

THE ANCIENT JAPANESE SKY-FATHER AND EARTH-MOTHER

A STUDY IN SHINTO ORIGINS

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The foregoing discussion of offered as evidence that in *Izanagi* is preserved the memory of an ancient Japanese Sky-Father and in his mate *Izanami*, the idea of a great Earth-Mother. Are they genuine Japanese ancestors, then? It is said that, some two thousand five hundred years ago the Hindus were already arguing as to whether one of their chief deities had his origin in an actual human being or in phenomena of nature.⁶¹ The old debate still goes on in modern Shinto. The euhemerist can adduce a certain amount of evidence in support of the proposition that *Izanagi* and *Izanami* were ancient historical personages of the Japanese race and that they are to be accounted for primarily from the standpoint of hero-worship. For example, the old tradition records the burial place of *Izanami* in Arima of Kumano⁶² and *Izanagi*'s final place of "concealment" on the island of Awa-ji.⁶³ It needs to be noted, however, that Greek mythology likewise recorded the human birth-place and the grave of the Sky-god, Zeus.⁶⁴ It is inevitable that the ancient Japanese representation of the two great deities which we have had under consideration should be in anthropomorphic terms. This is a universal characteristic of mythology. Ancient man's interpretation of his experiences with the phenomena of nature is necessarily in terms of his experiences in human society as such.

NOTES

1. Mac Culloch, J. W., Art "Earth", *Hastings Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (HERE), Vol. 5, p. 130.
2. Alexander, Hartley Burr, *North American Mythology (The Mythology of All Races)*, p. 289, cf. also *id.* pp. 273, 235, 81.
3. Foucart, George, Art. "Sky and Sky-gods", HERE, Vol. 11, p. 51.
4. Hopkins, E. W., *The History of Religions* (New York, 1918), p. 172.
5. Babylonian Mysteries were associated with rituals commemorating the death and resurrection of Tammuz, a chthonian vegetation god. Isis and Osiris, Demeter and Kore, Attis and Cybelé, as well as Zagreus, are all associated with primitive experiences with seasonal changes of vegetation. For literature and discussion see HERE, vol. 9, pp. 70-83.
6. Cf. Fox, Wm. Sherwood, *Greek and Roman Mythology (Mythology of all Races)*, p. 152.
7. Harrison, Jane Ellen, Art. "Mountain-Mother", HERE, Vol. 8, p. 868.
8. Cf. Mac Culloch, *op cit.*, p. 129.
9. Mayer, Chinese Manual, p. 174; cited in Aston, *Nihongi*, Vol. I, p. 28.
10. Grey, Sir George, *Polynesian Mythology and Ancient Traditional History of the New Zealand Race, as furnished by their priests and Chiefs* (London, 1855), pp. 1-2.
For general literature on the Sky-father and Earth-mother ideas consult; Dieterich, W., *Mutter Erde* (Berlin, 1905); Mac Culloch, J. W., Art "Earth" HERE, entire article pp. 127 ff; Foucart, George, Art, "Sky and Sky-gods", entire article, HERE vol. 11, pp. 580-585; Warren, *The Earliest Cosmologies* (New York, 1909); Jensen, *Kosmologie der Babylonier* (Strassburg, 1890); Farnell, L. R., *Cults of the Greek States*, Vol. III, pp. 289-306; Alexander, H. B., *North American Mythology*, p. 289 (references for American mythology); Max Muller, W., *Egyptian Mythology (Mythology of All Races Vol. 12)*, pp. 23-67; Keith, A. B., *Indian Mythology (Mythology of All Races, Vol. 6)*, pp. 15-72.
11. Grey, *op. cit.*
12. Cf. Tregear, *Maori-Polynesian Comparative Dictionary*, pp. 391-392; Dixon, Roland Burrage, *Oceanic Mythology* (Boston, 1916), p. 14; Anderson, J. C., *Maori Life in Aotea*, p. 127.
13. Cf. Aston, *Shinto, The Way of the Gods*, pp. 169-170.
14. *Hi-no-waka-miya* (日之少宮), Cf. *Rikokoku Shi Nihonshoki* (六國史日本書紀), Vol. 1, p. 23. Anesaki translates "Solar Young Palace," see art. "Life and Death (Japanese)", HERE, Vol. 8, p. 38.

15. Gill, Wm. Wyatt, *Myths and Songs from the South Pacific* (London, 1876), pp. 34.
16. Taylor, R., *Techlea a Mani or New Zealand and its Inhabitants* (London, 1870, 2nd ed.), p. 109.
17. Dixon, *op. cit.*, p. 37, Cf. also Tregear *op. cit.*, p. 392; White J., *Ancient History of the Maori*, I, p. 7.
18. Cf. Florenz, Karl, *Japanische Mythologie, Zeitalter der Götter*, p. 27 note 19, also pp. 319, 320; Buckley Edmund "The Shinto Pantheon" *New World*, Dec., 1896, pp. 13, 14.
19. Tregear, *op. cit.* p., 315.
20. Mac Culloch, *op. cit.*, p. 131.
21. Alexander, *op. cit.*, p. 295.
22. Dixon, *op. cit.*, p. 33, quoted from Grey, *Polynesian Mythology*.
23. 泣澤女神 (Kojiki), 啼澤女神 (Nihongi) Motoori in *Kojiki Den* suggests along with other possible interpretations, that *sa-came* (澤女) may be rendered *same, ame* (雨), "rain." Cf. *Dai Nihon Shimmei Jisho* (大日本神名辭書), p. 231. For *ame*, "rain", read *same* in compounds compare *harusame*, "spring rain," *murasame*, "sudden showers".
24. Harrison J. E., *Themis, A Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion* (Cambridge 1912), p. 176. The rain in the Greek myth is perhaps conceived of as the actual seminal fluid passing between the lovers.
25. 火之迦具土神 (*Hi-no-kagu-tsuchi-no-kami*), "Glittering-Earth-Deity of Fire". *Tsuchi* (土) is here interpreted in the sense of the ordinary meaning of the ideograph, i. e. "earth". For similar interpretations in the case of other deities whose titles contain the element *tsuchi* or *tsutsu*, see *Dai Nihon Shimmei Jisho* (大日本神名辭書), p. 65 under *Uwatsutsu-no-wono-Mikoto* and p. 230 under *Naka-tsutsu-no-wo-no-Mikoto*. The other names of *Hi-no-kagu-tsuchi-no-kami* indicate an original experience with objects which contain heat or fire and which at the same time reflect heat or glitter therewith—火之夜藝速男神 (*Hi-no-yagi-haya-wo-no-kami*) "Burning-Swift-Male-Deity-of-Fire", or *Glittering-Swift-Male Deity-of-Fire*"; 火之炫毘古神 (*Hi-no-kaga-biko-no-kami*), Glittering sun-child-Deity-of-Fire", or "Shining Prince Deity of Fire;" and 火産靈神 (*Hi-no-musubi-no-kami*), Fire Producing-Deity." The experience of primitive man with the dry and heated objects of summer earth would appropriately and, it may be said, almost inevitably produce these deities.
26. 天之尾羽張
27. 伊都之尾羽張. Cf. Chamberlain, *Kojiki* (1882) p. 34.

2. Transactions Asiatic Society Japan, Vol. 7, p. 414-15.
30. 速日神. Cf. *Kokushi Taikōi, Rikokoku Shi, Nihon shoki* (國史大系, 六國史, 日本書紀), p. 50.
31. 火速日神
32. 武速日神
33. The conclusion that invisibility of celestial phenomena or obscuration thereof was described by the early Japanese Myth-makers as an entering into the Rock-Cave of Heaven is indicated in the account of how when *Amaterasu-O-Mi-Kami*, the Sun Goddess, entered the Rock Cave of Heaven all the earth became dark. The original experience in this case was probably the obscuration of the Sun in an eclipse.
34. 石折神
35. 根折神
36. 石筒之男神
37. This trio of deities that appear at the upper part of Izanagi's sword have already been noted as those who dwelt in the Rock-Cave of Heaven. They plainly represent primitive experience with the lightning flash.
38. 闇淤加美神 (*Kojiki*); 闇靈神 (*Nihongi*). *Kuru* (闇) may be taken to mean "dark" or "black". This rendering is favored in the *Dai Nihon Shinmei Jisho* (Cf. p. 137 under *Kuru Okami no Kami*). *Okami* (游加美 or 靈) is taken in ordinary sense of the reading 靈 as given in the *Nihongi*, namely *Okami*, "the good of rain or water", 六國史日本書紀 p. 14. The elements of the ideogram, itself, give the idea of a dragon god of rain (雨 "rain" and 龍 "dragon"). Corresponding to this ideographic sense, which of course is Chinese in origin, there is the original Japanese idea, thus rendered, which seems to be expressed in the phonetic element *O* (淤). It is possible that *O* is to be taken in the sense of *odosu*, "to frighten". That an element of terror entered into the original experience that gave rise to the deity, *Kuru Okami no Kami*, seems to be indicated in the *Nihongi* variant which says, "Izanagi" no Mikoto drew his sword and cut *Kagu Tsuchi* into three pieces. One of these became the Thunder god (*Ikadzuchi no Kami* 雷神), one became the "Great-Mountain-Body-Deity" (大山祇神), and one became the Fierce Rain God (高靈, *Taka Okami*, or *Taka Kami*), *Rikokoku Shi* 六國史 p. 18. The *Nihon Shinmei Jisho* (Cf. p. 189. "*Taka Okami*") suggests that *taku* should be taken in the sense of *Takeki* 猛, "Fierce".
39. 闇御津羽神 (*Kojiki*); 闇罔象神 (*Nihongi*) Motoori in the *Kojiki Den* interpretes *Mizu* (御津) in the sense "water" and *ha* (羽) in the sense of 速, *Sumiyuka*,

- "Swift". Cf. *Dai Nihon Shimmei Jisho* (大日本神名辭書) p. 137, under *Kura Mitsuha no Kami*. The *Nihongi* explicitly states that a certain *Midzu-ha-no-me* who was born from *Izanami* was a water diety (水神). Cf. *Rikkoku Shi, Nihonshoki* p. 12. The authority is good for the interpretation of *Kura-midzu-ho-no-Kami* as "Dark-Water-Swift-Deity".
40. 關山祇, *Rikkoku Shi Nihonshoki* (六國史, 日本書紀), p. 14.
41. The function of the sky-god, in universal mythology, as impregnating the rocks of earth with fire by the lightningflash or thunder-bolt, is indicated in the following important observation by Foucart—"Sacred fire, the emblem of this god (sky-god), is supposed to be lighted by him; detached rocks and sharp mountain-peaks are supposed to be caused by the thunder in direct relation with the force of the sky-god.....Belief in the presence of celestial fire (and consequently of the sky-god) in flint, combined with the notions about aerolites or meteorites, gives rise later to the world wide cult of palaeolithic or neolithic tools, weapons, and instruments which are worshipped as having fallen from the sky and which become emblems of the sky-god. "Foucart," "Sky and Sky-Gods" *HERE*, Vol. II, p. 583.
- The Japanese myth of the deities that appear at the point of *Izanagi's* sword reflect a wide-spread belief of primitive culture that flints, which contain the element of fire, are thrown down by the thunderbolt or that the sacred fire (i e. the lighting flash) falls from heaven and enters into "rocks trees, and herbage" (Cf. *Nihongi* I, p. 29) from whence it may be extracted by striking or rubbing. For a clear statement of the meaning of the death of *Kagu tsuchi* in relation to universal myths of the origin of fire see Revon "Cosmogony and Cosmology (Japanese)". *HERE*, Vol. 4, p. 165. Revon does not connect the death of *Kagutsuchi* with the lightning flash, yet such a connection is supported by the internal evidence of Japanese mythology itself as well as by that of comparative mythology.
42. Chamberlain, *Kojiki*, T. A. S. J. Vol. 10 (1882). Supplement, p. 33.
43. Muller, *Egyptian Mythology (Mythology of all Races*, Vol. XII). pp. 113 ff.
44. *HERE*, Vol. 2, p. 218.
45. *HERE*, Vol. 9, p. 78.
46. With regard to *Ishtar's* relation to seasonal changes in vegetation *Jeremias* remarks, "Since nature dies and comes to life again (in cosmical language sinks into the Under world and then rises again), She is the goddess who goes with dying nature into the Underworld and who brings up the new life." "Die Religion in Babylonien," *Allgemeine Religions-Geschichte* (München, 1918), p. 29.

47. Aston, *Nihongi*, I, p. 21.
48. HERE., Vol. 5, p. 12). Ref. is to Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folklore of N. India*, Vol. I. p. 30 ff; Hopkins, *Religion of India*, p. 532.
49. Hopkins, E. W., *The History of Religion*, p. 170.
50. HERE, Vol. 9, p. 823.
51. Or: *Waku-Musubi-no-Kami*; 和久産巢日神 (Kojiki), 稚産靈 (Nihongi).
52. Cf. Aston, *Nihongi*, I. p. 21.
53. Chamberlain, *op. cit.* p. 36.
54. Cf. HERE, Vol. 5, p. 129.
55. Tregear, *op. cit.* p. 314.
56. Cf. T A S J. Vol. 16, p. 262.
57. Cf. *Shinto, The Way of the Gods*. pp. 169-170.
58. 然後采生萬物焉, *Rikokoku Shi Nihon Shoki* (六國史, 日本書紀), p. 13.
59. Cf. Buckley, *Phallicism in Japan*, pp. 22-26.
60. For references consult Art. "Phallism," HERE. Vol. 9. See also Harrison, *op. cit.* pp. 396 ff., pp. 451 ff, ("The Omphalos"), also p. 266.
"At Syracuse, on the day of the Thesmophovia cakes of sesame and honey representing the female sex. . . . were carried about and offered to the goddesses—probably Demeter and Kore" ERE. Vol. 9, p. 818. These two deities were Earth-goddesses and the use of the sex emblems is related to fertility rites.
61. Hopkins, *op. cit.* p. 12.
62. Aston, *Nihongi* I. p. 21.
63. *Op. cit.*, p. 34.
64. Cf. Fox, W. S., *Greek and Roman Mythology*, p. 154 ff.

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(MARUZEN, 1921)