

THE ENIGMAS OF STONE SPHERES

by

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Summary

It is probable that in some stage of prehistoric ages, maybe 12,000 BC. to 6,500 BC., a certain kind of belief in big stone spheres existed in the world.

Such a hypothesis occurred to me when I chanced to behold big stone spheres (6 m to 7 m in diameter) and smaller ones (1m to 4m in diameter) as seen in Costa Rica, Easter Island, Mexico, United States (at Joshua Tree National Park) and in Japan: (at Nishijima islet, Hyogo pref. and at Yamazoe village, Nara pref.).

Such worship of stone spheres is somehow similar to the worship of pyramids or square rock-features as seen in Egypt, Meso-Americas, India and in the Middle East. And it is to be supposed that those who contributed much in the diffusion of belief in stone spheres were seafaring people, who sailed across the oceans, of which evidence can be seen in the traditional ritual held by "Ama" or "Uminchu (mariners)" offsprings of the very old sea-tribes in prehistoric Japan. This paper aims at decoding the enigmas.

IT WAS a surprising moment when I was led to a memorial site in front of the community center of Yamazoe village, Nara pref., Japan on Nov.24 evening, 2003.

There just before 12 members of the Kansai chapter of the Japan Petrograph Society was a big stone sphere about 7 meter across (Fig.1).

According to the municipal officer's explanation, "7 years ago, when the village planned to develop a hill to build the community center, the developer found about

23 stone spheres buried in the soil. The sizes were various, from 7 feet to 22 feet in diameter. They were all obstacles in the construction, so municipal officers allowed developers to break all the stone spheres and 22 stone spheres were destroyed, but the last stone, which was 22 feet in diameter was too hard to break with bulldozers. Then we hit upon an idea of destroying it with dynamite, but the cost was too expensive. Therefore, the village government decided to conserve it as a memory stone giving it a name of Choju-rock (long life rock) just in front of the community center building".



Fig. 1: Stone sphere of Yamazoe village, Japan.



Fig. 2: Concentric petroglyphs of Waikoloa King's Trail, Hawaii.

It seems that there were none who thought that those stone spheres were artificial ones made in prehistoric ages. Before destroying all the stone spheres, the municipal government asked some geologists if they were precious ones, but the answer was, "All the stone spheres were made when magma cooled and hardened deep in the ground about 10 km to 20 km depth about one hundred million years ago. Then later some diastrophism pushed the stone spheres up to near the surface, and the developer chanced to excavate them. So, the stone spheres are all natural, not artificial. You may take it easy to break them all as obstacles".

It was a kind of tragedy that such curious stone spheres were all destroyed except one. On Nov.24 evening, during our investigation of the stone sphere, we happened to notice a triple concentric circles engraved on the surface. It was as big as 40cm in diameter. Such a concentric circles can be seen at almost prehistoric sites in Japan as well as at Waikoloa Petroglyph Field in the Big Island of Hawaii. Probably they were made by people who made some kind of rituals upon rocks (Fig.2).

It is to be noted that in the earliest Japan, people believed that spirit or deities descended upon a huge rock or high tree from Heaven. On altar rocks almost at holy hills we can see similar concentric circles or triple concentric circles carved on rock surfaces.

EVIDENTLY FROM the existence of the triple concentric circles on the stone sphere, we can safely say that the stone sphere played a roll of a ritual stone with which prehistoric people used to pray for prosperity of their tribe. By the way, the location of the site was latitude 34 degrees 40 min. N and longitude 136 degrees 3 min. E.

On seeing the stone sphere, I remembered a similar stone sphere at the top of the Nishijima islet in the Sea of Seto-nai-kai. I was

asked by Dr. Tadahiko Ueno who at that time lived on the island as the only one medical doctor at the clinic to examine the engravings on the surface of the stone sphere, which used to be called "Kohnai-no-ishi" (kohnai rock, which means "a rock not to be talked about to outsiders"), although the meaning of the naming used to be unknown (Fig.3).

IT HAPPENED that Mr. Will Schleben, American Geologist, dropped in Japan on his way home in USA from his expedition tour in India, and I invited him to join our expedition to the islet. He joined my fieldwork on May 25, 1992.

We found three engravings on a rock beside the stone sphere; Djasla (Earth God), Emergency Spiral and Ir-ga-ga (We pray for rain). On the south center of the Kohnai-rock (stone sphere), Dr. Tadahiko Ueno had discovered an engraved chrysanthemum with 16 petals about 40cm in diameter.

All of us did not know what the 16 petal chrysanthemum meant at that time, but after 10 years recently I came to read a book, "How the Sun-God Reached Americas" written by Dr. Reinoud M. de Jonge and Mr. Jay Stuart Wakefield.

In the book, the both authors write an admiring discovery that the numbers of chrysanthemum petals show the unit of latitude. According to the authors, ancient Egyptian sailors engraved petals of chrysanthemum on rocks at important islands to record how far they sailed south or west; for example, by sailing south and west one would sail to the Canary Islands at 29 degrees N. ($A+B+C+D+E = 6+6+8+9 = 29$) from Gibraltar.

They had only to count the numbers of chrysanthemum petals and add them to know where they were. If we borrow the two authors' thesis here in Japan, the engraved 16 petals on the Kohnai rock may show numbers



Fig. 3: Kohnai-no-ishi at Nishijima islet, Hyogo pref., Japan.

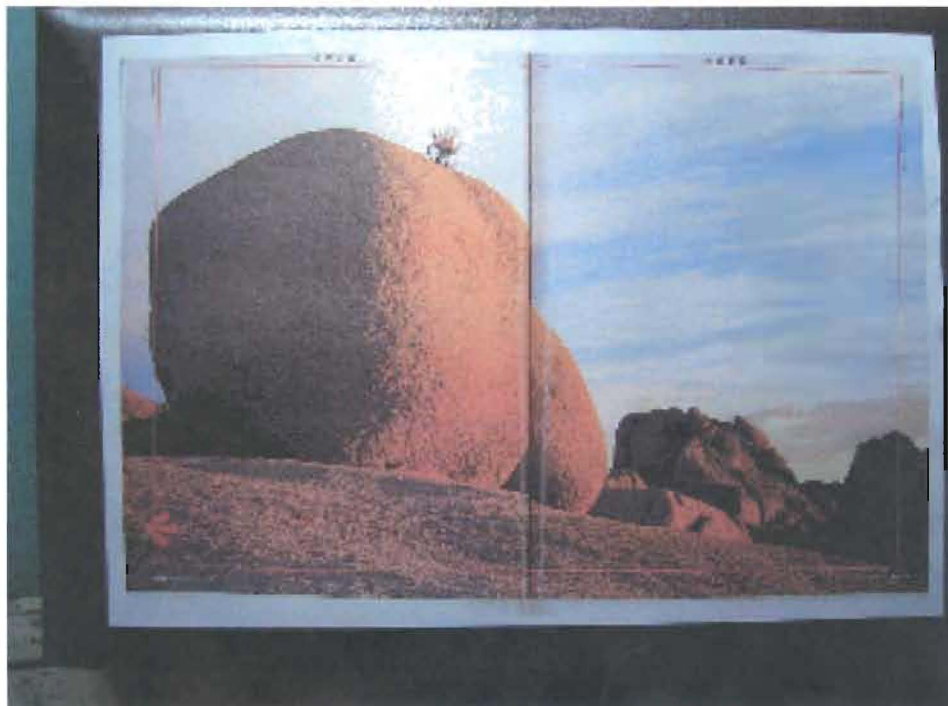


Fig. 4: The stone sphere of Joshua Tree National Park, California, USA.

of latitude to be plugged to some former ones on previous rocks, which means that there are some engraved rocks in a sailing course of the Sea of Seto-nai-kai.

The location of the Nishijima islet is at lat. 34 degrees 40 min. N. and 134 degrees 30 min. E. It sounds interesting that the both stone spheres are located on the same latitude.

It was a very shocking surprise when I chanced to see a photograph on a service magazine of All Nippon Airways during my flight to Osaka on Dec.17. On the page, over two pages, was a nice picture of huge stone spheres in an evening sunlight (Fig.4).

THE ROCK was one of the strange rocks at Joshua Tree National Park, California.

I noticed a cupule seemingly about 30cm across near the center of the right smaller stone sphere, which means that these two stone spheres were used for some ritual in prehistoric ages.

Coming home, I tried to examine the location of the National park, because I hit upon an idea that the all stones at Joshua Tree National park might be located on the same latitude just as the Japanese ones.

The Joshua Tree National park is located at lat. 34 degrees N., long. 116 degrees E. Hereby I hit upon an idea that in some stage of prehistoric ages there might be a possible link of "a so-called belief in ball-stones" along the latitude 34 degrees N., because the three ball-stone sites, Nishijima, Nara and Joshua Tree National park are about on the line of lat. 34 degrees N.

Recently one of my colleagues chanced to see a science magazine, "Mu" published in Japan, and let me know that in Costa Rica, a similar stone sphere exists. But the article of the magazine did not write of the sizes of the stone spheres. Then I sent an e-mail to Mr. Frank Joseph, Chief Editor of the Ancient

American, asking if he knew some information about the Costa Rica stone spheres. He soon gave me information by e-mail that Prof. Ivar Zapp of the University of Costa Rica studied 28 stone spheres for over 24 years, adding that the largest of those basalt and granite stones is over 7 feet in diameter.

Prof. Ivar Zapp is reported to have come to believe that those were artificially fashioned by an earlier civilization.(The picture below shows the stone spheres of Costa Rica) (Fig.5,6).

Frank Joseph wrote me that there were similar specimens at other places; at the Mexico City Museum, at Troy in Turkey and on a cliff which over-looks the sea of the Caribbean island of Haiti.

Most of Japanese archaeologists and historians agree that in the earliest stage of Japanese history, people used to worship huge rocks with common belief that upon such a huge rock deities or spirit descend.

Almost without exceptions on a hill top behind any Japanese shrine, an altar rock is located, artificially or by nature, and the holy rock has been worshipped by pious native people.

The "Kohnai-no-ishi" at the hill top of the Nishijima islet, Hyogo pref. still gathers islanders in the region at every annual ritual, and that "Choju-ishi" (long-life-rock) has been worshipped by the villagers as a sacred rock which gives luck and long-life to those who worship it.

ALTHOUGH IT happened to be preserved officially owing to the lack of the village budget to destroy it with dynamite, nobody can deny the coherent belief in the enigmatical power of the stone sphere.

We have to recollect a traditional ritual of Japanese mariners, which prevails from



Fig. 5: Costa Rica stone spheres.



Fig. 6: Costa Rica stone spheres.

Okinawa to northern part of Japan; the Amas (sea tribe) used to make rituals at sea-shores facing a sea in the rising Sun light, of which scenery is as shown in the picture Nr.7. I took it myself on April 13 early morning, 1997.

A leader chants a solemn incantation to a drum, and all followers chant spells and incantations.

IN OKINAWA, "Noro" a group of female priests, lead the chants with sincere wish to an imaginary motherland far away, as is called "Nirai-kanai" of which location nobody knows but feels the fairyland does exist. Some scholars say that the motherland from where their ancestors came must be "Mu," the legendary continent that sank undersea.

At a hill-top of a small town of Kaimon, Kagoshima pref., in the south-western edge of Japanese islands, there is a strange palace of "the Mu" museum, where a big map of the Pacific ocean can be seen (Fig.8).

It was several years ago that I guided Mr. Frank Joseph, Chief Editor of the Ancient American, during his lecture visit to Japan to the Mu Museum, because he had strong interest in the exhibition there.

Mr. Tsuguyoshi Imajo, Chief curator of the Mu Museum shows, the location of legendary continents which are said to have sunken under-sea about 12,000 years ago. In the center is the Mu and to the right is a moon shaped continent, while just under Japanese islands is a big ball-shaped continent. The map was made by the revelation of Rev. Reikiyo Umemoto.

My keenest concern goes to the ball-shaped continent which the curator points with his hand, because the range includes Okinawa, Taiwan, Philippines, Borneo, Molucca and Caroline islands, where such a stone sphere belief may remain until today descended long, long since prehistoric ages.

A stone sphere, according to my presumption, must be a copied symbol or model of the ball-shaped land of the Mu and the sphere left beside the Mu, from where sea-people fled at the emergency that occurred about 12000 years ago to safer lands where they settled and made new habitats.

To commemorate their starts at each habitation and to transmit the catastrophe of diastrophism of continents' sinking under-sea, the refugees built a memorial stone-sphere with sincere wish of repose of souls at each eminent spot as we see today.

It is to be evaluated highly that besides such a belief in big stone spheres sincere belief in small stone-spheres did exist everywhere in Japan.

For example, at a very old temple, Kaburajji-temple in Sana-city, Hyogo pref., we found a small stone sphere (about 15cm across) had been worshipped in a small stone altar behind the temple, which was built by Rev. Shohtoku-taishi, famous Prince in Nara period, 600's AD.

At the Enoshima shrine, Fujisawa city in Kanagawa pref. near Tokyo, there is a stone-sphere (about 40cm across) piously set in front of a little shrine dedicated to "Ichikishima-hime-no-mikoto", one of the three goddesses, guardians of mariners. The stone-sphere is called, "Chikara-ishi" (powerstone) with which worshippers believed to gain mythical power from Heaven (Fig.9).

GENERALLY speaking, since earlier days throughout Japan, people used to worship a stone-sphere setting it in an altar shrine as "Goshintai" (ritual object) upon which Spirit or Deity was believed to descend and dwell. "The bigger the stone-sphere is, the more powerful is it" was the common belief by pious people. Therefore, most of Japanese shrines keep stone spheres in the sacred altars as highly divine objects. Tiny stone-spheres



Fig. 7: A group of mariners ritual at dawn near the Saeki Bay, Ohita pref., Japan.



Fig. 8: Mr. Imajo shows Mu (red circle in the center) at the Mu Museum, Kagoshima pref., Japan.



Fig. 9: Power stone of the Enoshima Shrine, Fujisawa-city, Japan.



Fig. 10: Navel spheres at Pito Kura, Easter Island.

are often seen politely worshipped at domestic altars in local districts as well as at traditional families in urban regions, which tells how stone-sphere-worship prevailed in the Far East. Of course, similar worship for ball-jade or ball-crystal can be seen in China. Since old ages, Chinese have kept strong belief in ball-jade or ball-crystal (big or small), which, according to their belief, would bring luck and happiness to those who worship ones. Such belief in ball-shaped object must have come from the strong belief in big stone spheres which probably have come down since prehistoric ages.

IT IS A VERY interesting fact that the islanders of Easter Island worship a mysterious site with 5 stone spheres; in the center of a round stone-fence is a bigger stone sphere with smaller stone spheres in every 4 corner. The site, "Te pito kura" must have been a ritual center for the earliest islanders to pray and divine for something, just as Japanese islanders of the Nishijima islet or native people of Yamazoe village used to do (Fig.10).

Some scholars and historians have a kind of speculation that Easter Island (Rapa Nui)

once was at an edge of Mu continent (Lemuria, the lost continent) and that is why Moai and the Navel spheres are to be seen there. By the way, a legend says that the Navel sphere sites shows the center of the world, which alludes the stone spheres have some kind of extraordinary power to affect the movement of the earth: and so the spheres are power stones.

I am of opinion that since some stage of prehistoric ages there was a custom of worshipping stone spheres, which were probably elaborately carved out and polished so nicely as perfect balls by themselves, and the pious belief has long survived among some tribes until now as we see them today at some old ruins or ritual spots.

Of course, this argument has not been approved by world scholars, but I do have trust in my presumption.

Controversial theses and any comparative thesis are helpful for further studies on the enigmas of stone spheres, thank you.

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