

The concept of *musubi*: An approach to from cognitive archeology¹

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Introduction

The question of the concept of *musubi* 結 in the philosophy of modern Shinto is posed as an alternative or complementary position to the theology of Amaterasu, the imperial deity. This theology has been systematically supported and disseminated by pro-imperial factions since the Meiji Restoration (1868), it has been made official in the propaganda apparatus of Imperial Japan until World War II, and in the postwar period it continues to count on important supports in the academic and extra-academic world to this day.

The very tradition of texts associated with classical mythology already reveals a struggle between the *musubi* deities and the imperial deity for hegemonically representing the symbolic peak of divine power. Both traditions point to fundamental conceptions in the history of Shinto philosophy and theology. While the deities of the *musubi* have represented the generational model, a conception of great importance in the construction of a Shinto as a religion centered on the present, the imperial deity Amaterasu represents the importance of the imperial figure within the myth of the descent from the celestial plane to the terrestrial, a myth with claims to enter history, and clearly theocratic. In this way, the problem of how to harmonize these two great sources of divine power is generated historically, a problem that is solved in some passages of classical mythology itself by representing the cooperation of the force of both deities that we find in certain places. However, the intellectual struggle of two different conceptions of the origin of power in the history of Shinto philosophy remains latent, a struggle that reaches contemporary times.

Shinto is a religion that conceptually starts from a kratophantic world view. Invisible power is manifested through force. Or said otherwise, every force of a certain level reveals a mysterious hidden power of which it is its manifestation in the visible world. The old word for this idea, or '*chikara*' (力), is also used in contemporary Japanese. While in the associated sinogram, physical force is represented by the stylized figure of an arm, as a human force of work or military power, the Japanese term associates the idea of force with any phenomenon that manifests extraordinary power, which directly associates it with the definition of 'spirit' (*kami* 神) in authors like Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801) in the *Kojikiden* 古事記伝 (1798): "everything unusual that contains a great virtue and is worthy of fear" (*yo no tsune narazu suguretaru koto no arite, kashikoki mono* 世の常ならず優れたることの在りて畏

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き も の) [Motoori 1798, vol. 9, p. 125]. Where Norinaga refers to virtue (*koto* 徳) it is indicating that spiritual power which underlies and sustains any extraordinary phenomenon, be it in the field of nature or the human field. An erupting volcano as well as a powerful leader manifest a power whose origin is divine. In Norinaga, the influence of the Confucianism of the 18th century makes him identify the concept of 'virtue' with that of 'force', implicitly resulting in that all force is virtuous, or on the contrary, all virtue is manifested by great power. This kratophantic conception of *virtus* makes it not dependent on good, as in Semitic religions, and is applied interchangeably to good and evil. The result is that a demon (*akushin* 悪神) is in many cases nothing more than the violent manifestation of a 'spirit'.

Another ancient concept related to the twofold idea of 'strength' and 'spirit' is that of 'sword' (*tsurugi* 剣). The sword accompanies certain deities in mythology, and later the great emperors and heroes of the ancient chronicles. The great swords have a spirit and are at the same time a manifestation of strength and virtue. That is why they have a name, beginning with Kusanagi no Tsurugi (草薙剣), the sword that the first emperor received as an emblem of his mysterious power. Its original name was Ame no Murakumo no Tsurugi (天叢雲剣) or 'sword that pierces through thick clouds', a manifestation of the terrible power of the spirit of the great serpent Yamata no Orochi 八岐大蛇.

The question posed by the cognitive archeology of shinto that we are dealing with here is the problem of the origin of force or power. In our Greco-Roman tradition we recognize representative ideas of power such as physical force or *krátos*, the power of technology or *techne* and political authority or *potestas*. The secularization of our historical conscience causes that from an early time the mere physical force is discredited against the moral force, or the mere technical capacity against the aspirations of the spirit. In this way historical dichotomies are forged which alienate the material force from spiritual authority. Only in our medieval period the symbolism of royalty, and the connection in the monarch between temporal power and spiritual power, represents a return to an archaic mentality. Here too the king's sword once again represents the union of both powers.

The Daoist concept of *shen* 神 or 'spirits' is also incorporated into this universe of symbols of hidden power. In the universe of religious Daoism, this sinogram refers to a pleiad of spiritual beings that inhabit mountains, rivers and valleys, and expect acts of worship from human communities through village rituals. They differ from the spirits of the ancestors, beings of the invisible world of greater relevance to the Confucian culture, which displaces the world of the *shen* to the periphery of its cultural universe. Upon arrival in Japan these spirit beings are identified with the spirits of the local indigenous cultures, the kamis. Throughout the history of Japan, the kamis will have to fight with the Buddhas and with Confucianism to occupy a privileged position in the distribution of symbolic power. Two interesting phenomena are noteworthy in this regard. Firstly, that the kamis become semiotic entities, one of whose main functions is to translate the foreign entities belonging to other semantic constellations to the universe of Japanese meaning. Thus, especially the Buddhas are incorporated into the religious universe of Japan as foreign kamis. In the same way that numerous deities of the Hindu universe had previously been incorporated / translated into

Chinese Buddhism. The spirits of the ancestors are also kamis, and in this way the concept of '*kami*' overflows its original cultural framework and expands to become a concept with claims of universality in the area of ancient Japanese culture. Based on this fact, shinto, built as the cult world of the kamis, incorporates Chinese Daoism to a great extent within it, and at various times will strive to reduce Buddhism to its conceptual framework. However, and secondly, during the Edo period (17th-19th centuries), it will have to accept a balance of intellectual power, shared with Buddhism and Confucianism as the "three teachings". In this new construct, the *kami* = *shin* sinogram comes to represent the spiritual power of the hidden world, a mystical power related to the life force.

In the Edo period a clearly mystified imprint is ascribed to the '*kami*' spirits and to Shinto as a religious tradition. The *kami* spirits come to fulfill their own function within the balance of the "traditions" recognized in this period. While Buddhism occupies the center of religious life and focuses on managing death, and Confucianism represents the center of social life reflected in its ethical codes, Shinto becomes the religiosity of life, which is managed by sanctuaries and the rituals of birth, purification and celebration of the community (*matsuri* 祭). In terms of the institutionally dominant philosophy of neo-Confucianism, *shin* 神 becomes the generative and mysterious principle, complementing the explicit activity of the *ri* 理 or rational principle and the *ki* 氣 or material principle. Therefore, *shin* represents the spirit, the realm of the spiritual that vivifies the dualism of *ri* and *ki*.

This new perspective will affect the reading that the school of National Studies (*kokugaku* 国学) of the 18th century will make of the texts of the Shinto tradition. It is in this position that the deities of the *musubi* acquire a certain preponderance as kamis of generation. And from here a *musubi* theology that reaches to modernity will emerge, mainly from the hands of the ethnologist Orikuchi Shinobu (1887-1953).

Sources

The concept of *musubi* originally appears in classical texts within the names of certain deities recognized as high-level kami. An archeology of the concept must therefore begin with a review of the places in Japan's Yamato mythological discourse where such deities are inserted, and an analysis of the meaning and semiotic significance of the insertion of the concept in certain places. Texts to review are the *Kojiki* 古事記 (712), a Yamato court myth-history compendium, the *Izumo Fudoki* 出雲國風土記 (713), the record of legends of the Izumo country / region, the *Nihon Shoki* 日本書紀 (720), first of Japan's national histories, the *Kogo Shui* 古語拾遺 (807), a compendium of mythological themes not collected in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*, the *Shinsen Shōjiroku* 新撰姓氏錄 (815), the first record of families preserved, and the *Engishiki* 延喜式 (905), an administrative text of the Kyoto court. In the table the presence of the sema '*musubi*' is found in the five deities associated with this concept.

	Takami-musubi	Kami-musubi	Tamatsume-musubi	Ikumusubi	Tarumusubi
<i>Kojiki</i> (712)	高御産巢日神 Kami	神産巢日神 Kami 神産巢日之命 Mikoto 神産巢日御祖 命 Mikoto			
<i>Izumo Fudoki</i> (713)		神魂命 Mikoto			
<i>Nihon Shoki</i> (720)	高皇産靈 Mikoto	神皇産靈尊 Mikoto			
<i>Kogo Shūi</i> (807)	高皇産靈神 Kami 高御魂神 Kami 高皇産靈 Mikoto	神産靈神 Kami 神皇産靈 Kami 神皇産靈神 Kami	魂留産靈	生産靈	足産靈
<i>Shinsen Shōjiroku</i> (815)	高皇産靈命 Mikoto 高御魂命 Mikoto 高魂命 Mikoto	神魂命 Mikoto		伊久魂命 Mikoto	
<i>Engishiki</i> (905)	高御産日神 Kami 高御魂命 Mikoto	神魂 Kami 神産日神 Kami 神魂命 Mikoto	魂留魂 Kami 玉留魂 Kami 玉積産日神 Kami	生魂 Kami 生産日神 Kami	足魂 Kami 足産日神 Kami

In this table we can check the range of semantic variance that affects the concept of *musubi*, according to the sinograms chosen in each case. The characteristic features come to be as follows:

- ‘*musubi*’ is associated with the sinogram 産 (all sources)
- ‘*musubi*’ is associated with the sinogram 魂 (*Izumo Fudoki*, *Kogo Shūi*, *Shinsen Shōjiroku*, *Engishiki*)

- the *musubi* is associated with the honorific ‘*mi*’ written with the emperor's sinogram 皇 (*Nihon Shoki, Kogo Shūi, Shinsen Shōjiroku*)
- the lemma ‘*bi*’ of ‘*musu-bi*’ is written with the sinogram 靈 (*Nihon Shoki, Kogo Shūi, Shinsen Shōjiroku*)
- the denomination of the *musubi* deities is ‘*Kami*’ and / or ‘*Mikoto*’ (*Kojiki, Kogo Shūi, Engishiki*)
- the denomination of the deities is exclusively ‘*Mikoto*’ (*Nihon Shoki, Izumo Fudoki, Shinsen Shōjiroku*)

In the list of variance that we have presented above and we will analyze below, it is worth noting the coincidence of the incidence of the lemma ‘*mi*’ that represents imperial dignity with the appearance of the lemma ‘*bi*’, that represents spiritual strength. The texts in which they appear, the *Nihon Shoki*, the *Kogo Shūi* and the *Shinsen Shōjiroku* thus reveal their strong connection with the imperial house and its ideology, on the one hand, and with the associated idea of a sacred, spiritual power. That is, the association of both ideas gives us the conception of the emperor as a source of spiritual power, inherited from his divine lineage.

For its part, the use of ‘*kami*’ and ‘*mikoto*’ is not significant enough. It is of little value in this context to enter into the discussion of the difference in meaning between the two appellations of divine dignity. Takamimusubi and Kamimusubi are recognized by all sources as the primary and main couple of the Musubi deities. The *Kojiki* assigns the latter the names of ‘*kami*’ and ‘*mikoto*’ interchangeably, and to Takamimusubi the appellation of ‘*kami*’, while the *Nihon Shoki* confers on both deities the divine category of ‘*mikoto*’. The first to appear in the mythological account is Takamimusubi, and he receives both nominal distinctions, varying according to the source we consult. Therefore, we understand that both designations refer to deities of the highest level in the hierarchy of the Yamato pantheon.

We do have to make an analysis of the three sinograms and their associated readings in ancient Japanese or *yamatogo*, directly linked to the term ‘*musubi*’. In effect, the three key sinograms of 産, 魂 and 靈 / 靈 with readings ‘*musu*’, ‘*musubi*’ and ‘*-bi*’ respectively, offer us ample information that completes the etymological root of ‘*musubi*’. Then, the sinogram 産, in later Japanese, will apply the Japanese reading of ‘*umu*’ = ‘give birth’. From the combination of the sinogram with the Japanese reading of ‘*musu*’, we have a semantic range that includes the ideas of ‘birth’, ‘generative productivity’ and ‘growth’. For its part, the sinogram 魂 appears in the *Kogo Shūi* and *Engishiki* with the reading ‘*tama*’ as well as ‘*musubi*’. Together they bring together the ideas of ‘soul’, ‘spirit’, ‘Yin-Yang energy’ (in the Daoist interpretation), something ‘surprising’ (or unusual) and a ‘divine being’. Finally, the third of the sinograms, 靈 / 靈, later read in Japanese as ‘*tama*’, appears here in the texts analyzed, always with a reading ‘*-bi*’, in the pair 産 靈 / 靈 ‘*musu-bi*’, therefore adding to the idea of ‘generation’ that of ‘spiritual force’, ‘soul’, ‘spirit’ or a ‘supernatural being’.

Results

The variants of meaning that we have obtained from the lexical analysis of the selected texts complete, with an etymological sense of great creativity on the part of their compilers, the basic meaning of the verb '*musubu*' in Japanese, that is, 'to connect', 'link with a tie', 'knot', and the result of the '*musubu*' activity is the '*musubi*', that is, an object resulting from the combination of several knotted, linked elements. By extension, '*musubi*' is the divine force capable of producing that miracle. To explicitly emphasize and express this mysterious power of '*musubi*', the compilers creatively combined the meaning of the Yamato language with the not so long ago incorporated sinograms from the continent.

The Japanese lexical root of '*musu*' also gives us the idea of humidity, as in an environment favorable to the growth of moss. That is to say, the overall image that we obtain of all this variance of semantic range is mainly that of a vegetable ecosystem with a high level of humidity, very conducive to the emergence of life in its elemental forms, a very fertile ecosystem, with a very lush plant growth. In this we notice how the metaphor of vegetative life, as more basic and fundamental than animal life, which is itself generated by reproductive means, characterizes the Japanese story of the generation of the world. The great generating forces of an ecosystem that allows the birth of life in the cosmos and in the territory bear its distinctive mark in its name, and is none other than the '*musu*' lemma. By associating the Japanese '*musubi*' with two combined sinograms, resulting in '*musu-bi*', the compilers of the texts consciously break down a common use of the term to invite mythological reading, introducing the ideas of generation and spirit. It is in this etymological interpretation that Orikuchi Shinobu will base his fundamental theology of the *musubi*.

Discussion

To conclude this essay, I will proceed to discuss the meaning of the occurrence of the notion of *musubi* in the sources presented above, from the point of view adopted in this proposal. There the meaning of *musubi* will appear in its proper context for discussion.

In the mythology of the texts analyzed here, the two main deities of the *musubi*, Takamimusubi 高御産巢日神 and Kamimusubi 神産巢日神, are presented to us as a complementary couple that is also part of a Daoist triad, along with the deity who occupies the 'center', literally 'Ame no Mi-naka-nushi' 天之御中主神. The scheme is therefore as follows:

天之御中主神



高御産巢日

神産巢日神

This is how the *Kojiki* describes it (*Kojiki* I: I²; *Shinten*: 1995, p. 12-13; Philippi: 1968, p. 47). It is the first appearance of the deities of the *musubi* in this work. Regarding the passage that narrates the beginning of the universe, the deities of the *musubi* are in their natural

² We follow the numbering of the English edition of Philippi: 1968.

position as great generating forces. Duality reflects a constant in Japanese mythology, in deities that adopt a yin-yang relationship, very present in the proto-Shinto ritual world in Japan. Furthermore, in this passage they associate and subordinate to another abstract deity whose name identifies it as a mere position, without any other visible charisma. The order indicates that space is first configured, starting from a center, and in relation to this the generating forces of the cosmos come into play. It is a solution that cleverly combines a Daoist worldview of continental origin with the original function of two fundamental kamis in the local pantheon.

The *Kojiki* also informs us of the relationship of these original deities with other deities that decisively intervene in the process of construction of the territory. Such is the case of Takamimusubi's genealogical connection with the deity Omoikane (*Kojiki* 17:5; *Shinten*: 1995, p. 28; Philippi: 1968, p. 82). Omoikane no Kami is a deity who has a fundamental role in solving the cosmic problem posed by the voluntary confinement of the deity Amaterasu. It is a time of deep crisis in the heavenly kingdom, Takamagahara. And the narrative draws on an archetypal figure of "aulic adviser" in this kami. The connection with Takamimusubi, one of the great cosmic forces prior to the birth of Amaterasu, gives this episode a very serious tint, where a force rooted in an original power like that of the *musubi* has to intervene for its resolution.

If the charisma of Omoikane is that of the council, in another passage of the same mythology it reappears in a context of collective consultation (*Kojiki* 32:5; *Shinten*: 1995, p. 44; Philippi: 1968, p. 121). Here Amaterasu herself joins the ancestor deity Takamimusubi in an authority couple, revealing that Amaterasu's invested power within the cycle of divine descent into the territory also originates from the original *musubi* force. The divine council again turns to Omoikane, the ancestry of whose power we have already known.

And also in a passage that follows immediately, the query is repeated, with the same formula of the combination of forces between the two ancestral deities (*Kojiki* 33: I; *Shinten* 1995, p. 45; Philippi 1968, p. 123). Once again the advisory charisma of Omoikane is used. In another passage, the *musubi* power of Takamimusubi is associated with the power represented by the iconicity of the tree. Thus, Takamimusubi is associated with Takaki no Kami 高木 神, a deity of high rank ('taka-') and unknown origin, but coinciding in his reference to the world of plants (*Kojiki* 33: 13; *Shinten*: 1995, p. 46; Philippi: 1968, p. 124).

As for Kamimusubi's presence on the *Kojiki*, his original ancestor deity character is emphasized (*Kojiki* 18: 5; *Shinten*: 1995, p. 30; Philippi 1968, p. 87). In the quote the name 'Mioya' 御祖 is added, which we have reflected in the table of the Musubi deities. It is a passage that introduces into the mythological story the widely held motive in Asia of the generation of the original seeds of the grain, from the body of a deity. That in the story it is precisely Kamimusubi, as an ancestral deity, who collects the seeds, causes the connection of the growth force of the icon of the grain with the *musubi* power of the deity.

In the following passage, Kamimusubi reveals his position as ancestral deity as bestower of grace (*Kojiki* 22: 6; *Shinten*: 1995, p. 35; Philippi: 1968, p. 96). It is a passage in which the power of the ancestor deity exercises the function of the hierarch to which one

goes to ask for a favor or to ask for justice. The ancestral charisma of a judge prevails here over the generating power of the *musubi*.

As for the following passage, Kamimusubi again shows his role as ancestral parent (*Kojiki* 30: 4-5; *Shinten* 1995, p. 42; Philippi 1968, p. 116). It is a passage belonging to the myth of the 'creation of the territory', *kunizukuri* 国造り, which is inserted in the mythological account within the section corresponding to the country of Izumo. In the construction paper of the territory an unknown deity appears with the name of Sukunabikona. The lord of the territory, Ōkuninushi, questions this presence, and the account clarifies the origin of his lineage in the ancient deity. In this way, the force of creation of the territory is protected by a previous and greater force, the universal force of the generation represented in Kamimusubi.

The deities of the *musubi* as we see have a relatively little presence in mythology, but they appear in moments of great transcendence, when the intervention of an original and creative force is required. The last case to be analyzed in the *Kojiki* occurs in the mythological cycle known as *kuniyuzuri* 国譲り, which narratively relates the moment of transfer and cession of sovereignty of the kingdom of Izumo to the power of Yamato. In the act of cession, a deity in charge presents offerings to heaven, where the ancestral deity Kamimusubi's residence is located (*Kojiki* 37: 11-13; *Shinten*: 1995, p. 50; Philippi 1968, p. 135-36). It is a context of great relevance within three stages that form a sequence, beginning with the creation of the world and the territory, continuing through its organization, and ending with the granting of universal sovereignty to Yamato. In the three moments the *musubi* deities appear, Kamimusubi presenting the particularity of emphasizing his ancestral aspect of 'Mioya no Mikoto'.

Next, from the *Nihon Shoki* I select two paragraphs. The first belongs to the mythological part or "era of the *kami* deities" (*Shinten*: 1995, p. 176; Aston: 1896, Vol. I p. 5). I will comment on two aspects in this short entry in the narration of the *Shoki*. The first is that the source coincides with the *Kojiki*, it is a short entry that reproduces the same narrative that we have analyzed. But the source is cited as an alternate version of the main narrative given in the *Shoki*, which is completely different from the one offered here. The formula of "a writing" is used to give input to secondary sources that complete the information of each episode of the "age of deities". In other words, the *Shoki* takes this important triad of cosmogonic origin as a simple alternative version, which indicates that this work expressly distances itself from its predecessor in the same typology of the myth-historical account. Furthermore, secondly, the names used to designate the three deities have peculiarities. He gives them the treatment of 'Mikoto' instead of 'Kami'. And this is related to the use of the honorific '-mi', as we have seen above. While in the *Kojiki* the sinogram 御 is used, which generally indicates an honorable treatment, in the *Shoki* the sinogram of imperial dignity 皇 is used on purpose. We can understand that both strategies have the express intention of associating these deities with the imperial lineage. They are therefore incorporated as the first ancestors of this long lineage, beyond the importance of the Amaterasu deity as the ancestor deity of the imperial house. The 'Mikoto' form here can be understood as a reinforcement of this connection. The *Shoki* thus places the imperial lineage

at the center of the entire cosmogonic narrative. This role played by the *musubi* deities will be confirmed in the later literature compiled in the court. The *musubi* deities here acquire a new functionality in the mythological account, as protective deities of the emperor and the nation.

Indeed, although the special cult of the Amaterasu deity as an imperial ancestor has already established itself in the compilation period of this work, the connection with the Takamimusubi deity, using the honorific sinogram of 皇, is reinforced in the second passage that I analyze, where such lineage connection is made explicit (*Nihon Shoki*, reign of Emperor Kenzō, in *Shinten*: 1995, p. 496; Aston 1896, Vol. I p. 392). The identity of the "Solar Deity" appearing here has been questioned by the geographer Senda Minoru, who points to a Kyushu solar deity (Como: 2009), but the connection with Takamimusubi and the use of the imperial sinogram suggests that it is Amaterasu. That a couple of passages before, in the "Third year, spring, second month, first day", the same character receives a message from the lunar deity, sister of Amaterasu according to the mythology of the *Kiki* (*Kojiki* + *Nihon Shoki*), and consequently receiving similar treatment from the court, reinforces the likelihood that the "Solar Deity" here is a reference to Amaterasu, as imperial ancestor. The lunar deity also claims Takamimusubi as ancestor, which gives us the genealogical sequence Takamimusubi — Izanagi no Mikoto — Amaterasu · Tsukiyomi no Mikoto — Ninigi no Mikoto (founder of the imperial lineage). The connection between Takamimusubi and Amaterasu, according to Michael Como (2009), following Okada Seishi, may have its origin in an archaic form of worship in the shrine of Ise, turned into an imperial shrine. In the myth of the descent of Amaterasu's grandson and the foundation of the imperial lineage, both deities would be connected by the strategy of the *Shoki*. This possibility would be reinforced by the presence of both deities in the worship of the Amaterasu Ōmikami Takakura Jinja shrine in Kawachi province. As he acknowledges that Takamimusubi is connected with several very old episodes of the cycle of imperial mythology, as well as in the annual harvest festival *Niiname no matsuri* and in the ritual of access to the rank of emperor (*Daijōsai*). He understands that the imperial cult of Takamimusubi precedes that of Amaterasu (Como: 2009). In summary, Takamimusubi is originally an agricultural deity which in the court mythology is elevated to a cosmic deity and protective deity of the imperial clan.

The link or annexation of the figures of the Musubi deities to the imperial pantheon is confirmed by another text compiled in court in 807, the *Kogo Shūi* 古語拾遺, which reinforces this ascription in its version of the cosmogonic myth (*Shinten*: 1995, p. 888; Katō/Hoshino: 1923, p. 15). The variant of this version of the well-known passage of the appearance of the three original deities is the gloss that accompanies the names of the *musubi* deities. Sumeragamutsukamuro-gi 皇親神留伎 and Sumeragamutsukamuro-mi 皇親神留彌 is the name that will identify these deities in the official liturgy of the Jingikan 神祇官 or Department of Worship of the *kami* deities. The addition in the *Kogo Shūi* of these ritual denominations is due to the fact that the authorship of this compilation is attributed to the Imbe clan 忌部氏·齋部氏, in charge of keeping the periods of ritual abstinence according to the Jingikan calendar. In the *Engishiki* (927) vol. 8, we find the formula Sumemutsukamuro-gi 皇睦神漏伎命 and Kamuro-mi 神漏彌命, which identifies a pair of deities of origin in the Takamagahara ('Heavenly Upland') as protectors of the emperor and by extension of the nation. While in the *Engishiki* formula the lemma '*mutsu*' is

associated with the sinogram 睦, which indicates a relationship of familiarity between the emperor and the deity, the *Kogo Shūi* formula is even more explicit when associating the lemma with the sinogram of 'ancestor' 親. For its part, the meaning of the couple, *-gi -mi*, gives rise to thinking about the original pair, which can be interpreted as an allusion to Izanagi and Izanami, the first pair of deities that contribute to the generation of the world through reproductive means male-female in Yamato mythology. In the *Engishiki* we do not find another way of denomination or allusion to this couple, but we do find the reference to their sanctuary as Izanagi no Kami no Yashiro 伊射奈伎神社, and to the female couple as Izanami no Mikoto 伊弉冉尊 · 伊佐奈美 · 伊佐奈彌.

As a conclusion, in the animistic world, the *musubi* deities are in charge of sustaining the bond that unites the soul and the body. In particular that of the emperor, as we have seen in the *Mi-tamashizume no matsuri* ritual, where the honorific '-mi' refers to imperial dignity. The name of the deity Tamatsumemusubi refers directly to this power. '*Tama-tsume*' 魂留 literally means 'to knot the soul', '*iku*' 生 means 'to vivify', and '*taru*' 足 is a metaphorical expression that takes from the ordinary meaning of 'enough' the idea of a resistant, powerful force. This last epithet frequently functions in ritual or symbolic language as a prefix of magnification.

They are undoubtedly deities from the shamanic world, or with shamanic symbology, incorporated into the clan of the Mononobe military guild. The *musubi* 結 is presented to us in folklore as the subject of a rebirth ritual. The bond it guarantees is that of the bond between body and soul. In a context of animistic culture, the *musubi* is the link that guarantees that the soul does not leave the body, or in its case guarantees that this link is restored. In this sense, this link is part of the ritual known as *tamafuri* 玉振, a ritual of rejuvenation or rebirth of the individual's vital power. The *musubi* deities therefore come from the world of religious cult that preceded the construction of the Jingikan state apparatus. Textually we have evidence of these three deities from the *Kogo Shūi* (807).

The *musubi* deities therefore have their origin in the agricultural calendar. This corresponds to the reading '*musu-bi*' 産靈 or 'spirit of generation', especially of life in the vegetable kingdom, which we have found in the *Kojiki* (産巢日), the *Nihon Shoki*, the *Kogo Shūi* and the *Shinsen Shōjiroku* (産靈), and the *Engishiki* (産日). In all cases the sinogram of 'generation' 産 appears. Only the "Izumo Fudoki" opts for the transcription of 魂 or 'spirit' without direct reference to the idea of generation. But in other cases, the other key component of the term *musubi* is the ending '-bi' or 'spirit', which we find in all cases with phonetic 日, or semantic transcription 靈. It deals therefore about the force of life, biology, and by extension, nature. All the *musubi* deities represent one aspect of this enormous power. Not only the five main deities consecrated in the Jingikan, but minor deities in Japanese mythology, such as Wakamusubi 稚産靈, son of the fire deity Kagutsuchi and the earth deity Haniyamahime, who represents the power of the new vegetation due to the combination of the life-giving fire and the nutrient earth (*Shintēn*: 1995, p. 185; Aston: 1896, vol. I, p. 21), that is, the power of life.

The *musubi* deities are deities of the generation, attached to the power of biological, vegetable life, and cover the entire life cycle, the harvest and the life of the community. Therefore they become deities of regeneration, not only of vegetable life, but also of human life. They are therefore powerful spirits that protect the thread of life, guaranteeing the 'bond' that ties the soul to the body, and guarantee the survival of the emperor and of the entire nation. For this reason they are incorporated not only into sowing rites, but also to rites of appeasement (*tamashizume*) and revitalization (*tamafuri*) of the soul. And the imperial clan designates them as ancestors of their lineage. They are the deities that remove the threat of death from the repetitive and regenerative cycle of life.

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