



# *The Creation of Heaven and the Earth*

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Japanese

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*Intermediate*  
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Of old the Heavens and the Earth were not separated. Land and water, solids and gases, fire and stone, light and darkness were mixed together. All was liquid and turbid chaos.

Then the mighty mass began to move from within. The lighter particles of gas and air began to rise, forming the sky and heavens. The heavy parts sank and cohered, becoming the earth. The water formed the four seas. Then there appeared something like a white cloud floating between heaven and earth. Out of this came forth three beings—The Being of the Middle of Heaven, The High August Being, and The Majestic Being. These three “hid their bodies.”

Out of the warm mould of the earth something like a rush sprouted up. It was clear and bright like crystal. From this rush-sprout came forth a being whose title is “The Delightful and Honorable Rush-Sprout.” Next appeared another being out of the buds of the rush-sprout whose name is “The Honorable Heaven-born.” These five beings are called “the heavenly gods.”

Next came into existence four pairs of beings viz.: (1) The Being Sprung from the First Mud, and The Being of the Sand and Mud; (2) The Being with Hands and Feet Growing, and the Being Having Breath; (3) The Male Being, and the Female Being of the Great Place (the earth); (4) The Being of Complete Perfection, and the Being who cried out “Strange and Awful” to her mate.

Thus the last pair that came into existence were the first man and woman called Izanagi and Izanami.

It is said that the other pairs of beings before Izanagi and Izanami were only their imperfect forms or the processes through which they passed before arriving at perfection.

These two beings lived in the Heavens. The world was not yet well formed, and the soil floated about like a fish in the water, but near the surface; and was called "The Floating Region." The sun, earth and moon were still attached to each other like a head to the neck, or arms to the body. They were little by little separating, the parts joining them growing thinner and thinner. This part, like an isthmus, was called "Heaven's Floating Bridge." It was on this bridge that Izanagi and Izanami were standing when they saw a pair of wagtails cooing and billing sweetly together. The heavenly couple were so delighted with the sight that they began to imitate the birds. Thus began the art of love, which mortals have practiced to this day.

While talking together on this Bridge of Heaven, they began to wonder if there was a world beneath them. They looked far down upon the green seas, but could see nothing! Then Izanagi took his long jeweled spear and plunged it into the turbid mass, turning it round and round. As he lifted it up, the drops which trickled from it hardened into earth of their own accord; and thus dry land was formed. As Izanagi was cleansing his spear the lumps of muck and mud which had adhered to it flew off into space, and were changed into stars and comets.

It is said that by turning his spear round and round, Izanagi set the Earth revolving in daily revolutions.

To the land thus formed, they gave the name of "The Island of the Congealed Drop," because they intended to create a large archipelago and wished to distinguish this as the first island. They descended from Heaven on the floating bridge and landed on the island. Izanagi struck his tall spear in the ground making it the axis of the world. He then proceeded to build a palace around the spear which formed the central pillar. [This spot was formerly at the North pole, but is now at Eshima, off the central eastern coast of Japan]. They then resolved to walk round the island and examine it. This done, they met together. Izanami cried out, "What a lovely man!" But Izanagi rebuked her for speaking first, and said they must try it again. Then they walked round the island once more. When they met, Izanami held her tongue while Izanagi said, "What a lovely woman!"

Being now both in good humor, they began the work of creating Japan. The first island brought up out of the water was Awaji; and then the main island. After that, eight large islands were created, whence comes one of

the names of Japan, "The Empire of the Eight Great Islands." Six smaller islands were also produced. The several thousand islets which make up the archipelago of Everlasting Great Japan were formed by the spontaneous consolidation of the foam of the sea.

After the country was thus formed the divine pair created eight millions of earthly gods or kami, and the ten thousand different things on the earth. Vegetation sprang up over all the land, which was however still covered with mist. So Izanagi created with his breath the two gods, male and female of the wind. All these islands are the children of Izanagi and Izanami, and when first born were small and feeble, but gradually grew larger and larger, attaining their present size like human beings, which are at first tiny infants.

As the gradual separation of the land and sea went on, foreign countries were formed by the congealing of the foam of the sea. The god of fire was then born of Izanami, his mother. This god often got very angry at any one who used unclean fire. Izanami then created by herself the gods of metals, of clay and of fresh water. This latter was told always to keep the god of fire quiet, and put him out when he began to do mischief.

Izanagi and Izanami, though married but a short time, began to quarrel, for Izanami had once told her husband not to look at her when she hid herself. But Izanagi did not do what she requested, but intruded on her privacy when she was unwell, and stared at her when she wished to be alone. Izanami then got very angry, and went down to the lower world of darkness, and disappeared.

In the dark world under the earth Izanami stayed a long time, and after long waiting, Izanagi went after her. In the darkness of the Under-world he was horrified at what he saw, and leaving his consort below, tried to escape to the earth again.

In his struggles several gods were created, one of them coming out of his staff. When he got up to daylight, he secured a large rock to close up the hole in the earth. Turning this rock into a god, he commanded him to watch the place. He then rushed into the sea and continued washing for a long time to purify himself. In blowing out from his lungs the polluted air inhaled in the Under-world, the two evil gods sprang forth from his breath. As these would commit great harm and wickedness, Izanagi created two other gods to correct their evil. But when he had washed his eyes and could see clearly again, there sprang out two precious and lovely beings; one from his left eye, being a rare and glistening maiden, whom he afterwards named Ama Térasu, or "The Heaven Illuminating Spirit."

From his right eye appeared Susa no O, the "Ruler of the Moon." Being now pure again, and having these lovely children, Izanagi rejoiced and said, "I have begotten child upon child, and at the end of my begetting, I have begotten me two jewel-children."

Now the brightness of the person of the maiden Ama Térasu was beautiful, and shone through Heaven and Earth. Izanagi, well pleased, said: "Though my children are many, none of them is like this wonder-child. She must not be kept in this region." So taking off the necklace of precious stones from his neck and rattling it, he gave it to her, saying, "Rule thou over the High Plain of Heaven."

At that time the distance between Heaven and Earth was not very great, and he sent her up to the blue sky by the Heaven-uniting Pillar, on which the Heavens rested like a prop. She easily mounted it, and lived in the sun, illuminating the whole Heavens and the Earth. The Sun now gradually separated from the Earth, and both moved farther and farther apart until they rested where they now are.

Izanagi next spoke to Susa no O the Ruler of the Moon, and said, "Rule thou over the new-born Earth and the blue Waste of the Sea, with its Multitudinous Salt Waters."

So then the Heavens and the Earth and Moon were created and inhabited. And as Japan lay directly opposite the sun when it separated from the Earth, it is plain that Japan lies on the summit of the globe. It is easily seen that all other countries were formed by the spontaneous consolidation of the ocean foam, and the collection of mud in the various seas. The stars were made to guide warriors from foreign countries to the court of the Mikado, who is the true Son of Heaven.

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