Belief in wooden effigies used for malevolent purposes between the Asuka and Heian period

飛鳥時代から平安時代における呪詛としての木製人形代の信仰

Katalin Helfenbein
Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE)
Japanese Philology (PhD)
Content

- Definition for „figurine”
- The enmi
- The Chinese origin of enmi
- Japanese sources and artefacts
  - Asuka period, Nara period, Heian period
- Conclusion
Figurine

- 人形 ningyō (doll)
- Hitokata, hitogata
- Katashiro 形代 (substitutional object)

Usage:

1. space to occupy by spirits (kami 神)
2. object of purification (nademono 撫物)
3. substitution of a certain person
   a) prayer
   b) curse
Healing and „exorcism”

- Late Asuka period (694–710)
- Nara period (710–794)

Source: Mokki shūsei zuroku – Kinki kodaihen
木器集成図録 近畿古代篇

Source: Mokki shūsei zuroku – Kinki kodaihen
木器集成図録 近畿古代篇
Enmi 厭魅

En 厭
• Carving images
• Drawing likenesses
• Stabbing the heart
• Piercing nails through the eyes
• Tying the hands and feet

Mi 魅
• Summoning demons
• Practicing the „Ways of the left”
• Using spells

...to harm/kill a person
Ancient China

- Six Secret Teachings (*Liù Tāo* 六韜)
- Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Governance (*Zīzhì Tōngjiàn* 資治通鑑)
Asuka period (538-710)

- The Chronicles of Japan (*Nihon Shoki* 日本書紀)
  - Figures of cursed princes

Nara period (710-794)

- Continued Annals of Japan (*Shoku Nihongi* 続日本紀)
  - Emperor Shōmu’s decree
  - Prince Nagaya’s suicide and his „vengeful spirit”
Nara period - Heijō palace

- „Sakabe Shūken” 坂部秋建
- Cursed figure

Source: Mokki shūsei zuroku – Kinki kodaihen 木器集成図録 近畿古代篇
Princess Inoue 井上内親王

- Crime of *fuko* 巫蠱
- Crime of *enmi*
- *Ryōanji goryō daimyōjīn engi*
- 霊安寺御霊大明神縁起 (accursed figure)
- *Kugyō bunin* 公卿補任 (coup d’état?)
- Deaths in prison
- Princess Inoue, Prince Osabe and their „vengeful spirit”
Heian period (794-1185)

- Cursed „couple”
  - Fujii Fukumaro 葛井福万呂
  - Hinokuma Ako.. 檜前阿古□□

- Cursed noble(wo)man


Late Heian period

- *Shihōhai* 四方拝 Emperor’s ritual on New Year’s day

Conclusion

- Imperial court – maintaining the order
- Intentional human deed – punishment
- Unintentional human error – appeasement of the supernatural power
- Tools of secular intents
- Coming to a full circle
Thank you for your kind attention!