CHAPTER I

THE FIVE SEPARATE HEAVENLY DEITIES COME INTO EXISTENCE.

1 At the time of the beginning of heaven and earth, there came into existence in TAKAMA-NÖ-PARA a deity named AMÉ-NÖ-MI-NAKA-NUSI-NÖ-KAMI; next, TAKA-MI-MUSUBI-NÖ-KAMI; next, KAMI-MUSUBI-NÖ-KAMI. These three deities all came into existence as single deities, and their forms were not visible.2

2 Next, when the land was young, resembling floating oil and drift-like a jellyfish, there sprouted forth something like reed-shoots.4 From these came into existence the deity UMAŠI-ASI-KABI-PIKODI-NÖ-KAMI; next, AMÉ-NÖ-TÖKO-TATTI-NÖ-KAMI.6 These two deities also came into existence as single deities, and their forms were not visible.3

3 The five deities in the above section are the Separate Heavenly Deities.’

1 See ADDITIONAL NOTE 1 for a discussion of the cosmogony of this chapter. For discussions of proper names see GLOSSARY.

2 Pitoriz-gami, unlike the pairs of male and female deities who came into existence later, these deities came into being one by one and had no counterparts. However, it later becomes apparent that both Kami-musubi-no-kami and Taka-mi-musubi-nij-kami had children (cf. 30:4; 38:5).

3 Or ‘they hid their bodies.’

4 Asi-kabi, the word forms part of the name of the next deity.

5 Or ‘by, by means of.’

6 The first two sentences of this verse are written phonetically, for the most part, and must have originated in oral tradition. Kanda Hidco surmises that the section from 1:2 through 2:2 was originally a poem depicting the birth of all things from reed-shoots springing up in the muddy water of some primeval period. Kojiki no kozō (Meiji Shoin, 1959), pp. 246–47.

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CHAPTER 3

THE SEVEN GENERATIONS OF THE AGE OF THE GODS COME INTO EXISTENCE.

1 Next there came into existence the deity KUNI-NÖ-TÖKÖ-TATI-NÖ-KAMI; next, TÖYÖ-KUMO-NO-NÖ-KAMI. These two deities also came into existence as single deities, and their forms were not visible.  

2 Next there came into existence the deity named U-PIDI-NI-NÖ-KAMI; next, his spouse SU-PIDI-NI-NÖ-KAMI. Next, TUNO-GUPI-NÖ-KAMI; next, his spouse OPO-TO-NÖ-DI-NÖ-KAMI; next, his spouse OPO-TO-NÖ-BE-NÖ-KAMI. Next, Omô-daru-nô-kami; next, his spouse Ayà-kasiko-ne-nô-kami. Next, IZANAGI-NÖ-KAMI; next, his spouse IZANAMI-NÖ-KAMI.

The deities in the above section, from KUNI-NÖ-TÖKÖ-TATI-NÖ-KAMI through IZANAMI-NÖ-KAMI, are called collectively the Seven Generations of the Age of the Gods.*

4 The first two single deities are each called one generation. The next pairs of ten deities are arranged in couples, each couple being called one generation.

1 Pitôri-gamî.  
2 Or 'they hid their bodies.'  
3 Kami-yô-nana-yô.  
4 Yô. The two single deities in verse 1 are each counted as one yô; the ten deities which follow are in couples, each couple being reckoned as one yô. Thus there are altogether seven yô.  
5 Verse 4 is a redactional gloss, written in small characters in the original, no doubt by Yasumari. For the cosmogony of this chapter, see ADDITIONAL NOTE 2.

1 Evidently the Separate Heavenly Deities of Chapter 1.  
2 Some manuscripts have 'giving a command.' A heavenly mandate is not an essential element in the story of Izanagi and Izanami (its omission in most of the versions in the Nihonshoki reveals that it was something of an afterthought). Matsumura Takes notes that it was included in the Kojiki version to conform with a traditional idea that any deities descending from the heavens to perform any activities should be acting under a mandate from the heavenly deities. Nihon shinwa no kenkyû, II, 71-83.  
3 The land mentioned above (12:3) as 'drifting like a jellyfish.' A similar command is given later to Opo-kuni-nusi (cf. 30:5).

4 Amè nô nu-bokô. The words amè nô ('heavenly') are a stylized epithet praising an object by connecting it with the heavenly abode of the gods. Nu is an element which seems to mean 'jewel'; thus, nu-bokô would mean a spear made of, or decorated with, precious stones.

5 Amè nôbi-pasi, cf. 13:1, 13:13. A bridge over which divine beings traveled between heaven and earth. Commentators have interpreted it as a boat or raft, a high ladder, a bridge of rainbows, or the Milky Way.

6 Kôwôrô kôwôrô nî. This onomatopoeia, which appears again in the song intâ:57-58, has also the sense of 'curdling' or 'congealing.' This section of the narrative is perhaps reminiscent of the ancient Inland Sea custom of manufacturing salt by boiling down sea water.

7 Onôgôrô island, which may literally mean 'self-curdling' island (see GLOSSARY).
CHAPTER 4

IZANAGI AND IZANAMI MARRY AND BEAR THEIR FIRST OFFSPRING.

1 Descending from the heavens to this island, they erected a heavenly pillar and a spacious palace.

2 At this time [Izanagi-nō-mikoto] asked his spouse IZANAMI-NŌ-MIKOTO, saying:

“How is your body formed?”

3 She replied, saying:

“My body, formed though it be formed, has one place which is formed insufficiently.”

4 Then IZANAGI-NŌ-MIKÔTO said:

“My body, formed though it be formed, has one place which is formed to excess. Therefore, I would like to take that place in my body which is formed to excess and insert it into that place in your body which is formed insufficiently, and [thus] give birth to the land. How would this be?”

5 IZANAMI-NŌ-MIKÔTO replied, saying:

“That will be good.”

6 Then IZANAGI-NŌ-MIKÔTO said:

“Then let us, you and me, walk in a circle around this heavenly pillar and meet and have conjugal intercourse.”

7 After thus agreeing, [Izanagi-nō-mikoto] then said:

“You walk around from the right, and I will walk around from the left and meet you.”

8 After having agreed to this, they circled around; then IZANAMI-NŌ-MIKÔTO said first:

“Ana-ni-yasi, how good a lad!”

9 Afterwards, IZANAGI-NŌ-MIKÔTO said:

“Ana-ni-yasi, how good a maiden!”

10 After each had finished speaking, [Izanagi-nō-mikoto] said to his spouse:

“It is not proper that the woman speak first.”

11 Nevertheless, they commenced procreation and gave birth to a leech-child. They placed this child into a boat made of reeds and floated it away.

12 Next, they gave birth to the island of Apa. This also is not reckoned as one of their children.

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* An exclamation of wonder and delight.

* Or ‘it bodes no good.’

* Piri-go; for a discussion of the leech-child, see Additional Note 4. The leech-child and the island of Apa were considered failures and were not counted among Izanami and Izanagi's rightful progeny (cf. 7:25).

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* Yu-piri-nii. The wedding palace of Izanagi and Izanami. According to Kurano, piro is a unit of length equivalent to the distance from fingertip to fingertip when a person has both arms extended.
CHAPTER 5
IZANAGI AND IZANAMI, LEARNING THE CODES OF MARRIAGE RITUAL.

1 Then the two deities consulted together and said:
"The child which we have just borne is not good. It is best to report [this matter] before the heavenly deities."

2 Then they ascended together and sought the will of the heavenly deities. The heavenly deities thereupon performed a grand divination¹ and said:
"Because the woman spoke first, [the child] was not good.² Descend once more and say it again."

3 Then they descended again and walked once more in a circle around the heavenly pillar as [they had done] before.

4 Then Izanagi-nö-mikoto said first:
"Ana-ni-yasi, how good a maiden!"³

5 Afterwards, his spouse Izanami-nö-mikoto said:
"Ana-ni-yasi, how good a lad!"⁴

¹Puto-moni; mentioned also in 73:10. According to the description in 17:10, puto-moni was an ancient method of divination, in which the shoulder blade of a deer was heated (using bark from the popaka tree) and the cracks observed. This system was evidently practiced in Japan from antiquity and was later replaced by the tortoise-shell system of divination imported from China. Archeological evidence reveals that scapulamancy was performed at least as early as the Yayoi period: remains of such bones have been discovered in late Yayoi period strata in Miura, Kanagawa-ken, as well as in the Yayoi-period Chigusa remains on Sado island, Niigata-ken. The evidence shows that the early Japanese among the early Japanese (Tsunoda Ryusaku et al., comps. Sources of Japanese Tradition [New York: Columbia University Press, 1958], p. 7). For information about the archetypal forms see Saitö Tadashi, Nihon koten no kenkyû, I: Genshi (Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1958), pp. 241–43.

²This statement was anticipated by Izanagi in 4:10. The condemnation of the woman for speaking before the man was probably influenced by Chinese ideas; it is doubtful that the ancient Japanese had any such clear-cut ideas of male supremacy. Tsuda. Nihon koten no kenkyû, I, 353.

³All of the islands which Izanagi and Izanami bore have alternative personal names, and some of them clearly have gender. The island of Apadi plays a central role in all of the Kojiki and Nihon shoki accounts of island-bearing; in one version in the Nihon shoki, Izanagi is said to dwell enshrined upon this island (see note 13:9).

⁴As Tsuda says, the accounts of island-bearing are not a cosmogony, but merely accounts of the origin of Japan in a political sense. It is strange that there is no account of the creation of man or animals in these origin myths. To Tsuda, Izanagi and Izanami are national deities in a narrow sense, who give birth first to the islands of Japan, then to the deities who dwell in them, and finally to Ama-tcrasu-opo-mi-kami, the emperor-symbol; at no time do they leave Japan. Nihon koten no kenkyû, I, 343, 350, 358.

Kanda (pp. 251–54) argues that the Izanagi-Izanami myth was originally a myth-complex from the Inland Sea area and could be dated from the end of the Jomon Period, or approximately the third century B.C. At any rate, it is clear that the Kojiki account reflects the geographical knowledge of a fairly late period, when sea communications along the Inland Sea to Kyushu were well developed and when the nation was unified under the Yamato court.

⁵Literally, "double-named island." Both Iyö (Shikoku) and Tukusi (Kyushu) have four divisions.

CHAPTER 6
IZANAGI AND IZANAMI GIVE BIRTH TO NUMEROUS ISLANDS.

1 After they had finished saying this, they were united and bore as a child [the island] Apadi-nö-po-no-sa-wake-nö-sima.¹

2 Next they bore the double island² of Iyö. This island has one body and four countenances, each with a separate name:

3 Thus, the land of Iyö is named Eri; the land of Sanuki is named Ipi-yöri-piko; the land of Apa is named Opo-gё-tu-pime; and the land of Tosa is named Take-yöri-wake.

4 Next they bore the triple island of Oki, also named Amè-nö-osì-koro-wake.

5 Next they bore the island of Tukusi. This island also has one body and four countenances, each with a separate name:

6 Thus, the land of Tukusi is named Sirà-pì-wake; [the land of] Töyö-kuni is named Töyö-pì-wake; [the land of] Pi is named

¹All of the islands which Izanagi and Izanami bore have alternative personal names, and some of them clearly have gender. The island of Apadi plays a central role in all of the Kojiki and Nihon shoki accounts of island-bearing; in one version in the Nihon shoki, Izanagi is said to dwell enshrined upon this island (see note 13:9).

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⁵Literally, "double-named island." Both Iyö (Shikoku) and Tukusi (Kyushu) have four divisions.
CHAPTER 7

IZANAGI AND IZANAMI GIVE BIRTH TO NUMEROUS DEITIES. IZANAMI DIES AFTER BEARING THE FIRE-DEITY.

1. After they had finished bearing the land, they went on to bear deities.

2. The name of the deity they bore was Opo-kōtō-osi-wō-nō-kami; next they bore Ipa-tuti-biko-nō-kami; next they bore Opo-su-pime-nō-kami; next they bore Ipa-tuti-pike-nō-kami; next they bore Amé-nō-piki-wō-nō-kami; next they bore Opo-yama-biko-nō-kami; next they bore Kaza-mōtu-wake-nō-osi-wō-nō-kami; next they bore the sea-deity, whose name is Opo-wata-tu-mi-nō-kami; next they bore the deity of the sea-straits, whose name is Paya-aki-tu-piko-nō-kami; next, his spouse Paya-aki-tu-pime-nō-kami.

3. From Opo-kōtō-osi-wō-nō-kami through Paya-aki-tu-pime-nō-kami are altogether ten deities.

4. These two deities Paya-aki-tu-piko and Paya-aki-tu-pime rule, respectively, the rivers and the seas.

5. They bore the deity Awá-nagi-nō-kami; next, Awá-nami.

- At this point Izanami gives birth to the deities who are to inhabit the islands. The deities represent various natural phenomena and physical features of the land.

Tsuda, reasoning from the fact that many of the deities in this section do not seem to have any gender and that their functions and roles are not mentioned, concludes that they were gods having names but no distinctive characteristics; even their names were given to them in the absence of any real basis in folk belief. Nihon koten no kenkyū, I, 365.

Matsumura (II, 345–50) draws attention to the similarities between the deities mentioned here and those which are listed in Chapter 2. Both accounts supply lists of names of deities without giving any information about their characters or functions.

Tsugita (pp. 41–42) suggests that the six deities from Ipa-tuti-biko-nō-kami through Kaza-mōtu-wake-nō-osi-wō-nō-kami were deities of buildings.

Other sea deities, whose names contain the element wata-tu-mi (‘sea spirit’), are born of Izanagi’s purification (cf. Chapter 11).


Because [Izanami-nō-mikōtō] bore this child, her genitals were burned, and she lay down sick.  

In her vomit there came into existence the deity Kana-yama-biko-nō-kami; next, Kana-yama-hime-nō-kami. 

Next, in her face there came into existence the deity Paniyasu-biko-nō-kami; next, Paniyasu-bime-nō-kami. 

Next, in her urinating there came into existence the deity Mitupa-nō-me-nō-kami; next, Waku-musubi-nō-kami. The child of this deity is Tōyō-uke-bime-nō-kami. 

Thus at last, Izanami-nō-kami, because she had borne the fire-deity, divinely passed away. 

From Amē-nō-tūri-pun through Tōyō-uke-bime-nō-kami are altogether eight deities. 

All of the islands born by the two deities Izanagi and Izanami were fourteen; the deities born by them were thirty-five. 

These were born before Izanami-nō-kami divinely passed away. However, the island Onōgōri was not born. Also the leech-child and the island of APA are not reckoned as their children.”

12 See ADDITIONAL NOTE 5. 

13 Most manuscripts have ‘were born’; the verse has been emended to agree with verse 20ff. 

14 The deities who came into existence in Izanami’s face are deities of clay or earth, and Mitupa-nō-me-nō-kami, who came into existence in her urine, was a deity connected with water or water-greens. Matsumura (II. 370-72) says that he knows of no other people who have deities born from excrement, and allude to their importance as fertilizer in Yayoi period agriculture. 

15 From Izanami’s death, Motoori concludes that even the gods are subject to death and must then descend to the detestable land of Yomi. In his Tama-kushig, he goes on to write: “Everything is an exotic, alien falsehood and deception which estcems the ideas of not rejoicing at what should rejoice, not sorrowing at what should sorrow, not being surprised at what should surprise us, and in general not feeling emotion whenever should. This is against human nature and a most bothersome matter. Death, in particular, is one thing about which we cannot help but feel sorrow. Even the great god Izanagi, who formed the land and all things in it and who initiated the Way of this world-did he not, at the death of the goddess, weep and sorrow with all his heart like a little child, and out of his yearning follow after her to the land of Yomi? This is the true, the real human nature, and the people of the world must of necessity be this way.” Motoori Norinaga zenshi [Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1926-28], VI, 11.

16 Cf. 3:3. 

17 Cf. 4:11.
At this time Izanagi-no-mikotō said:

"Alas, I have given my beloved spouse in exchange for a mere child!"

Then he crawled around her head and around her feet, weeping.

At this time in his tears there came into existence the deity who dwells at the foot of the trees in the foothills of Mount Kagu, named Naki-sapa-me-no-kami.

Then he buried the departed Izanami-no-kami on Mount Piba, the border between the land of Idumo and the land of Papaki.

Weeping-Marsh-Woman Deity (see Glossary). This account undoubtedly reflects the practice of using female lamenters or professional mourners (naki-me, 'weeping woman,' cf. 33:7, 34:3) at funerals.

One important variant in the Nihon shoki relates that Izanami was buried in the village of Arima in Kumano in the land of Ki (Minami-muro-gun, Wakayama-ken). "The local people pay worship to the spirit of this deity with flowers during flower-time and also with singing and dancing, using drums, flutes, and banners." [Kôei] Nihon shoki, ed. Takeda Yûkiichi (Asahi Shimbunsha. 1953-57), hereafter cited Asahi ed., I, 72. Both are probably late glosses and do not form an essential part of the original Izanagi-Izanami myth.

The god whose birth, in 7:17, was the cause of Izanami's sickness and death.

Or 'from, by means of' the sword. Tsugita (p. 54) regards this section as a reference to the tempering of a sword.

“The three gods Ipasaku, Ne-saku, and Ipatsu-tutono-wo represent rock; the two gods Mika-paya-pi and Pi-paya-pi represent fire; and the two gods Kura-okami and Kura-mitu-pa represent water. Thus, the necessary steps in making a sword—firing it, shaping it on a rock, and soaking it in water—are the meaning behind this myth. The blood flowing over the surrounding rocks is reminiscent of the sparks which fly out when a sword is being tempered. Also, at the appearance of the dragon-god (Kura-okami-nb-kami) one imagines the smith seeking out sacred waters in the mountain valleys and soaking the blade in them.”

Nakajima Etsuji says with regard to this section:

The deities in the above section, altogether eight in number from Ipasaku-no-kami through Kuramitu-pa-no-kami, are deities born by the sword.
CHAPTER 9

IZANAGI VISITS IZANAMI IN THE LAND OF YŌMI. BREAKING THE TABOO, HE LOOKS UPON HER CORPSE.

1 At this time, [Izanagi-nō-mikōtō], wishing to meet again his spouse Izanagi-nō-mikōtō, went after her to the land of Yōmi.\(^1\)

2 When she came forth out of the door of the hall to greet him, Izanagi-nō-mikōtō said:

   “Oh, my beloved spouse, the lands which you and I were making have not yet been completed; you must come back!"\(^3\)

3 Then Izanagi-nō-mikōtō replied, saying:

   “How I regret that you did not come sooner. I have eaten at the hearth of Yōmi. But, oh my beloved husband, how awesome
   
   1 See Additional note 6 for a discussion of the evidence in this chapter regarding the ancient Japanese ideas of death and the afterlife.
   
   It has frequently been suggested that the accounts of the visit to Yōmi were influenced by the ancient practice of burial in subterranean stone chambers with stone passageways. (For a description of these tombs, similar to the tumuli of ancient Europe, see Kidder's Japan before Buddhism, pp. 145-92.) That some such recollection was at work can be argued from the fact that Izanagi's corpse was found in an inner chamber (a 'hall,' cf. 9:4-5), and that the entrance to Yōmi was a 'pass' closed by a large boulder (10:11). The archeologist Gotō Shuichi argues that the Kojiki account of the visit to Yōmi clearly reflected the burial customs of the late Tomb Period—i.e., the sixth, seventh, and first half of the eighth centuries. Nihon kōdaishi no kokogakuteki kentei (Yamaoka Shoten, 1947), pp. 11-21. (See also Tsugita, pp. 57, 65-66, for an eloquent statement of the tumulus theory; and Matsumura. II. 391-407, for a dispassionate evaluation of this theory.)

   Matsumura (ibid.) concludes that it is patent that a separate land of the dead was intended here; arguing that the ancient Japanese fundamentally regarded the abode of the dead as being not a subterranean land but a place deep inside caves or far in the mountains, he believes that the suggestions derived from tomb construction were merely secondary elaborations.

   * One ideograph (菅) in this passage is corrupt and cannot be given a suitable translation.

   * It is interesting that the appeal to return rests on the necessity of resuming the work of land-creating.

   * See Additional note 7 for a discussion of this passage.

6 The deity who came into existence in the head of the slain KAGU-TUTI-NŌ-KAMI was named MA-SARA-YAMA-TU-MI-NŌ-KAMI.\(^2\)

7 Next, the deity who came into existence in his chest was named ODŌ-YAMA-TU-MI-NŌ-KAMI.

8 Next, the deity who came into existence in his belly was named OKU-YAMA-TU-MI-NŌ-KAMI.

9 Next, the deity who came into existence in his genitals was named KURA-YAMA-TU-MI-NŌ-KAMI.

10 Next, the deity who came into existence in his left hand was named SIGI-YAMA-TU-MI-NŌ-KAMI.

11 Next, the deity who came into existence in his right hand was named PA-YAMA-TU-MI-NŌ-KAMI.

12 Next, the deity who came into existence in his left foot was named PARA-YAMA-TU-MI-NŌ-KAMI.

13 Next, the deity who came into existence in his right foot was named TO-YAMA-TU-MI-NŌ-KAMI.

14 From MA-SARA-YAMA-TU-MI-NŌ-KAMI through TO-YAMA-TU-MI-NŌ-KAMI are altogether eight deities.

15 The name of the sword with which [Izanagi-nō-mikōtō] killed [the fire-deity] was AME-NŌ-WO-PA-BARI; another name is ITU-NŌ-WO-PA-BARI.

Note: The type of metamorphosis seen in verses 6-13 has already been seen in the account of the dying Izanami (7:19-21) and appears again in 9:7-14 and in 18:4.

4 Cf. 35:3f.

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it is that you have entered here! Therefore I will go and discuss for a while with the gods of Yōmi my desire to return. Pray do not look upon me!  

4 Thus saying, she went back into the hall, but her absence was so long that [Izanagi-nō-mikōtō] could no longer wait.

5 Thereupon he broke off one of the large end-teeth of the comb he was wearing in his left hair-bunch,1 lit [it as] one fire,8 and entered in to see.

6 At this time, maggots were squirming and roaring9 [in the corpse of Izanami-nō-mikōtō].

The Kojiki is apparently inconsistent about the nature of the rulers of Yōmi. Here it seems to say that there are some unnamed ‘gods [or god] of Yōmi’—the word may be singular or plural—to whom Izanami is subordinate, while in 10:16 Izanami herself is called ‘the great deity of Yōmi’ (Yōmō-tu-opo-kami). Tsuda writes that this reflects a state of mental confusion about the nature of Yōmi on the part of the ancient Japanese.

In the Nihon shoki and norito, Izanami is depicted as the ruler of the underworld while Izanagi figures as the ruler of the world of men; this idea is also present in the Kojiki in 10:13-14.

A similar taboo is found in 45:6. Some scholars have regarded both of these myths as variants of a single ‘forbidden chamber’ story, and some have connected the taboo related here with taboos against witnessing parturition (Izanami’s downfall being connected with her giving birth to the fire-god—see also the variant mythological narrative in the norito for the fire-pacifying festival). Some scholars have thought this a reflection of an actual taboo against looking at a corpse. Matsumura (II, 439-48), on the other hand, supposes that there may have been a practice of going at stated intervals to look at a corpse in order to see whether it had come back to life, and that this myth is a reflection of such a custom.

Mi-midura. The midura [from mimi-dura, ‘ear bunch’?] was a man’s hair style: the hair was parted in the middle, then tied in bunches on both sides of the head; combs were inserted at the top of each bunch, and the bunches were secured with strings called kadura, often made of vines. The word midura was later corrupted to bizura or bincusat, which was in later periods a boy’s hair style.

Motoori says that, because the ancient custom must have been to kindle two or more fires, here special attention is drawn to the fact that only one fire is kindled.

The Nihon shoki has the following interesting gloss on this passage: “This is the origin of the taboo among the people of the present day against [lighting] a single light at night and against casting down a comb at night.” (Asahi ed., I:74; Aston, I, 24)

Motoori (loc. cit.) mentions a taboo, in the region of Iwami (modern Shimane-ken), against presenting only one light to a god and against throwing down a comb. According to B. H. Chamberlain, the superstition still existed in Tokyo (Kojiki, Supp. to TASJ. X [1882], [rep. ed.: Tokyo, 1905], 42).

Some manuscripts have ‘oozing.’

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7 In her head was Great-Thunder;10
8 In her breast was Fire-Thunder;9
9 In her belly was Black-Thunder;12
10 In her genitals was Crack-Thunder;13
11 In her left hand was Young-Thunder;16
12 In her right hand was Earth-Thunder,15
13 In her left foot was Sounding-Thunder;16
14 In her right foot was Reclining-Thunder.”
15 Altogether there were eight thunder-deities.18
CHAPTER 10

IZANAGI FLEES AND ELUDES HIS PURSUERS.

IZANAGI AND IZANAMI BREAK THEIR TROTH.

1. Hereupon, Izanagi-nō-mikōtō, seeing this, was afraid, and he turned and fled.
2. At this time his spouse Izanami-nō-mikōtō said: “He has shamed me!”
3. Thereupon she dispatched the hags of Yōmī to pursue him.
4. Then Izanagi-nō-mikōtō undid the black vine securing his hair and flung it down; immediately it bore grapes. While [the hags] were picking and eating [the grapes], he fled.
5. When again they pursued him, he next pulled out the comb he was wearing in his right hair-bunch and flung it down; immediately bamboo shoots sprouted forth. While [the hags] were pulling up and eating [the bamboo shoots], he fled.
7. Then [Izanagi-nō-mikōtō] unsheathed the sword ten hands long which he was wearing at his side and fled while waving it behind him.
8. The pursuit continued, and when Izanagi-nō-mikōtō had arrived at the foot of [the pass] Yōmō-tu-pira-saka,7 he took three peaches8 which were there and, waiting for [his pursuers], attacked [them with the peaches]. They all turned and fled.
9. Then Izanagi-nō-mikōtō said to the peaches: “Just as you have saved me, when, in the Central Land of the Reed Plains, any of the race of mortal men fall into painful straits and suffer in anguish, then do you save them also.”
11. Finally, his spouse Izanami-nō-mikōtō herself came in pursuit of him. Then he pulled a tremendous boulder and closed [the pass] Yōmō-tu-pira-saka with it.
12. They stood facing each other, one on each side of the boulder, and broke their troth.10

2. Yōmō-tu-sikō-me. The word is written phonetically. Sikō-me is literally ‘ugly woman’ or ‘ugly women.’ The word sikō appears again as an adjective sikō-me (translated as ‘unpleasant, horrible’) in 11:1, and also as an element in the name Aki-para-sikō-wo-nō-kami (Ugly-Male-of-the-Reed-Plains Deity), another name for Opo-kami-nushi-nō-kami (20:19, 23:5, etc.).
3. Kadura; cf. 9:15 and footnote. Much later the word came to mean ‘head-band’ and ‘wig’ (Modern Japanese katsurara).
4. Similar stories, involving throwing at one’s pursuers various objects which change into other things and stop their pursuit, are found in folk tales throughout the world and in later Japanese folk tales. Such tales are called ‘magic flight’ or ‘transformation flight’ tales. Matsumura, II, 450.
5. Matsumura (II, 452-58) connects this myth with folk practices designed to prevent the spirits of the dead from coming back to disturb the living.
6. The kutsu-tani-gami mentioned in 9:15.
7. Literally, ‘the thousand five-hundred Yōmī army.’

8. The pursuit continued, and when Izanagi-nō-mikōtō had arrived at the foot of [the pass] Yōmō-tu-pira-saka,7 he took three peaches8 which were there and, waiting for [his pursuers], attacked [them with the peaches]. They all turned and fled.
9. Then Izanagi-nō-mikōtō said to the peaches: “Just as you have saved me, when, in the Central Land of the Reed Plains, any of the race of mortal men fall into painful straits and suffer in anguish, then do you save them also.”
11. Finally, his spouse Izanami-nō-mikōtō herself came in pursuit of him. Then he pulled a tremendous boulder and closed [the pass] Yōmō-tu-pira-saka with it.
12. They stood facing each other, one on each side of the boulder, and broke their troth.10

1. Cf. verse 18 below; also 24:12.
2. Using peaches to dispel demons or evil spirits was a common practice in China from antiquity; this myth is regarded by commentators as the product of an age when Chinese influence was strong.
3. A singular pronoun is used.
4. Aki-para-nō-naka-tu-kuni; a mythical expression referring to the islands of Japan, ‘Central’ may be used to locate the land between the heavenly land of Takama-nō-para and the subterranean land of Yōmī.
6. Ti-biki nōpa; literally, ‘thousand-pulling boulder’ (i.e., one requiring a thousand persons to pull it); cf. 24:8, 35:2. One interpretation is that this boulder is the rock used to seal the entrance to an underground burial mound. Matsumura (II, 466-73) doubts whether the long flight described in the chapter could have been thought to have taken place in the relatively short entrance corridor of a tomb.
7. Some scholars, including Matsumura, see in this boulder a type of the Sai-no-kami, a rock-deity worshipped at the outskirts of a village in order to keep evil spirits away. It seems more probable that the rock was used to block physically the passage of Izanami, rather than magically, as the Sai-no-kami is used; the latter is a small road-side idol and does not coincide with the description here.
8. The Japanese words present some difficulties; they are read either (a) keito-dō[uo] utaastu, or (b) keito-dō[as]tamu. Their literal translations would be (a) ‘to hand over a thing-door,’ or (b) ‘to cross a thing-door.’ Both of these are, of course, quite meaningless, and some other interpretation independent of the literal meanings of the ideographs must be attempted.
At this time Izanami-nō-mikotō said:
"O my beloved husband, if you do thus, I will each day strangle
to death one thousand of the population of your country."

This is the reason why one thousand people inevitably die and
one thousand five hundred people are inevitably born every day."

Izanami-nō-kami is also called Yōmō-tu-opo-kami. Also,
because she joined in the pursuit, she is called Ti-siki-nō-opo-
kami.

The pronunciation kōtō-do is indicated in a gloss.
The word kōtō may be a word meaning 'separate' or 'different.' It may also mean
'thing,' 'word,' or the musical instrument koto. The word do, written with the ideograph for 'door,' is unclear, but may mean 'place';
more probably it is a term for any sort of solemn rite or magic ceremony. In this case it is the same as the to in the word norito. See Kaneko Takeo, Engi-shikinorito kō (Musashino Shoin, 1951), pp. 439-45.

Although kōtō-do may have come to mean 'an oath of divorce,' it may earlier have meant some sort of magic-religious ceremony of rejection. Cf. Kaneko, ibid.; Matsumura, II, 479-81.

Literally, 'human grass.'

The account in verses 13-15 is a mythical explanation for the statistical fact of population increase. Watanabe Yōshimichi sees in this passage the writer's awareness of the rapid population increase accompanying the development of agricultural production after the third and fourth centuries. Kojiki kō (Hakuyōsha, 1936). p. 52.

Matsumura (II, 485-90) says that this account reflects also the ancient custom of deciding disputes by verbal battles. However, in such cases the engagements usually took place by means of songs or long harangues, not by brief statements as here.

Most manuscripts have Izanami-nō-kami-nō-mikotō.

'Great Deity of Yomi.' The metamorphosis of the goddess Izanami from a land-
creating goddess to a goddess of death and the underworld is paralleled in other mytholo-
gies, where the Earth-mother (Freya, Persephone, Nerthus, Frigg) becomes a goddess
presiding over the abode of the dead. See also Matsumura, II, 161-66, 388-93.

Why is the entrance to the land of Yomi located in the land of Idumo? Tsugita (p. 66) writes that Ipuya-zaka was the main route between Idumo and Yamatō, and the mythical account of its being closed was a reflection of a historical rupture between the two regions.

This viewpoint is unconvincing, and it is now obvious that the passage was a late
gloss which did not exist in the original version of the myth.
Arriving at the plain

(Ahogether three deities) says this of Japanese funeral

Then Naka.

Omitted in certain manuscripts.

Kingdom of physical and

Maga.

Some manuscripts have ‘skirt.’

Sei and Ishihara Michihiro, eds., Naposu.

[of the

pp.

The practice of purification by ablution had a very early origin in Japan. The account

Next, when he flung down his
cloak, there came into existence a deity named Wadurapi-nō-usi-nō-kami.

Next, when he flung down his trousers, there came into existence a deity named Tī-mata-nō-kami.

Next, when he flung down his headgear, there came into existence a deity named Aki-gupi-nō-usi-nō-kami.

Next, when he flung down the arm-bands of his left arm, there came into existence a deity named Oki-zakaru-nō-kami; next, Oki-tu-nagisa-biko-nō-kami; next, Oki-tu-kapi-bera-nō-kami.

Next, when he flung down the arm-bands of his right arm, there came into existence a deity named Pe-zakaru-nō-kami; next, Pe-tu-nagisa-biko-nō-kami; next, Pe-tu-kapi-bera-nō-kami.

The twelve deities in the above section, from Punā-do-nō-kami through Pe-tu-kapi-bera-nō-kami, all were born from his taking off the articles worn on his body.

Then he said:

“The current of the upper stream is a current too swift; the current of the lower stream is a currents too weak.”

Then, when he went down and dived into the middle stream and bathed, there came into existence a deity named Yaso-maga-tu-pi-nō-kami; next, Opo-maga-tu-pi-nō-kami.

These two deities came into existence from the pollution which he took on when he went to that unclean land.

Next, in order to rectify these evils, there came into existence the deity Kamu-napobi-nō-kami; next, Opo-napobi-nō-kami; next, Idu-nō-me-nō-kami. (Abogather three deities)

Next, when he bathed at the bottoms of the water, there came into existence the deity named Sōkō-tu-wata-tu-mi-nō-kami; next, Sōkō-dutu-nō-wo-nō-mikōtō.

When he bathed in the middle of the water, there came into

68

1  Hereupon, Izanagi-nō-opo-kami said:

“I have been to a most unpleasant land, a horrible, unclean land.
Therefore I shall purify myself.”

Arriving at [the plain] Apakī-para by the river-mouth of Tahi-bana in Pimura in Tureisi, he purified and exorcised himself.2

When he flung down his stick, there came into existence a deity named Tuki-tatu-puna-to-nō-kami.

Next, when he flung down his sash, there came into existence a deity named Mitti-nō-naga-ti-pa-nō-kami.

Next, when he flung down his bag, there came into existence a deity named Tōki-pakasi-nō-kami.

1 Literally, ‘therefore I shall work my body’s purification.’ The word used implies purification by ablation. Motoori, rejecting a spiritualizing interpretation, insists that pollution of the body, not of the soul, was meant:

“Exorcism and purification are for the purpose of cleansing the pollutions of the body.
To say that they are for exorcising and cleansing the spirit is a concept completely alien to Japanese antiquity.” Kojiki-den, 1, 317.

It is questionable whether the ancient Japanese distinguished between physical and mental pollution. Matsumura, II, 504-506.

2 The practice of purification by ablation had a very early origin in Japan. The account of Japan in the History of the Kingdom of Wei (WeiChi) says this of Japanese funeral customs:

“When there is a death, they mourn for ten days, during which period they do not eat meat. The chief mourners wail and weep, and the others sing, dance, and drink liquor. After the burial, the whole family goes into the water to bathe, like the Chinese sackcloth-ablations.” Wada Sei and Ishihara Michihiro, eds., Gishiwajinden (Iwanami Shoten,1951), p. 45; see also Tsunoda et al., Sources of Japanese Tradition, pp. 6-7.

Even today, purification by washing is a common element in Japanese folk religion. The propensity for bathing of the ancient Japanese probably reflected, not an inordinate wish for bodily cleanliness, but a desire to rid themselves by magical practices of evils and ritual impurity originating in contact with death.

* Some manuscripts have ‘skirt.’

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existence the deity named *Naka-tu-wata-tu-mi-nō-kamī*; next, *Naka-dutu-nō-wo-nō-mikōtō*.

18 When he bathed on the surface of the water, there came into existence the deity named *Upa-wata-tu-mi-nō-mikōtō*; next, *Upa-dutu-nō-wo-nō-mikōtō*.

19 These three *Wata-tu-mi* deities are the deities worshipped by the *Murazi* of the *Adumi* as their ancestral deities. The *Murazi* of the *Adumi* are the descendants of *Utusi-pi-gana-saku-nō-mikōtō*, the child of these *Wata-tu-mi* deities.

20 The three deities *Sōkō-dutu-nō-wo-nō-mikōtō*, *Naka-dutu-nō-wo-nō-mikōtō*, and *Upa-dutu-nō-wo-nō-mikōtō* are the three great deities of *Sumi-nō-ye*.

21 Then when he washed his left eye, there came into existence a deity named *Ama-terasu-opo-mi-kamī*.

22 Next, when he washed his right eye, there came into existence a deity named *Tuku-yōmi-nō-mikōtō*.

23 Next, when he washed his nose, there came into existence a deity named *Take-paya-susa-wo-nō-mikōtō*.

24 The fourteen deities in the above section, from *Ya-so-maga-tu-pi-kamī* through *Paya-susa-wo-nō-mikōtō*, are deities born from bathing his body.

25 Chapter 12

IZANAGI ENTRENDS THEIR MISSIONS TO THE THREE NOBLE CHILDREN.

1 At this time *Izanagi-nō-mikōtō*, rejoicing greatly, said:

   "I have borne child after child, and finally in the last bearing I have obtained threcenobichildren."

2 Then he removed his necklace, shaking the beads on the string so that they jingled, and, giving it to *Ama-terasu-opo-mi-kamī*, he entrusted her with her mission, saying:

   "You shall rule *Takama-no-para*."

3 The name of this necklace is *Mi-kura-tana-kamī*.

4 Next he said to *Tuku-yōmi-nō-mikōtō*, entrusting him with his mission:

   "You shall rule the realms of the night."

5 Next he said to *Take-paya-susa-wo-nō-mikōtō*, entrusting him with his mission:

   "You shall rule the ocean."
While the other deities ruled their realms in obedience to the commands entrusted to them, PAYA-SUSA-NŌ-WO-NŌ-MIKÔTO did not rule the land entrusted to him. Instead, he wept and howled even until his beard eight hands long extended down over his chest.

His weeping was such that it caused the verdant mountains to wither and all the rivers and seas to dry up. At this, the cries of malevolent deities were everywhere abundant like summer flies; and all sorts of calamities arose in all things.

Then IZANAGI-NŌ-OPO-MI-KAMI said to PAYA-SUSA-NŌ-WO-NŌ-MIKÔTO:

"Why is it you do not rule the land entrusted to you, but instead weep and howl?"

Then PAYA-SUSA-NŌ-WO-NŌ-MIKÔTO replied:

Susa-nō-wo's conduct has been interpreted in various ways. Similar conduct is recorded in the Kojiki (73:2), and twice in the Izumo Fudoki, which reads:

"Adi-suki-taka-piko-nō-mikoto, the son of the great deity who created the lands under the heavens [Opo-namoti-nō-mikoto], cried exceedingly day and night. A high building was made for him... and they constructed a ladder on which they went up and down as they raised him." Fudoki, ed. Takeda Yûkichi (Iwanami Shoten, 1939), p.144.

"Adi-suki-taka-piko-nō-mikoto, the son of the great god Opo-namoti-nō-mikoto, cried day and night until his beard grew eight hands long, and his words were not comprehensible." Ibid., p. 151.

Matsumura (II, 651-16) supposes that there was an ancient magico-religious rite to summon down the deities by crying and howling. This rite, which had by then been forgotten, was reflected in these accounts.

In verse 3, the actions seem to be those of a ravaging nature-deity such as Susa-nō-wo was often supposed to be. For further notes on the aggressive behavior of Susa-nō-wo see Chapter 16.

See Additiional note 9 for a discussion of this verse.

Chapter 13

Susa-nō-wo Disobeys His Divine Trust and Is Expelled by Izanagi.

"I wish to go to the land of my mother, Ne-nō-kata-su-kuni. That is why I weep."\(^3\)

Then IZANAGI-NŌ-OPO-MI-KAMI, greatly enraged, said:

"In that case, you may not live in this land!"

Thus [saying], he expelled him with a divine expulsion.\(^4\)

This IZANAGI-NŌ-OPO-KAMI is enshrined in Taga of Apumi.\(^5\)

\(^1\) Cf. 17:2.

\(^2\) See Additional note 9 for a discussion of this verse.

\(^3\) This verse is a gloss, inserted here at the end of Izanagi's career. Instead of the words 'Taga in Apumi,' the Ise manuscript has 'Taga in Apadi.' Apadi also figures in the Nihonshoki account, which says:

"After this, Izanagi-nō-mikoto, his divine mission being completed, passed on in the spirit. Then he provided himself with a hidden shrine on the island of Apadi, and abode there eternally in peaceful seclusion. Also, it is said: Izanagi-nō-mikoto, his merit reaching its supreme limits and his virtue also being at its greatest, at this point ascended to Heaven and reported the accomplishment of his mission. Thus he remained abiding in the Younger Palace of the Sun." Asahi ed., I. 89; see also Aston, I, 33-34.

In any case, the verse is a gloss of late origin, and there is no need to attach great importance to it. Tsuda argues that Taga in Apumi is a place which has no connection with the god Izanagi, and that the passage is a fabrication of a period when various shrines sought to enhance their importance by creating mythical sanctions. Nihonshoki no kenkyû, I, 351.
In the misty spray there came into existence a deity named KUMANO-KUSUBI NŌ-MIKŌTŌ.

At this time AMA-TERASU-OPO-MI-KAMI said to PAYA-SUSA-NŌ-WO-NŌ-MIKŌTŌ:

“The latter-born five male children came into existence from my possessions and arc therefore naturally my children. The first-born three female children came into existence from your possessions, and are therefore your children.”

Thus saying, she distinguished [the offspring].

The first-born deity, TAKIHI-BIME-NŌ-MIKŌTŌ, is enshrined in the OKI-TU-MIYA of MUNAKATA.

Next, ITIKI-SIMA-PIME-NŌ-MIKŌTŌ is enshrined in the NAKA-TU-MIYA of MUNAKATA.

Next, TAKIHI-PIME-NŌ-MIKŌTŌ is enshrined in the PE-TU-MIYA of MUNAKATA.

These three deities are the three great deities worshipped by the KIMI of MUNAKATA.

Among the latter-born five deities, the child of AMI-NO-POPI-NŌ-MIKŌTŌ, TAKE-PIRA-TŌRI-NŌ-MIKŌTŌ, the ancestor of the kuni-nō-miyatuko of IDUMO, of the kuni-nō-miyatuko of MUNAZI, of the kuni-nō-miyatuko of KAMI-TU-UNAKAMI, of the kuni-nō-miyatuko of SIMO-TU-UNAKAMI, of the kuni-nō-miyatuko of ISIMU, of the agata-nō-atape of TU-SIMA, and of the kuni-nō-miyatuko of TÓPO-TU-APUMI.

Next, AMA-TU-PIKONE-NŌ-MIKŌTŌ is the ancestor of the kuni-nō-miyatuko of OPUKI-KAPUTI, of the MUKAZI of the NUKATA-BE-NŌ-YUWE, of the kuni-nō-miyatuko of UBARARI, of the atape of TANAKA in YAMATO, of the kuni-nō-miyatuko of AMAISIRI, of the kuni-nō-miyatuko of MUNAKUSA, of the kuni-nō-miyatuko of KURI in MIKI-NŌ-SIRI, of the kuni-nō-miyatuko of SUFURI, of the miyatuko of AMU in YAMATO, of the agata-nusi of TAKÉTI, of the INAKI of KAMAPU, and of the miyatuko of the SAKIKUSA-BE.

Among the latter-born five deities, the child of AMI-NO-POPI-NŌ-MIKŌTŌ, TAKE-PIRA-TŌRI-NŌ-MIKŌTŌ, the ancestor of the kuni-nō-miyatuko of IDUMO, of the kuni-nō-miyatuko of MUNAZI, of the kuni-nō-miyatuko of KAMI-TU-UNAKAMI, of the kuni-nō-miyatuko of SIMO-TU-UNAKAMI, of the kuni-nō-miyatuko of ISIMU, of the agata-nō-atape of TU-SIMA, and of the kuni-nō-miyatuko of TÓPO-TU-APUMI.

Next, AMA-TU-PIKONE-NŌ-MIKŌTŌ is the ancestor of the kuni-nō-miyatuko of OPUKI-KAPUTI, of the MUKAZI of the NUKATA-BE-NŌ-YUWE, of the kuni-nō-miyatuko of UBARARI, of the atape of TANAKA in YAMATO, of the kuni-nō-miyatuko of AMAISIRI, of the kuni-nō-miyatuko of MUNAKUSA, of the kuni-nō-miyatuko of KURI in MIKI-NŌ-SIRI, of the kuni-nō-miyatuko of SUFURI, of the miyatuko of AMU in YAMATO, of the agata-nusi of TAKÉTI, of the INAKI of KAMAPU, and of the miyatuko of the SAKIKUSA-BE.

1 In the Kojiki Susa-nō-wo’s victory is due to his production of female children, whereas in the Nihon shoki it is because his offspring are males.

Takeda suggests that this show of respect for women might indicate that the Kojiki was transmitted by women and may be adduced as an argument that Piyeda nō Are was a woman. Kojiki (Kadakawa Shoten, 1956, pp. 25-26).

Although it is not impossible to regard the Kojiki account as a reminiscence of an earlier matrilocal social system, it is generally agreed that, of the two, the Nihon shoki accounts are the older.

Tsuda argues persuasively that Susa-nō-wo’s children were originally male, and that the statement that female children were a proof of innocence of heart is a later alteration.


2 For a discussion of Susa-nii-wo’s destructive behavior in this chapter, see ADDITIONAL NOTE 10.

3 Or where she tasted the first fruits. The Hall of the First Fruits was the place where the harvest festival was celebrated; cf. also 133:31.
Even though she thus spoke with good intention, his misdeeds did not cease, but became even more flagrant.

When Ama-terasu-opo-mi-kami was inside the sacred weaving hall seeing to the weaving of the divine garments, he opened a hole in the roof of the sacred weaving hall and dropped down into it the heavenly dappled pony which he had skinned with a backwards skinning.

The heavenly weaving maiden, seeing this, was alarmed and struck her genitals against the shuttle and died.

Ama-terasu-opo-mi-kami, has the power to bring about the announced results.

Perhaps this is evidence of an ancient belief that one could turn evil into good by speaking well of it. Japanese scholars love to dwell on the word-spirit, the magic power dwelling in words or in certain verbal formulae, which were believed to have the power to bring about the announced results.

Motoori says that the latter is the original version, and that the punishment against whom he was struck was an ingredient of the ritual action itself. Matsumura (III, 67) also insists, incidentally, that the rages of the sun-goddess were everywhere abundant, like summer flies; and all manner of calamities arose.

Tsuda, on the other hand, sees a political significance in Ama-terasu-opo-mi-kami’s role: the goddess is an emperor-symbol against whom Susa-nō-wo rebelled in a manner symbolizing the unsuccessful revolts of the enemies of the Yama-to Court. Nihon koten no kinyō, 1, 432.

Kami-mi-so; garments to be presented to a deity, or ‘sacred garments.’

Aston says: “Indian myth has a piebald or spotted deer or cow among celestial objects. The idea is probably suggested by the appearance of the stars.” Nihongi, I, 40.

Saka-papi. “Backwards skinning,” evidently flaying a live animal from the tail up, is mentioned together with “skinning alive in the norito” as one of the heavenly sins (ama-su-tama). Perhaps skinning a live animal was some sort of black magic practice.

Ama-terasu-opo-mi-kami herself who is alarmed and injured. Matsumura (III, 43-45) is of the opinion that the latter is the original version, and that the Kojiki’s account is a later revision making a subordinate suffer the direct effects of the indignity.
They gathered together the long-crying birds of Tōkō-yō and caused them to cry. They took the heavenly hard rock from the upper stream of the river Amē-nō-ya-su-nō-kapa; they took iron from [the mountain] Amē-nō-kana-yama. They sought the smith Amatu-mara and commissioned Isi-kōri-dome-nō-mikōtō to make a mirror. They commissioned Tama-nō-ya-nō-mikōtō to make long strings of myriad Maga-tama beads. They summoned Amē-nō-ko-yane-nō-mikōtō and Puto-tama-nō-mikōtō to remove the whole shoulder-bone of a male deer of the mountain Amē-nō-Kagu-yama, and take heaven's papaka wood from the mountain Amē-nō-Kagu-yama, and with these perform a divination. They uprooted by the very roots the flourishing Ma-sakaki trees of the mountain Amē-nō-Kagu-yama; to the upper branches they affixed long strings of myriad Maga-tama beads; in the middle branches they hung a large-dimensional mirror, in the lower branches they suspended white nikite cloth and blue nikite cloth. These various objects were held in his hands by Puto-tama-nō-mikōtō as solemn offerings, and Amē-nō-ko-yane-nō-mikōtō intoned a solemn liturgy."

8 Ya-po-yōridunō-kami; the ideographs, translated into Modern Japanese, mean 'eight million gods.' The word ya, written 'eight,' is a sacred number often meaning 'many'; and yōridunō, written 'ten-thousand,' is an indefinite term best translated by the word 'myriad.' Another divine assembly is described in identical terms in 32:5. The ethnologist Torii Ryūnosuke compares these meetings of the gods with the Mongolian meeting of clans called Kuritai. Jinma-gakus-no yori mitaru waga jōda ni bunka (Sōbunkaku, 1925), pp. 57-65. Tsuda says that the assembly of the gods reflects an ancient custom of holding Kuritai-ike meetings of powerful clans to confer and cooperate in deciding important questions on behalf of the ruling family. Nihon koten no kōkyō, I, 433. Most authorities agree that this convocation reflects not a primitive democratic town-meeting but a confabulation among the powerful ruling families connected with the Yamato court.

9 Omōpi; or 'to think,' 'to devise.' To lay a wise plan.' This deity, evidently a god of wisdom or counsel (see Glossary), is always called upon to devise a plan whenever there is a convocation of the gods; cf. Chapters 32, 33.

10 The 'long-crying birds' (naga-naki-dōri) are cocks. Tōkō-yō (see Glossary) is clearly the land of Tōkō-yō, the mythical 'eternal world.' The word was formerly mistakenly translated as 'eternal night,' on the understanding that 'eternal night' (tōkō-yō) was phonemically equivalent to Tōkō-yō. Actually, the final elements of the two words are phonemically distinct. Evidently, cocks were made to crow in order to summon the sun at dawn; the crowing of cocks is a feature of funerals among various peoples because of its association with dawn, early morning, resurrection of the dead, and banishment of evil spirits. There is a myth among the Miao tribes of southern China in which the sun concealed itself but came out again on hearing the cock's crowing. Matsumura, III, 71–73.

11 Evidently, the hard rock was used as a rock anvil on which to temper the iron. Pito-mu-no-mikōtō (see glossary) describes the mirror which is evidently the one made in verse 8 by Isi-kōri-dome-nō-mikōtō, is described in verse 20. The myriad Maga-tama beads and branches of uprooted trees were a common practice in ancient Japanese worship; undoubtedly, the tree thus decked became the temporary abode of the spirit of the deity.
Amē-nō-Ta-dikara-wō-nō-kami stood concealed beside the door, while Amē-nō-Uzume-nō-mikōtō bound up her sleeves with a cord of heavenly ira-kage-vine tied around her head. A hand-band of the heavenly ma-sara vine, bound together with bundles of sasara leaves to hold in her hands, and overturning a bucket before the heavenly rock-cave door, stamped resoundingly upon it. Then she became divinely possessed, exposed her breasts, and pushed her skirt-band down to her genitals.

Then Takama-nō-para shook as the eight-hundred myriad deities laughed at once.

In order to pull the sun-goddess out, as he does in verse 22.

Note the various preparations of Amē-nō-Uzume-nō-mikōtō for shamanistic possession. A parallel to the stamping of the overturned buckets found in the ceremonies of the chinkon-sai (spirit-pacification ceremony) of the imperial court, in which a wooden bucket (or some sort of tub or wooden container) is pounded with the staff of a long spear while the emperor's garments are shaken or waved in a magical tic to increase his longevity. Matsumura, III, 75-76.

Some scholars have held that all therities in this chapter were the same as those of the chinkon-sai ceremony, in which indeed the women of the Sarume clan played an important role. The chinkon (or sama-suri) rite was a ceremony attempting to prevent the spirit from leaving the body, or to summon it back into a dead body, according to one interpretation, to attach additional spiritual forces to a person's soul, and thus to increase his vitality and longevity. Matsumura (III, 76-91) claims that chinkon rites must have been performed for the sun when it lost its force during the winter.

Kanu-gakari; god-possession. The widespread popularity of shamanistic spirits, possession among the ancient Japanese is amply attested to in documentary sources, it was widely practiced until the Meiji period and is still practiced in the Ryūkyū Islands and among the Ainu, Koreans, and other continental peoples. Torii asserts that shamanism was the native religion of the Japanese, that the sun-goddess and the deities surrounding her in Takama-nō-para were shamanism, and that the whole setting for the concealment myth is shamanistic. Ōmura-gakari, ppp-53.

Motoori attributes Uzume's exhibitionism to the discipline, i.e., to a state of possession. The same actions are performed in her encounter with Saruta-biko, as recorded in the Ninigi no okuni (see note on 38:11).

Exposure of the genitals is believed among many peoples to have magic power to drive away evil spirits. Chin, Mashiko records such a custom, called Choparata, among the Ainu. Bunnitu Aina-go-itize (Nihon Jōminbunka Kenkyūjo, 1954), III, 66-67.

Matsumura (III, 91-98) gives a number of accounts from various peoples which reveal that this type of exhibitionism was used in religious rites, not only to drive away undesirable influences, but also to amuse, entertain, and impart vitality to the deities. He likens Amē-nō-Uzume's dance to the one performed by Jambe before Demeter in the Homeric hymns and to that performed by Baubō before Demeter in the Prometheus of Clement of Alexandria.

Matsumura (III, 91-98) says that ritual laughter was used magically to propitiate the anger of the gods or to increase their vitality. The Kojiki narrative, of course, records the laughter merely as a device to arouse the curiosity of the sun-goddess.

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and the nails of his hands and feet, had him exorcised and expelled him with a divine expulsion.

25 The deities had Susa-nō-wo’s beard, fingernails, and toenails cut off to punish him or, rather, in order to exorcise him and thus remove the sins and pollution adhering to him.

26 Some manuscripts substitute an ideograph meaning ‘pull out’ or ‘remove’ for the one translated ‘exorcism’; thus the passage may read: “cutting off his beard and causing the nails of his hands and feet to be extracted, expelled him...”

27 Here Susa-nō-wo is again expelled (cf. 13-8) from the society of the heavenly deities and, branded as a transgressor, is sent wandering throughout the world. Susa-nō-wo was regarded as a wandering outcast for some time after his expulsion.

The Nihon shoki, which records versions in which he went to Korea after having been driven out of heaven, gives this interesting variant:

“After being exorcised, the various deities expelled him with these words: ‘Because your conduct has been exceedingly outrageous, you may not remain in the heavens, nor may you dwell in the Central Land of the Reed Plains. Be gone with you quickly to the lowest Ne-nō-kuni!’

“Since there was a rainstorm then, Susa-nō-wo bound up grass and made a braided hat and straw coat and went around asking for shelter of the various deities, who answered that they would not provide shelter for one who was exiled for his evil doings.

“In spite of the fierce wind and rain, he was unable to find anywhere to shelter himself and rest, and he descended in great pain.

“From this time on, there has been a taboo against entering the house of another wearing a braided hat and straw coat, and against entering another’s house carrying grass bound in sheaves. If anyone breaks this taboo, he is fined and subjected to exorcism.” Asahi ed., 1, 108 (condensed).

CHAPTER 18

Opo-gē-tu-pime produces food and is killed by Susa-nō-wo.


2 Then Opo-gē-tu-pime took various viands out of her nose, her mouth, and her rectum, prepared them in various ways, and presented them to him.

3 Thereupon Paya-susa-nō-wo-nō-mikōtō, who had been watching her actions, thought that she was polluting the food before offering it to him and killed Opo-gē-tu-pime-nō-kami.

4 In the corpse of the slain deity there grew [various] things: in her head there grew silkworms; in her two eyes there grew rice seeds; in her two ears there grew millet; in her nose there grew red beans; in her genitals there grew wheat; and in her rectum there grew soy beans.

5 Then Kami-musubi-mi-oya-nō-mikōtō had these taken and used as seeds.

1 A food-goddess. See ADDITIONAL NOTE 11 for a discussion of this chapter.