

## The performative power of the word in Kojiki's mythological world

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The narrative framework of the most ancient text of Japan testifies to a strong, if rather ill-defined belief, in the hidden power of the word. Taking an analytical look at the different episodes of the Kojiki, it appears that this old belief was posited partly on a causal relationship between the word itself and its conveyed meaning manifesting in reality. With such a definition, one can hardly resist relating this belief to the famous compound *kotodama*, which can be roughly translated as the “spirit of the words”. Nevertheless, the *kotodama* principles are not applicable when it comes to the study of the Kojiki, firstly because not even a single reference to such word is included in the whole text, and secondly, because *kotodama* as it is known today suffers from an undue crystallization of unrelated notions of uniqueness, both religious and political. Therefore, in clarifying the original meaning and principles of this magical power attributed to the word in the Kojiki, we will not use the *kotodama* conceptual tool, but some of what one can call its “modalities”, namely *kotoage* (lifting the words), *kotomuke* (words of pacification) and *kotoyosashi* (words of command). Moreover, given that this magical power is not always linked to the semantic field of the word, we will also take a short look to the expressions situated on the threshold of the articulated language, so numerous in the Kojiki, and so manifestly bursting with performative power. Almost absent from the Nihonshoki, those expressions are undoubtedly a specific feature of the Kojiki. This double-axed methodology will hopefully shed some light on the creative role played by the word in old Japanese mythology as it is described in the Kojiki.