

Kojiki (712 AD) [Record of Ancient Things] contains Japanese Creation Myth

In the beginning was chaos. Heaven and earth were not divided.

A reed appeared in the chaos.

It was eternal land ruler, Kunitokotatchi.

Next came the female God, Izanami, and the male, Izanagi.

They stood on the Floating Bridge of Heaven (*Amenoukihashi*) and churned the ocean of chaos with a jewelled spear (*Amanonuhoko*) to make an island.

The island was Onokoro/Onogoro (self-forming).

They built a palace (*Yahirodono* - the hall whose area is 8 arms' length squared) on the island, with a central pillar of stone (*Amenomihashira*).

Izanami walked one way around the pillar, and Izanagi walked the other. When they met face to face, Izanagi greeted Izanami first, and they united in marriage.

They had two children Hiruko (leech child) and Awashima (pale island), but they were malformed.

They placed the two children in a reed boat and set them adrift. Hiruko became Ebisu, God of fishermen.

Then they walked around the pillar again. This time Izanami uttered the first greeting.

Izanami gave birth to the eight islands of Japan (*Ōyashima*).

Finally Izanami began to give birth to the Gods of the sea, of the land, of wind and rain. But when Izanami gave birth to the God of fire (*Kagututi*, incarnation of fire, or *Ho-Masubi*, causer of fire), she was badly burned and died.

Izanagi killed Kagututi by cutting him into three pieces and then went in search of Izanami.

He travelled to Yomi, “the shadowy land of the dead”, where he found her.

She told him he was too late as she had eaten the food of Yomi.

She agreed to return provided Izanagi waited and did not look at her.

Izanagi grew impatient. He broke a tooth of the comb he wore in his hair and used it as a torch to find her in her bedroom.

He saw that she was already rotting and maggots were swarming over her body. She was giving birth to the eight Gods of thunder.

Izanagi was disgusted and frightened, and he fled. Izanami ordered the *shikome*, or foul women, to capture him.

He escaped, throwing away his headdress, which turned into a bunch of black grapes, and his comb, which turned into bamboo shoots. Each time the women stopped to eat the food.

The female spirits of Yomi took up the chase. Izanagi urinated to slow them down with a river barrier. Then he threw peaches at them.

Izanagi blocked the pass between the land of the living and the underworld with a huge boulder, so making a permanent barrier between life and death.

Izanagi proceeded to purify himself. Each item he dropped became a deity. More gods were born and formed from parts of his face as he washed.

Amaterasu, incarnation of the sun, was formed from his left eye.

Tsukuyomi, incarnation of the moon, was formed from his right eye.

Susanoo, incarnation of storms and ruler of the sea, was formed from his nose.

Amaterasu inherited the heavens, Tsukuyomi night and moon, and Susanoo the seas (as well as snow and hail).

Amaterasu (female) and Susanoo (male) competed against each other, creating the first five men and the first three women.

Susanoo then threw a half-flayed horse at Amaterasu, who fled into a cave (*Iwayado*).

When the sun goddess disappeared into the cave, darkness covered the world.

All the gods and goddesses tried to coax Amaterasu out of the cave, but she ignored them all.

Finally, the spirit (*kami*) of merriment, Ama-no-Uzume, placed a large bronze mirror on a tree, facing Amaterasu's cave.

Uzume clothed herself in flowers and leaves, overturned a washtub, and began to dance on it, drumming the tub with her feet. Finally, Uzume shed the leaves and flowers and danced naked.

All the male gods roared with laughter, and Amaterasu became curious.

When she peeped outside from her long stay in the dark, a ray of light called “dawn” escaped and Amaterasu was dazzled by her own reflection in the mirror.

The god Ameno-Tajikarawo pulled her from the cave and it was sealed with a holy shirukume rope.

Amaterasu's depression disappeared and she agreed to return her light to the world. Uzume was from then on known as the *kami* of dawn as well as mirth.