1,260 as the multiplier by which to inflate the true number of years. Were this the case, the actual number of years would have been 1,423 [1,792,470 years divided by 1,260]. Adding 1,423 years to 667 B.C., we arrive at 2090 B.C. -- a date certainly falling within the lifetime of Javan (Ninigi).

The above considerations would seem to point to a definite role for Tarshish in the makeup of the Japanese nation. A close look at the complicated genealogies presented in the Nihongi and the Kojiki might reveal further tie-ins with early post-Flood biblical history. Your comments would be appreciated.

Keith