

## Why Do the Girls Crawl?: *Kojiki* and Ecology as Clues

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### Lying Postures/Precedents/Abstraction

Leiko Ikemura recognizes her motif of a "lying girl" as the representation of her own self. But if we were to refer to just the motif of a "lying" posture, we would see that it has been well utilized within the history of art.

Let us first examine the posture of "lying on one's back." As Ikemura mentioned in her interview (p.216), the Swiss artist Ferdinand Hodler portrayed his beloved woman on her deathbed, which he depicted over several days. In most of those works, the woman is lying on her back, but a few show her lying on one side and looking at the viewer. Also, in *Valentine Godé Darel in Bed with a Dog and a Flower Bouquet* (1914), a form that might actually be a dog but which can also be seen as a strange creature makes an appearance. That form can be associated with the images found in Ikemura's early-1990s drawings. Hodler is unique in terms of depicting a woman on her "deathbed," but the motif itself of a woman lying on her back can be commonly found throughout the history of art.

However, there are not many works where the figure is lying in a facedown posture. One example of this is found in a 1910 work by Franz Marc, who Ikemura considers to be a most significant artist. That work shows a nude woman with her eyes closed as she lies face down on the ground, which is blooming with flowers. One might also recall Gauguin's *Spirit of the Dead Watching* (1892). The interesting point is that they both convey a sense of exoticism. But let us not dwell any further on this subject.

My primary focus is not on how much Ikemura was aware of works such as those mentioned above. Rather, my aim is to distinguish the characteristics of Ikemura's oeuvre, through comparing her works with the preceding works of other artists.

This brings rise to the relationship between the abstract color field and the body that is uniquely found in her works. Those who are familiar with Gauguin's *The Loss of Virginity* might argue that this feature cannot be credited to Ikemura alone. However, the two artists use different degrees of abstraction. Gauguin's work is a symbolist expression, composed of a fox, which the painter described as the "Indian symbol of perversity," depicted beside a woman figure who holds a single flower in her hand. In contrast, Ikemura's expression is extremely simple. Her "lying girl" series only consists of the images of a clothed girl, a belt of light, and a background. The background, which has been released from its function of representation, is solely focused on embracing depths with a sense of lightness within the space (that lightness is made possible through her use of a rough jute canvas, and also by her applying a black cloth on the back of the canvas, so that the other side/wall cannot be seen through; Lucio Fontana had also done this in his works). Thus, her focus is entirely on the spatiality and the bodily posture of the work.

### Crawling/*Kojiki*/Channels

Making such a verification can gradually clarify the peculiarity found in Ikemura's "lying girl" motif. That

feature seemingly resides in the fact that the "girls" are by no means at ease, as each girl lies on the horizon. One of the girls is floating slightly above the horizon (cat. no. 123), while the other has her right hand slightly stretched out further than her left (cat. nos. 122, 124). This means that the "girls" are in motion or are trying to move. But the reason behind this is unknown—her paintings do not allude to any explanation. In other words, Ikemura's aim is to depict the "lying girls" who are trying to move through their immanent impulses, without providing any external motivating factors.

We often describe "moving" or "squirming" on our stomachs as "crawling," but today, that word may readily remind one of a military "crawling" style. However, in ancient times (at least in Japan), that posture was in fact applied to women to express their physical distresses.

I would like to refer to the Imperial funeral songs sung upon the death of Prince Yamatotakeru, which appear in one of the most famous sections in *Kojiki* (*Records of Ancient Matters*)<sup>1)</sup>:

Thereupon [his] Empresses and likewise [his] august children, who dwelt in Yamato,  
all went down and built an august mausoleum, and, forthwith crawling hither and thither  
in the rice-fields encompassing [the mausoleum].

Sobbed out a Song, saying:

The *Dioscorea quingueloba* crawling hither and thither among  
The rice-stubble, among the rice-stubble in the rice-fields  
encompassing [the mausoleum].

Thereupon [the dead prince], turning into a white dotterel eight fathoms [long], and  
soaring up to Heaven, flew off towards the shore.

After the Empress and the august children crawled around in lamentation, they watched the soul of the dead Prince fly away in the appearance of a white bird. It was with their own eyes that they saw that scene. They then sought after the bird and chanted the next song, saying:

Our loins are impeded in the plain [over-grown with] short bamboo-grass. We are not  
going through the sky, but oh! we are on foot.

As we go through the sea, our loins are impeded,—tottering in the sea like herbs  
growing in a great river-bed.

The dotterel of the beach goes not on the beach, but follows the seaside.

There are striking resemblances between the scene in which these songs were sung and the scenes in Ikemura's works. Those resemblances are found in: "The Empresses and august children...forthwith crawling hither and thither" and in Ikemura's works on cat. nos. 129-134; "a white dotterel...flew off towards the shore" and in her work on cat. no. 145; and "the Empress and the august children...sought after the bird" and in her work on cat. no. 146.

Moreover, the place where the Imperial mausoleum was built is located in the former Suzuka District of Ise Province. This is only thirty kilometers from Tsu, where Ikemura was born and raised. That place, which is less than an hour drive from her hometown, is precisely where Prince Yamatotakeru is said to be buried. It was where the "Empresses and likewise the august children... forthwith crawling hither and thither in the ricefields encompassing [the mausoleum]," a time when the Prince was within the transitional boundary between life and death, or during the time when the funeral rites were held.

Some readers might wonder if Ikemura had known that section in *Kojiki*. I do not have the answer, but neither do I feel the need to ask her. Even if she did not know about that section, it does not mean that the inference I just made is invalid. It only proves that the act of crawling has "universality."

Let us go back to *Kojiki*. A scholar of Japanese literature, Saigo Nobutsuna, has argued that the term *Dioscorea quinqueloba* [wild yam family, vine plant] that appears in the song is a metaphor for the act of "crawling hither and thither around the corpse as they wriggled their bodies," and "that crawling was a part of the invocation of the dead, which was held at a temporary mortuary." At least in *Kojiki*, the women and children's acts of crawling around and wriggling upon their stomachs are coupled with their feelings of lamentation.

The meaning of "crawling" goes further than that. Saigo read deep into the songs, while also surveying other songs/poems. He then discovered that in *Manyōshū* (*Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves*), there is a phrase "*tokorozura* (*Dioscorea quinqueloba*) when I sought after..." He indicated that "crawling" is not only coupled with "lamentation," but is also the act of seeking after the spirit of the dead. This is because *Dioscorea quinqueloba* is used as the "pillow words" "to seek after." He then concluded:

The *Dioscorea quinqueloba* that appear in that passage in *Kojiki* should also be interpreted as encompassing a double meaning of "to crawl about" and "to seek after." Rather, the relationship between the two is simply that the act of "crawling about as they mourn" is a dramatic mimicry of seeking after something. For even if the woman and the children took that posture because they were half out of their minds from sorrow, their behavior should not be seen as a meaningless, instinctive struggle, but as a type of rendering that should be interpreted as a ritualistic formality. The profound sense of shock and grief deriving from the death of the prince could only be relieved through adopting such a formality and being given a channel back to society.<sup>2)</sup>

The physical postures of “lying” and “crawling about” can function as such channels. Reading Ikemura’s poem below allows us to realize that she also has that same understanding:

girls, touch the earth  
lying, you are in transit  
between two worlds (p.81)

An important problem is concealed in this poem. That is, how do the “girls” recognize the “transit between two worlds?,” or how do they perceive those transitions?

### **Sleep/Dreams/Souls**

The answer to how the “girls” perceive those transitions is through the act of “viewing.” I venture to say that the subject to “view” in that situation is not “my” body, but the soul that dwells within “me.”

In an ecstatic state, the “ritualistic bodies” of the Empress and the children “crawled around in lamentation,” while also watching the soul of the dead Prince fly away in the appearance of a white bird. This is the so-called “visual hallucination.” Because they were in that state, the white bird that at first looked large (“eight fathoms [long]”) eventually appeared to be a small bird (“a dotterel”). That vision also allowed them to naturally accept the transformation.

But then, is an act of viewing in the form of a visual hallucination impossible to reach unless we fall into an ecstatic state?

I do not think so. There is at least one other way to fall into that state, which is to dream. In fact, from around 2008, which was after the period in which Ikemura created the “lying girl” series, she began to adopt the motif of “sleep” in her paintings and sculptures (cat. nos. 185-189). She has also stated in one of her poems that, “just closing the eyes/you can meet dead people” (p. 129). This is evidence that she was aware that the act of “lying” and the act of “closing the eyes” both function in the same way.

Ancient Japanese people were strongly aware that a different form of visual perception operates when one closes one’s eyes. This fact can be confirmed from the origin of the Japanese word “yu-me” (which means “dream”), which derived from the word “yi-me” (“to sleep” or “sleeping eyes”). In other words, one “sees” a dream while “sleeping,” that is, when one’s eyes are closed.

Then who is it that sees the dream? The answer is “I,” but at the same time it is not “I.” That is why when we wake up, we are sometimes surprised by the substance of the dream that we saw. It is not the “I” that is “I.” but the Other that dwells within “I.” The Other functions when we close our eyes. But then, we may ask, who in the world is that?

The answer to this question is a “soul.” At least in Japanese culture, “soul” and “heart” are differentiated. Saigo argued the difference between the two is that while a heart is seen as an internal organ, a soul is “something nonphysical that is mythical or else metaphysical.”<sup>3)</sup> This is exactly why the soul separates itself from the body during one’s ecstatic state or in one’s sleep.

That state of separation is well described in the Japanese word *tamageru*, which means “to be startled.” The Chinese characters used for that word are “魂消る” (which literally mean “soul” and “to disappear”), signifying that the soul had disappeared from the body because it was startled. It is widely known that in Okinawa, that state of the soul is described as “*mabui* fell out” (*mabui* is an Okinawan dialect, meaning “soul”). In order to recover the lost soul, Okinawans still perform a ritual known as *mabuigumi* (which means “to recover the lost soul”). From that relationship between the body and the soul, Saigo determined the relationship between “my” body and “my” soul to be as follows:

A soul dwells within the self, and has a unique strength that can support that life, but to the self it is also the Other. “I” do not possess the “soul,” “I” am the depository of the soul.<sup>4)</sup>

“I” seen as the depository of the soul: “I” am merely a body that possesses a heart, through which the soul comes and goes. That soul might not be limited to one. (This is precisely why various rituals used to be held where souls were exchanged at different stages of human growth.) The only word that can describe that physical form through which a soul can come and go is *utsuro* (which means “hollow”). The word *utsuro* also reminds us of the sound heard from *utsuwa*/ a container.

Because Ikemura has such knowledge, she could express the body of a girl in the form of a hollow “container” in her sculptural works (cat. nos. 120, 130-134). The reason why her human figures hold up their hands to the openings, such as the eyes and mouth (cat. nos. 128, 131, 132 and 134), might be from trying to stop their souls from leaving their bodies. Or could those postures be new rituals to revive the souls that are hardly able to feel any solid sense of reality?<sup>5)</sup>

### **The Horizon/Cezanne/Depth**

For a period, Ikemura depicted “a lying human figure” coupled with another motif, which was a belt of light—that is, the horizon.

Generally speaking, a horizon allows us to imagine some place “beyond,” while also manifesting the idea that the earth is round, or at least that it is not flat. In other words, a horizon arouses the viewer’s desire to go toward a land far beyond, while at the same time enlightening them on the fact that geographically, there is no such thing as a definite place beyond the horizon. Therefore, the horizon is a contradictory existence.

People create conflicts as they stand in the threshold between their desires and realities. Economist Gabriel Tarde indicated in his book *Economic Psychology* (1902) that imperialism could not continue to exist, because the earth is a spherical body, meaning that there is no true center on the surface of the earth. This was written in the same year that economist John A. Hobson was about to publish *Imperialism*.<sup>6)</sup>

Half a century after those books were published, Ikemura was born in a town along a seacoast in

the Far East. Ten-odd years after she was born, protests to put an end to the imperial system were predominantly made by students in Japan.

I do not of course know if Ikemura, living as a high-school student right along the Ise Bay, possessed any similar, distinct idea toward imperialism as Tarde. But it is a fact that all people live within the finite space of the earth; hence, people who took any interest in history at the time would likely have known the consequences that resulted from the imperialistic practices of expanding territories and pursuing profits.

In fact, Ikemura, who was born after World War II in a Far East country (and which for a period had even adopted the word “Imperial” as part of the national name), was well aware of the fate of imprudent imperialism. In addition, the period that she lived in Japan (1951-1972) was about the same as when high economic growth took place in the country. But in compensation for that rapid growth, environmental problems surfaced. In a city not far from where she lived, a disease called Yokkaichi Asthma, which was later designated as one of the “Four Big Pollution Diseases of Japan,” spread during the 1960s and 70s due to industrial pollution. Different from the other three diseases (such as Minamata Disease), a number of companies had caused the pollution that led to Yokkaichi Asthma. In addition, it was the local governments that invited those companies to build the plants and that also promoted the construction of a petrochemical complex along the coast in Yokkaichi. Seen in that light, this unfortunate event exposed the most negative side of the rapid economic growth in Japan. Incidentally, Ikemura seems to have not known too much about that environmental problem that was occurring at that time.

In any case, upon surveying these matters, one can surmise that in reality, the horizon existed before her eyes. Moreover, that ocean she used to look out upon was the same one that the ancient Japanese people gazed upon so that they could see the Pure Land (paradise). (The Kumano region in Wakayama Prefecture, located south of Mie Prefecture, is a famous religious site that is considered to be close to the “Pure Land,” which is said to be on the southern sea.)

Therefore, we should think in the following way: Ikemura's aim was to revive the horizon, or she was attempting to recover the mentality that we once had when we saw the horizon. This is the reason why she steered her expressions away from depicting a sense of vastness and toward a sense of depth.

However, that depth found in Ikemura's works is different from Cézanne's expression of depth. It is true that he once wrote, “Nature is more depth than surface,” and that he innovated a new spatial expression in painting. But as it turned out, Cézanne ended up capturing “depth” from the perspective of the distance from where he lived to the surface of the object of Mont Sainte-Victoire. In that sense, that depth had a limit. To Cézanne depth was an objectifiable existence. Thus, after the above quotation he explained a scientific/chemical means of expressing “depth” as follows “Hence the need to introduce into our light vibrations represented by reds and yellows, a sufficient amount of blue to give the impression of air.”

But then, can “depth” as expressed in Cézanne's style really be can “depth?” Ikemura considers depth not as the distance “from here to there,” but that which can only be described as “from there to

somewhere.” In other words, her idea of depth must be based on quality and not quantity. And if I may add, her idea would suggest that depth must also possess a multi-directional or variable quality.

In this essay, I would like to refer to that depth as the “Giacometti style.” Cézanne's depth was created via a unidirectional differentiation of the space from where he was to the Mont Sainte-Victoire. But Giacometti's idea of depth encompasses the distance that goes in multiple directions and off in slight deviations, regardless of whether the distance is short between the person who is viewing and the person who is being viewed. Why? That is because for the viewer, the distance to the nose and the distance to the eyes of the person that she/he is looking at are completely different. Consequently, that expression of depth was derived from this integral formula.

Ikemura, who aimed to revive the horizon, strove to capture a “depth” that possesses the same quality found in the Giacometti style. And as a result, she also obtained another big advantage: she no longer needed to create large-scale works.

## **Non-Architectural Elements/Smallness/Mythology**

In her 1980s' paintings, Ikemura worked with subjects such as conflicts and disputes between man and woman (cat. nos. 15, 19 and 82), metaphysical ideas (cat. no. 12), and religious motifs (cat. no. 13). The style of her works was characterized by the roughness of colors and brushstrokes on a large-scale canvas. In other words, her expression was not outside the framework of Neo-Expressionism that was flourishing at the time.

After that period, she reached a turning point in her artistic career. In the early 90s, she created many studies in the forms of drawings and paintings. After her *Kopffüßler* (cat. nos. 101-108) series, she began to reduce the size of her works. For instance, the size of her paintings became at a maximum two meters on the longer side of each work. Her use of colors began to convey a meditative feeling, and she depicted her paintings as if she were blending paint into the support (cat. nos. 121-127). This allowed her works to create a rapport with the viewer's physical nature. It meant that she began to value the feeling of resonance, rather than creating discords between the materials.

There is a concept in art called a “museum piece.” This term signifies that a work has a suitable quality to be exhibited in an art museum, while also implying that the work has a sufficient enough largeness for the exhibition space. The works Ikemura created in the 80s fulfilled both of those requirements; in fact, her works are in the collection of public art museums both in Europe and Japan. If she reduced the size of her works regardless of those necessary requisites (that is, if she abstracted one of the requirements that made a work become a “museum piece”), then she must have purposefully made that choice.

Incidentally, like Ikemura, artist Louise Bourgeois (1911-2010) created drawings, paintings and sculptures. Ikemura has also spoken of Bourgeois' influence on her in the 1990s.<sup>7)</sup> And as with Ikemura, Bourgeois also professed her sympathy for existentialism, with both having discussed their admiration for Albert Camus' literature.<sup>8)</sup> And coincidentally, the two artists are represented by the same gallery in Cologne.

But upon comparing the two artists, one finds an interesting difference in the size of their works. As is typically found in her *Cell* series, Bourgeois created a group of works that adopted architectural elements, such as a room or house. Cultural critic Mieke Bal characterized the function of Bourgeois' architectural elements as a device to bring together the viewers and the story of her personal memory.<sup>9)</sup> Bourgeois summoned architectural elements so that they could function as “buffer zones” for her works. As a result, her works naturally became increasingly enormous in size, to the extent where she created a work large enough to fill the Turbine Hall of the Tate Modern.

On reflection, the reason why Ikemura does not need to adopt any architectural elements or sense of magnitude is that she does not focus on the story of her personal memories as Bourgeois did. Even if Ikemura's works do initiate from her dreams and personal experiences, they always develop toward universality or formalization. During that process, she abstracts peripheral elements from her work, leaving only the fundamental structure and depths. This allows her to probe into finding typical, common traits that exist in the Other's dreams and her personal experiences. This can certainly be seen as a mythological operation.

As is well known, after World War II, German Neo-Expressionists and Italian Transavantgarde artists aimed to critically recover the subject of the “myth,” which artists in the Axis countries were forced to give up during the war. What helped the rise of those styles were the galleries that made objections toward the anti-market trend that occurred a decade before those styles appeared. Thus, those paintings (and objects) that expressed common-sense stories (myths) were favorably accepted by the art market, which considered them easy to sell (or exchange).

However, the more a person valued a “myth,” the more unbearable that situation likely was. This can be understood from how myths have frequently adopted episodes about the exchange of gifts in order to create an equal relationship; thus, the stories told by myths and the principles behind capitalism can never be consistent.

In addition, a myth, in essence, is not merely a story. In his book *Ancient People and Dreams*, Saigo argues that, “When a ritual stops being a deed and turns in to a mere ceremony, a myth will lose its imageries as it eventually draws closer to ideology.”<sup>10)</sup> The word “imagery” does not simply refer to an image, but alludes to the “nowness” of images that are vividly perceived in one's eyes. Saigo also points out that in order to originate that “nowness,” it is necessary to possess an active body that can perform rituals.

This means that for a myth to be considered “mythical,” it is essential that the physical body can perform deeds, such as the act of crawling. Performing those deeds makes it possible for one to reawaken the same sensations that originally spawned the structure of myths. Saigo elaborated on this as follows:

A dream, seen as a personal myth, is the basic structure of the unique cultural form of myths, and is what determines a myth as being spiritual. At the least, without an active mental attitude that can regard dreams as deriving from inspirations, a mythical



form is difficult to materialize.<sup>11)</sup>

Needless to say, it would be difficult to ask a viewer to crawl. Thus, what becomes important is the act of “empathizing” with a work, which is one of the functions that visual arts have nurtured over the long passage of time. If a work can inspire the viewer to empathize, then it is possible to reawaken his/her bodily senses or dreamy sensations. Since an active body is essential for the viewer to empathize with a work, the work must also be amiable toward the viewer. For this reason, a work should not be too large, and a “cell” should not come in the way of the viewer. The “transition” that Ikemura made in the mid-90s, which is symbolically found in the reduction in the size of her works, should be thought as deriving from similar ideas as this. But then, one may ask, what is the reason behind Ikemura’s persistent attempts at reviving a “myth?”

### **Ecology/Diversions/Involution**

To start the section with a conclusion, the answer to the question posed above is that Ikemura feels the necessity to revive a myth because she has a correct recognition of the concept of ecology. She states her policy as an artist as follows:

It is necessary for artists to understand the events that have occurred in our times from a historical perspective, and then contemplate how we should relate to those facts. It is also indispensable that artists possess a political or ecological consciousness.  
(p. 218)

This statement well describes Ikemura’s understanding that “to be political” and “to be ecological” are two sides of the same coin. When she moved to Germany in the 1980s, Green Party activities thrived in that country. Considering that background, one might not find it surprising for her to have that recognition, but her ideas are not that simple. What she is saying is that when one can reconsider present human nature through a holistic vision (which encompasses not only the environment but also history), and can then put one’s ideas into action, then that person can be seen as having both a political and ecological consciousness.

That notion is quite similar to Félix Guattari’s recognition that “Ecology in my sense questions the whole of subjectivity and capitalistic power of formations...”<sup>12)</sup> Based on this idea, he states that there are three interacting ecologies: “environmental,” “social [social relations],” and “mental [human subjectivity].” He suggests that human mentality should be examined within the interrelationship between the environmental and social relations. Today, Guattari and other ecologists take a perspective that has derived through their reflecting upon the reasons why they had not put such an obvious notion into practice.

Does that perspective taken by ecologists sound unrealizable? Would most readers feel that this perspective is outside the framework for artists to even think about?

My answer to the first question is that no matter how inconceivable that might sound, it has become evident that if we do not take immediate steps forward, the environment, society, and each individual person's spirit will all be destroyed. The sight of the hydrogen explosions at the Fukushima nuclear power plant that we recently saw symbolically revealed the price we are paying for neglecting to resolve all the contradictory problems that we have caused in the past. My reply to the second question is that artists like Ikemura can at least put Guattari-inspired ecological ideas into practice.

After Ikemura left Japan, she moved to Spain, to Switzerland, and then to Germany. At each new country, she learned a new language while also abandoning the languages she had become familiar with. Thus, the concept of “nation state” must sound very hypocritical to Ikemura. But that is why she was able to naturally adopt an ecological and radical means of expression, through which she captured the relationship between society and human mentality, based on the environment. A pertinent example of this can be found in her views regarding an island and the self (pp. 220-221).

Is Ikemura inclined toward Jürgen Habermas' idea of Cosmopolitanism? She very well may be, but would unlikely feel the need to establish a law like Habermas. This is because she is an artist. Guattari indicated that artists' methodologies should be referred to upon putting ecological ideas into practice, and that those methods are completely the opposite of the conditions of what is considered “law.” On this subject, Guattari stated the following:

Unlike Hegelian and Marxist dialectics, eco-logic no longer imposes a “resolution” of opposites... This new ecosophical logic—and I want to emphasize this point—resembles the manner in which an artist may be led to alter his work after the intrusion of some accidental detail, an event-incident that suddenly makes his initial project bifurcate, making it drift [*dériver*] far from its previous path, however certain it had appeared to be. There is a proverb “the exception proves the rule,” but the exception can just as easily deflect the rule, or even recreate it. <sup>13)</sup>

As a curator who planned and organized this exhibition, I have experienced the diversions” that Leiko Ikemura has continued to make. But her stance to wholly accept “transfiguration” is what made Ikemura the person, the artist and the ecologist that she is today.

The “transfiguration” Ikemura underwent is not only found in her theory of creation, but is also manifested in her works. For instance, let us refer to her theme of “evolution” (pp. 45-67). She asserts that this theme of “evolution doesn't always make linear progress” (p. 223). In addition, her sculptural human figures all possess forms that one would want to call “pre-humans” rather than “post-humans.” But such a single-track, linear idea of “post” and “pre” deserves to be criticized, for Ikemura is solely focused on reconsidering “evolution” from a broad perspective based both on time and space. That “evolution” is in fact closer to the state of “involution” that Deleuze and Guattari referred to in their book *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, as follows:

To regress is to move in the direction of something less differentiated. But to involve is to form a block that runs its own line “between” the terms in play and beneath assignable relations.<sup>14)</sup>

Ikemura “involves” human beings. Through that process, she gently retrieves forms that emerge from within, and presents them as “visible objects” for us to view. Those forms include girls seen as *yurei* (a Japanese ghost) (cat. no. 198), a person with a cabbage head (cat. no. 111), and a building and rabbit that have been merged (cat. nos. 97-99). We must not look at those objects as merely atypical appearances. If we were to take that kind of attitude, then it could have only derived from our arrogance that considers our existence as the ultimate and superior form of evolution. It is important that we view those atypical figures as our own possible appearances; or else, to consider those figures not as mere images, but figures through which we can transform the state of our own bodies (or emotions), so that we can be seen as lively beings.

At this point in the essay, readers hopefully understand the reason why Ikemura has been trying to revive myths. Today, myths do not just tell the stories about nation-building, as they were used in the past. Neither do myths exist as recently recognized, information-processing styles, which can transmit intelligibility, meanings, and realities via the replacing or compressing functions used in computing.<sup>15)</sup> Rather, myths, based on the fact that mythical stories indeed exist, prove that human senses have (or at least used to have) the ability to accept visual hallucinations as realities. In addition, in order to visually hallucinate, it is necessary for us to possess a ritualistic body, as well as transforming emotions that are derived from that body. If I may go further, myths can also enlighten us on the necessity to once again restore our own bodies (views), so that we can understand the diversity of the world that has myriads of subtle transformations. Because Ikemura has discovered the present-tense function of myths, she can abstract the “crawling” body that derived from myths. This allowed her to undergo the process of “involving” that body in the form of a girl.

Needless to say, there is no end to “involution.” Thus, the girls will continue to “crawl” before us, as their bodies undergo constant formation (“becoming”) and transfiguration.

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[Translated by Nanpei Taeko]

#### Notes

1) *Kojiki (Records of Ancient Matters)*, translated into English by Basil Hall Chamberlin, 1920, Asiatic Society of Japan.

2) Saigo Nobutsuna, *Kodaijin to Yume (Ancient People and Dreams)*, Heibonsha Limited Publishers, 1993, p. 166.

- 3) *Ibid.*, p. 51
- 4) *Ibid.*, p. 52
- 5) The reason behind why Ikemura depicts "a girl" is not referred to in this essay, but the potential possessed by girls is stated in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, translated by Brian Massumi, London: University of Minnesota Press, 1987). In particular, the statement made in Chapter 10, "Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible," is valuable in understanding Ikemura's works.
- 6) Nakakura Tomonori, *Gabriel Tarde: Toward the Regime of Gift and Association*, Rakuhoku Publications, 2011, pp. 392-397.
- 7) In the interview I held with Ikemura on November 8, 2011, which is not compiled in this catalogue.
- 8) Robert Storr, Paulo Herkenhoff, and Allan Schwartzman, *Louise Bourgeois*, London: Phaidon Press Inc., 2003, p. 14.
- 9) Mieke Bal, *Louise Bourgeois' Spider: The Architecture of Art-Writing*, Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 2001, pp. 2-3.
- 10) Saigo, *op. cit.*, p. 172.
- 11) Saigo, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-28.
- 12) Félix Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, translated into English by Ian Pindar and Paul Sutton, London and New York: Continuum, 2008, p. 46.
- 13) *Ibid.*, p. 45.
- 14) Deleuze and Guattari, *op. cit.*, p. 276.
- 15) Fukushima Ryota, *Shinwa ga Kangaeru: Network Shakai no Bungakuron (Mythological Thinking: Literary Theory for a Network Society)*, Seidosha, 2011.

First appeared in *Leiko Ikemura: transfiguration* (p174-179),  
The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, Mie Prefectural Art Museum Assistance Foundation, 2011