

The Tale of ‘Funahiki Marsh’ and Malevolent Deities

Shūzō MORIUCHI (trans. Edwina Palmer)

Awaha Sato, Kako Kōri

Kako Kōri more or less corresponded with the area covering present-day Futami-chō in Akashi-shi, Inami-chō and Harima-chō both in Kako-gun, the eastern part of Kakogawa-shi, and Arai-chō and Takasago-chō both in Takasago-shi. Four *sato* names are recorded in *Harima no Kuni Fudoki* for Kako Kōri: Magari, Nagata, Umayama and Awaha, and an explanation of the place name origin is supplied for each of these. The one for Awaha is recorded as follows, and it is noteworthy as a story related to ancient transportation routes.

Awaha Sato. In olden times, Korime, the founder of the Ōtomo no Miyatsuko family, brought this grassland under cultivation and sowed a large amount of millet. Hence the village is called Awaha [‘much millet’]. In this village there is Funahiki Marsh. Long ago, there was a malicious deity in Kamusaki *Mura*. [S]he sank half of all the vessels that passed, so the boats that plied to and fro were all forced to detour willy-nilly at Ōtsue in Inami. They had to go up the river, drag their boats from Kaorita Valley, and set out [to sea] again via Hayashi Harbour in Akashi Kōri. Hence it is called Funahiki [‘Boat Dragging’] Marsh. The reason for this name is as reported above.

Two *mokkan* (wooden labels) have been excavated from the Heijō Palace and the Heijō capital city sites (Nara), which have written on them, respectively: ‘Harima Province Kako Kōri Awaha Sato 里 / [*lacuna*] household head name / sacks’¹ and ‘Harima Province Kako Kōri Awaha Sato 郷 Su [*lacuna* (ho?)] Sato Sonebe-ishi *Mura mitsugi* (taxes in kind) and *minie* (taxes of foodstuffs) “large octopus six *kin* [approximately 3.6 kg], fat”². The orthographic change from *sato* 里 to *sato* 郷 took place in 715.³ It may be inferred that Awaha was a district that included coastal land, from the fact that the latter *mokkan* refers to octopus as an item rendered as tax. However, there are several theories as to the actual location of ‘Awaha Sato’, and I shall reserve this issue for my final discussion.

¹ Translator’s note: 「幡磨国加古郡 禾禾里 / □戸主名俵」：幡磨国 Harima no kuni, employs variant graphs for the province’s name, Harima; 加古郡 Kako no Kōri; 禾禾里 variant graphs for Awaha no Sato; ? 戸主名俵 The meaning of this is somewhat obscure and contestable. The *lacuna* could perhaps indicate the family name of the household. 戸主 means “head of household.” 名 in such a context usually indicates a personal name. 俵 means ‘sack’, usually of rice, and it is also the numeral classifier for sacks of rice, each approximately 60 kg, in which case it is glossed *hyō*, but no quantities are indicated here; so it may be that the name of the head of the household was ‘Tawara’.

² Translator’s note: 「播磨国加古郡淡葉郷須□〔保?〕曾祢部石村御調御費「大蛸六斤太」」：播磨国加古郡 Harima no Kuni Kako no Kōri; 淡葉郷 variant graphs for Awaha no Sato; 須□〔保?〕曾祢部石村 Su[ho?] Sonebe-ishi *Mura*; 御調御費 *Mitsugi minie* taxes in kind; 大蛸 large octopus; 六斤 6 *kin* [weight], 太 fat.

³ Translator’s note: Awaha Sato was written in three different ways: 禾々里、鴨波里、and 淡葉郷.

Ōtsue in Inami

Until quite recently,⁴ administrative districts of local government called Inami-gun (*kōri*) and Kako-gun (*kōri*) straddled the Kako River, respectively on its western and eastern banks. The chief landscape feature of both of these districts is the broad plain that stretches on either side of the Kako River estuary. Most of this plain nowadays forms the flood plain of the Kako River, and formerly it was criss-crossed by innumerable creeks. On account of this, mooring facilities were constructed along this estuary called both *Kako no Minato* [Kako Harbour] in the entry for Ōjin in *Nihon Shoki*, and *Kako no Funese* [Kako Haven] in *Shoku Nihongi*. The name Ōtsue⁵ also denotes a harbour, and several place names containing *-tsu [-zu]*, ‘harbour’, remain in the vicinity to this day, such as Nakatsu, Awazu and Hiratsu (see Fig. 1).

Funahiki [‘Boat-dragging’] Marsh

Hitherto, the origin of the place name Funahiki *Hara*⁶ has been interpreted as ‘pulling boats up out of the water and transporting them overland by dragging them’. However, the expression *funahiki*, ‘boat-dragging’, actually refers to using human or horse power from the riverbank and pulling boats in the water upstream with ropes (i.e., along a towpath). According to *Kakogawa-shi Shi* [*The History of Kakogawa-shi*], such boat-pulling was in fact carried out until relatively recently in Kakogawa-shi. Although it says only ‘They stopped at Ōtsue and went to the head of the river’ in *Harima Fudoki*, it would have been impossible before motorization to go up the fast-flowing Kako River unassisted by some kind of power. And to go up the Kaorita valley, it would still have necessitated dragging the boat, even without going upstream against the strongest main current of the Kako River. Consequently, the origin of the place name Funahiki Marsh does not mean that they dragged the boat overland, but comes from the action of literally towing the boat upstream with ropes from the riverbank. In other words, it is quite possible that at the stage when *Harima Fudoki* was compiled, the place name origin story of Funahiki Marsh was misunderstood when it was noted down in writing from its oral transmission.

Kaorita valley and the Kako–Akashi detour route

Where exactly does ‘Kaorita Valley’ refer to? There are two theories about this Kaorita Valley: that it was either the Kumori River, or the Kusadani River. One of the bases for the Kumori River theory is the hamlet name Funahiki to the south of the Tenma Ōike Reservoir; but the Kumori River itself flows out from the Manryūike Reservoir in Inami-chō, and the only reason it maintains a steady flow nowadays is because of the network of irrigation channels that pass through the Ōgo and Yamada River irrigation canals and the Tōban [Eastern Harima] Irrigation system, so it is doubtful whether it had sufficient water in ancient times to be navigable by boat. Above all, the Kumori River flows along a level terrace, and visually, it does not form a valley that would have been called Kaorita Valley as such. In fact, the Kusadani River catchment area includes place names that contain *-tani [-dani]*, ‘valley’, such as Kusadani, Nodani and Hirovani, while there is none in the catchment of the Kumori River. From the point of view of land forms that one might call a ‘valley’, the Kusadani River is the more logical, so I shall further my argument predicated on that assumption.

The Kusadani River is a river rising naturally from a valley on the northern side of Mt. Mekkosan, and if one follows it upstream, it goes to Kande-chō in Nishi-ku, Kōbe-shi. If you were to pull a boat from Kande-chō using the level terrace on which National Route 175 runs nowadays, you would arrive alongside the Akashi River at Hirano-chō, Kōbe-shi, and if you carried on down that river you could reach ‘Hayashi Harbour’ (present-day Hayashizaki Fishing Port)—just as it says in *Harima Fudoki* with ‘pulling from Kaorita Valley’.

As it happens, the Kusadani River route was also the route of transmission of *sue* ware pottery technology in ancient times. The production of *sue* ware flourished from the eighth century

⁴ Translator’s note: 1979.

⁵ Translator’s note: *Tsu* means ‘harbour’, ‘ferry’, or ‘shore’, while *e* means ‘a large river’ or ‘estuary’. *Ōtsue* therefore literally means ‘large harbour on the estuary’.

⁶ 原 *hara* refers to unreclaimed and uncultivated land: here, given the context of the river estuary’s flood plain, ‘marsh’ or ‘wetland’ may be the most apposite English translation.

onwards in Shikata-chō, Kakogawa-shi, and from around the tenth century pottery was taken to Kande-chō in Kōbe-shi via the Kusadani River and loaded onto boats in the vicinity of Hayashizaki at the mouth of the Akashi River. Then in response to an increase in the demand for tiles in the Heian Capital (Kyōto) around the twelfth century, potters from Kande Pottery were summoned and a tile kiln centre was established at Hayashizaki (Hayashizaki Sanbonmatsu Tile Kiln). Later still, the technology of the Kande Pottery followed that route in reverse, and it was transmitted from the Kusadani River via the Kako River, through Tanba Province and up to Echizen and the Nōto Peninsula. Thus this route of transmission of ceramics technology coincides with the Kusadani River route in *Harima Fudoki*, and endorses its existence (see Fig. 2).

The malevolent deity of Kamusaki *Mura* and coastal transportation

There is no trace now of the place name Kamusaki *Mura*, but from the name Kamusaki (meaning ‘headland of the deity’) it probably referred to the coastal strip, either where Hayashi Shrine is located—a *shikinaisha*, i.e., mentioned in *Engishiki*, 927 CE (present-day Hayashizaki, Akashi-shi), or around Sumiyoshi Shrine which was the tutelary deity of marine navigation (Uozumi-chō, Akashi-shi). ‘Malevolent deity’ implies an impediment to transportation, and here it may be inferred as referring to the marine phenomenon known as ‘Hayashi no Iyanichi’ which was greatly feared locally. ‘Hayashi no Iyanichi’ is the phenomenon of triangular A-frame waves⁷ which occur offshore from Hayashizaki; it is especially common in winter. Recent research by Keiji WASHIO found that its main cause is that the huge anticlockwise maelstrom that occurs to the northwest of Awaji Island on the rising tide continues swirling even after the tide turns and it carries on entering the Naruto Straits. According to the tide map he charted, the current comes from the direction of Uozumi and Ōkubo in the west and is pulled towards Awaji Island and drawn into the maelstrom: this was feared as a ‘malevolent deity’, not only for the resultant A-frame waves but also for the complicated movement of the currents (see Fig. 3).

The locations of Funahiki Marsh and Iwaha *Sato*

On account of the entry for Awaha *Sato* in *Harima Fudoki* we know of the existence of an ancient detour route between the Kako River and Akashi via Inami-chō. So where exactly was Awaha *Sato* located? Apart from Awaha *Sato*, the territories of the other three *sato* in Kako *Kōri* have more or less been identified, but when it comes to Awaha *Sato*, its location and extent have not yet been agreed upon. One theory argues that it went from the inland part of Inami-chō as far as the coast at Uozumi-chō in Akashi-shi; and another that it refers to the area around Awazu in Kakogawa-chō, Kakogawa-shi. Either way, the territory of the *sato* will differ depending on where Funahiki Marsh is thought to have been.

From its essential meaning of ‘boat-pulling’, the location of Funahiki Marsh must be either the Kaorita Valley (by which I mean here the Kusadani River) or alongside the main channel of the Kako River. Judging by the place name origin myth for Funahiki Marsh, it is more natural to take it that Funahiki Marsh was in the Kaorita Valley, but as was discussed above, if the *Fudoki* compilers misunderstood the point of the boat-pulling on the basis of inaccuracies in its recounting, then we should not necessarily be too insistent on the area around the Kaorita Valley, and can take it to refer to land alongside the main channel of the Kako River. Rather, given that the *mokkan* from Awaha *Sato* records octopus rendered as a tax item, Awaha *Sato* must have included some coastal land, which is also geographically consistent with its being along the Kako River. In that case, it is plausible to regard Awaha *Sato* as where Awazu remains as a vestige of its name, covering the area from Awazu, Kakogawa-chō, Kakogawa-shi on the eastern bank of the Kako River, to Takasago-chō, Takasago-shi on the coast.

⁷ Translator’s note: An A-frame wave is one which breaks both left and right simultaneously with a clearly defined peak. The local name is said to derive from *iya na michishio* ‘a terrible rising tide’, contracted over time to > *iyanchi/iyainichi/iyantsu*. (Wikipedia, *Akashi Kaikyō* 明石海峡).