**Harima Fudoki Now**

In most cases, except for those that survived as fragments quoted in other texts, the myths recorded in *Harima Fudoki* disappeared into obscurity for a millennium, before rediscovery of the sole extant scroll in 1796. Until towards the end of the twentieth century, they remained largely unknown even within Japan. Most literate Japanese people have heard of the eighth-century *Fudoki*, although a very small proportion of them will have read more than a few words of a translation into modern Japanese. Few apart from interested scholars will have attempted to read their original texts in their entirety. However, along with other aspects of the ‘boom’ in recent decades in interest in Japan’s past, ordinary people from farmers to city office workers are better acquainted with snippets of *Fudoki* than they were ever before.

Formerly regarded as of little other than antiquarian interest, these ancient documents have been receiving renewed attention. In the wave of invention and reinvention of tradition in Japan—along with rural depopulation and in the face of globalisation of ‘international’ culture—the local myths and legends contained in *Fudoki* have been a convenient straw at which to clutch for many local government bodies and provincial organisations aiming at *mura okoshi* (village revival) within the larger *furusato undō* (‘back to the countryside’ campaign) since the 1980s. Several anthropologists and historians have commented on the *furusato* movement in the English literature, and I do not propose to add much to it here.172 Rather, I should like to point to the centrality of *Fudoki* in many of the attempts to fabricate—sometimes quite literally—a local connection to the ancient past of a district. At the very least such attempts draw the attention of residents to aspects of their local history that they had previously ignored. At places all over Harima nowadays, explanation boards have been erected for visitors, with pertinent quotations from *Harima Fudoki*. *Harima Fudoki* has been commercialised for tourist consumption and the fostering of local community pride. It has been commodified in other ways too. Two examples from the Harima region serve to illustrate this phenomenon.

In *Harima Fudoki*, the opening passage to the section on Sayo *Kōri* explains the place name by means of a myth in which deer are a central motif. In an effort to invent and promote a lucrative *meibutsu* (‘famous product’) for sale to locals and tourists alike, the Sayo-chō Chamber of Commerce launched the concept of *shika korokke*, ‘venison croquettes,’ which is to say, potato croquettes containing minced deer-meat. Croquettes are cheap and popular in Japan, but also

in the first decade of the twenty-first century they gained a fashionable image. That they are a very recent addition to the Japanese daily diet is of no concern to inventors of tradition.\footnote{Cwiertka, 2006, 421.} They may also overlook the reality that wild deer are still common in the mountains in many parts of Japan, and are by no means peculiar to the Sayo district. What is unique to Sayo is this Fudoki entry. The Fudoki passage about Sayo also testifies to the antiquity and endurance of this place. The proof of antiquity alone adds considerable cultural cachet to efforts towards promotion of the Sayo district within the Zeitgeist of nostalgia for the past in the furusato movement. And, incidentally, in a humorous coup that rivals the play on words in Fudoki place name narratives, the Chamber of Commerce persuaded the Sayo-gun Dental Association to assist in sponsoring the promotion: shika meaning both ‘deer’ and ‘dentistry’! Combined with fashionable concerns about healthy eating, venison may be advertised as ‘tender, not fatty, and light in flavour.’ “We want to make them a special local product full of dreams and romance,” the group leader was quoted as saying.\footnote{Kōbe Shinbun, 4 June 2004. My translation.} The romance is tacitly implied by association with the Fudoki myth. ‘Dreams’ seems to be an entirely new local addition to the semiotics of the humble but exotic croquette.

A second example of a locality appropriating and adapting a myth from Harima Fudoki is the case of ‘Nehime-chan’ in Kasai-shi. The entry for Tamano-mura, Narapara Sato, Kamo Kōri, relates the legend of Nehime (OJ Nepime), putatively the daughter of a local chief, who was wooed by the brothers known as the Princes Oke and Woke (later respectively to become Great Kings Ninken and Kenzō). Each brother deferred to the other, with the result that no marriage took place—or so the story goes. Nehime grew old and pined away, waiting for them to stop dithering and make up their minds. According to the Harima Fudoki legend, the princes built an impressive burial mound for her, which is today known as Tamaoka Kofun at Tamaoka-chō in the town of Kasai-shi.

From 1988 the town adopted the concept of Nehime as a promotional mascot and turned her into a kyarakutā (‘character’): a kind of manga-isation. Well-known book illustrator of local birth, Nagata Moe, was commissioned to design the ‘character’ for the town’s official logo. In 2001 an historical theme park called Nehime Roman no Sato, ‘Village of the romantic tale of Nehime,’ was opened around Tamaoka Kofun (see Plate 4).

Nehime was incorporated into the official town song, and she was retailed in the form of ‘Nehime Monogatari cakes.’\footnote{Kōbe Shinbun, 5 May 2002.} A group of tradespeople calling