

# Observation Regarding the Chronology of the Nihon Shoki

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While reviewing the \*Nihon Shoki\* recently, I discovered what appears to be a structural pattern in its chronological accounts:

1. Until the 14th year of Emperor Yūryaku, each “year” recorded in the \*Nihon Shoki\* seems to represent two actual solar years (a dual-year system).
2. The regnal years of Empress Jingū and Emperor Ōjin appear to have been absorbed into those of Emperor Nintoku.

From the 16th year of Emperor Yūryaku (471 AD), the text appears to transition to a one-to-one calendrical system. Interestingly, this shift aligns with the date engraved on the iron sword excavated from the Inariyama Kofun, which may have been produced to commemorate this change.

Regarding point 2, although the \*Nihon Shoki\* presents Emperor Ōjin as a separate sovereign following Empress Jingū, my analysis suggests that his recorded reign years may in fact correspond to the period during which Empress Jingū served as regent. The

title \*Taichū Tennō\* (“Emperor in the Womb”) associated with Emperor Ōjin may support this interpretation.

\*A corresponding chronological table is attached as a PDF.\*

Moreover, Emperor Nintoku’s reign years seem to match his lifespan, which raises the possibility that he and Emperor Ōjin may have been the same individual.

If we set the first year of Emperor Nintoku’s reign at 391 AD, the subsequent reigns align precisely with the dates of diplomatic missions recorded in Chinese sources concerning the Kings of Wa.

I believe the \*Nihon Shoki\* compilers misunderstood Empress Jingū’s political role, treating her governance as a formal regency (\*shōsei\*), and inadvertently miscalculated the timeline. Additionally, their efforts to synchronize events on the Korean Peninsula with Japanese records may have led to distorted accounts in the latter part of her

narrative.

This model, when applied to earlier periods, aligns the 9th year of Emperor Chūai with 390 AD. Tracing back from there, the reigns of Emperors Kaika and Sujin align with the chronology described in the *\*Records of Wei\** (*\*Weizhi Woren zhuan\**) — bearing in mind that two years were counted for each actual year.

Regarding the “queen” (*\*joō\**) referenced in Chinese records, I believe this may reflect a misunderstanding. Since the Japanese imperial line worships a female sun deity, Chinese observers may have assumed the sovereign was a woman.

The name “Himiko” may have derived either from *\*Ōhihihi\** (a possible reading of Emperor Kaika’s name), or more plausibly from *\*Himiko\** as “Child of the Sun” — a sacred title for a royal descendant of the sun goddess.

The outbreak of disease following Emperor Sujin’s enthronement and the religious

rituals performed by Toyosukiirihime appear to correspond with the \*Records of Wei\*'s account: "After Himiko's death, the country fell into disorder; a female relative named Iyo (or a misspelling of "Toyo") succeeded her."

The \*Records of Wei\* mention the arrival of the envoy at Ito-koku, followed by vague descriptions, suggesting that this may have been the actual location of the envoy's stay.

The latter part of Empress Jingū's chronology contains events that seem to mirror Himiko's accomplishments, perhaps due to the compilers of the \*Nihon Shoki\* retroactively incorporating elements from the \*Records of Wei\*.

Altogether, the chronology aligns without contradiction, suggesting that no additional reign periods are necessary between Empress Jingū, Emperor Ōjin, and Emperor Nintoku.

These discrepancies likely reflect the compilers' limited historical understanding rather

than deliberate fabrication. It appears they recorded what was available at the time, unaware of structural inconsistencies.

Reconstructed Chronology of the Five Kings of Wa Based on Nihon Shoki Analysis

This table shows the reconstructed timeline of the "Five Kings of Wa" based on the hypothesis that the Nihon Shoki employed a double-year calendar until the late 5th century.					
The first regnal year of Emperor Ōjin is considered identical to that of Emperor Nintoku. A "Spring-Autumn double-year system" (counting each spring and autumn as one year) appears to have been applied until the 14th year of Emperor Yūryaku (AD 470).					
天皇名 Emperor Name	在位年数（日本書紀） Years in office (Nihon Shoki)	倍暦だった場合の実年 Adjusted actual years (based on double-year system)	即位の想定年 Estimated Year of Enthronement	崩御の想定年 Estimated Year of Death	倭の五王中国史書の記録年 Record years in Chinese official histories
(応神天皇) (Ōjin)	(41)	(20)	(391)	(411)	
仁徳天皇 Nintoku	87	43	391(413)	434	讃 San (413)421 425 (430)
履中天皇 Rityu	6	3	434	437	
反正天皇 Hanzei	5	2.5	438	440	珍 Chin 438
允恭天皇 Ingyou	42	21	441	462	済 Sei 443 451 (460)
安康天皇 Ankou	3	1.5	462	464	興 Kou 462
雄略天皇 Yuryaku	23	7+9	464	479	武 Bu (477) 478 479?
清寧天皇 Seinei	5		480	484	史書に倭王の名がない年は（）内 Parentheses indicate years where the name of the King of Wa is not recorded in Chinese dynastic histories.
顕宗天皇 Kensou	3		485	487	
仁賢天皇 Ninken	10		488	498	
武烈天皇 Buretu	8		498	506	
繼体天皇 Keitai	25		507	531	

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