Chapter 1
Heaven and Earth First Become Active

When Heaven and Earth first became active (1), a deity came into existence (2) in Takamanohara 高天原 (3). Its name was Amenominakanushi no kami 天之御中主神 (4). Next Takamimusuhi no kami 高御産巣日神 appeared, and then, Kamumusuhi no kami 神産巣日神 (5). All three came into existence as solitary deities (6), and they hid their bodies (7).

Then, at the time when the land was still young, like floating fat, and drifting about like a jellyfish, a deity came into existence from a thing that sprouted forth like a reed shoot. Its name was Umashi ashikabi hikoji no kami 宇摩志阿斯訶備比古遲神 (8). Next Amenotokotachi no kami 天之常立神 (9) appeared. These two deities also came into existence as solitary deities and hid their bodies.

The five deities named above are the set-apart heavenly deities (10).

Text Notes

1. "When Heaven and Earth first became active" (*ametsuchi hajimete okorishi toki ni* 天地初発之時)

Various interpretations have been proposed regarding the reading and meaning of the digraph *shohatsu* 初発 found in this opening phrase of the *Kojiki* text.

Further comment: **The reading and meaning of the four graphs 天地初発.** The opening phrase of the *Kojiki* represents the universe through the graphs 天地 (*ametsuchi*, heaven and earth). The graph 天 (*ame*, *ten*) corresponds largely to Takamanohara 高天原 ("high heavenly plain"), named in the following phrase, while 地 (*tsuchi*, *chi*) is linked conceptually to "land" (*kuni* 国) and through this term to Ashihara no nakatsukuni 葦原中国 ("central land of reed plains"), which figures in later chapters as the main arena for the unfolding of the *Kojiki* narrative. The *Kojiki* goes on to depict the formation of the "land" and rulership over it as directed from Takamanohara.[1] The term "land" (*kuni*) carries the implication that it is a region over which some entity exercises authority; it presupposes a ruler. This point bears on Amaterasu ōmikami's later declaration that Takamanohara is "my land" and also on the description of the seas (*unahara* 海原) that Susanoo was supposed to govern as a "land."[2] The text's shift from referring initially to the earth as 地 in 天地 to "land" (国) is perhaps related to the fact that in the phrase following the opening reference to *ametsuchi* 天地, the deities are described as coming into existence in Takamanohara (see the next two text notes).

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[1] Aoki Shūhei, *Kodai bungaku no uta to setsuwa,* pp. 10–49.
[2] For these passages, see below, chapters 14 and 15.

Different readings of the digraph *shohatsu* 初発 have been proposed over the centuries, and there is as yet no definitive consensus. The medieval Ise-bon 伊勢本 lineage manuscripts adopt the reading *hirakeshi* ("opened up"), and Urabe-bon 卜部本 lineage manuscripts the reading *hirakuru* ("open").[3] Many early modern and modern editions and commentaries likewise opt for some form of *hiraku*. Such readings and interpretations draw from the sinified wording found in the *Kojiki* preface and the *Nihon shoki*. The *Kojiki* preface describes the beginning of the world as a process of separation or division, using the expressions *kenkon shobun* 乾坤初分 ("the initial separation of yang and yin") and *tenchi kaibyaku* 天地開闢 ("the opening up of heaven and earth"). The first passage of the *Nihon shoki* similarly uses the expressions *kaibyaku* 開闢 ("primordial opening") and *shohan* 初判 ("initial division") found in Chinese creation stories such as those in the *Huainanzi* 淮南子 or *Sanwu liji* 三五歷記.

In contrast to this approach, Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長 (1730−1801) called for trying to recover the worldview expressed in the ancient Japanese language underlying the Chinese graphs used to record the *Kojiki*. He rejected reading the digraph *shohatsu* as *hiraku*, seeing that reading as reflecting abstract Chinese theories of how the universe had come into being. Instead, he proposed, the digraph should be read simply as *hajime* ("beginning"), in line with the outlook expressed in the cosmogony myth particular to ancient Japan. He thus read the initial six graphs 天地初発之時 as *ametsuchi hajime no toki* ("at the beginning of the world"). He found support for this approach in phrases such as the first verse of *Man'yōshū* 万葉集 poem 167: "At the time of the beginning of heaven and earth . . ." (*ametsuchi no hajime no toki no* 天地之初時之).[4]

Today the influence of Chinese texts on the wording and content of the *Kojiki* is taken for granted, and many have noted the presence of Daoist ideas in the opening passage. We should not, however, conflate this point with the question of how to interpret the wording 天地初発. Inasmuch as the specific digraph 初発 does not occur in Chinese cosmogony myths, there is room to see its use as evidence, as Norinaga held, of a view of the world's formation particular to the *Kojiki*. At the same time, we should not ignore the implications of the compilers' choosing to conjoin the graph *hatsu* 発 ("become active," "start") with that for "beginning" (*sho*, *hajime* 初). The distinctive features of the expression lie precisely in its inclusion, and Norinaga's elision of it and reading of the digraph 初発 simply as *hajime* is not sustainable.

Elsewhere in the *Kojiki* the graph 発 is read *okoru* ("rise," "become active") and *tatsu* ("start up," "set out"). Some commentators, such as Nishimiya Kazutami 西宮一民, have thus proposed reading the opening phrase as *hajimete okorishi toki ni* ("when

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[3] Ise-bon lineage manuscripts are held to be textually related to the earliest extant *Kojiki* manuscript copy, the Shinpukuji-bon 真福寺本 of 1371–1372; they date from the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Urabe-bon lineage manuscripts derive from a transcription made by Urabe Kanenaga 卜部兼永 (1467–1536). (TN)

[4] Motoori Norinaga, *Kojiki den*, MNZ 9, pp. 121–23; Kojima et al., *Man'yōshū*, SNKBZ 6, p. 118.

[heaven and earth] first became active").[5] In recent years Yamaguchi Yoshinori 山口佳紀 and Kōnoshi Takamitsu 神野志隆光 have criticized this approach, arguing that the term *okoru* is not used of concrete objects. Drawing from Heian-period reading glosses, they propose instead to read the graph 発 as *arawaru* ("emerge," "appear") and the phrase as a whole as *ametsuchi hajimete arawareshi toki ni* ("when heaven and earth first appeared").[6] It is questionable, however, whether the world at the time of its origin can be considered a concrete object. Further, although examples exist in the *Nihon shoki* of reading the digraphs 発露 and 発顕 as *arawaru*, no instances can be identified of reading the graph 発 alone as such. Problems thus remain with adopting the reading *arawaru* here. It is difficult to reach a definitive conclusion, but among the other possibilities, *hiraku* also seems problematic. If the *Kojiki* compilers intended to use that term, with its connotations of opening up or separating out, the question arises why they did not choose a graph such as 開 or 闢. Since the *Kojiki* includes instances of reading the graph 発 as *okoru*, we have opted to read the graph combination at hand as *hajimete okorishi toki ni*.

Based on this reading, we take the phrase to mean "when the activity of Heaven and Earth began." The use of the graph 発 to express the starting point of the mythological world of the *Kojiki* corresponds to its use elsewhere in the text to convey a departure or start. The section on the district of Kashima 香島 in *Hitachi no kuni fudoki* 常陸国風土記 speaks of the myriad deities gathering in Takamanohara in "the time before the beginning of Heaven and Earth" (*ametsuchi no hajime yori saki* 天地草昧已前).[7] This passage should perhaps be considered as another instance of an attempt to avoid terms such as *tenchi kaibyaku* with its emphasis on the world forming through a process of separation.

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2. "Came into existence" (*naru* 成)

Motoori Norinaga held that the verb *naru* is used with three different meanings in the *Kojiki*: (1) The emergence or birth of something that did not exist previously, (2) the transformation of one thing into another, and (3) the completion of something.[8] Here it has the first of these senses. The compilers seem to have used the term *naru* to express the advent of deities in a stage prior to Izanaki and Izanami's producing deities by giving birth to them. The term "to give birth" (*umu* 生) would imply a parent-child relationship and the term "make" or "create" (*tsukuru* 作) would presume a differential relationship between creator and created. Use of the term *naru*, by contrast, made it possible to express the advent of entities existing outside the framework of such authority-based hierarchical

[5] Nishimiya, *Kojiki shūteiban*, pp. 26, 30.
[6] Kōnoshi and Yamaguchi, *Kojiki chūkai,* vol. 2, pp. 12–24; Yamaguchi and Kōnoshi, *Kojiki,* pp. 28–29.
[7] Uegaki, *Fudoki*, pp. 388–89.
[8] Motoori Norinaga, *Kojiki den*, MNZ 9, pp. 124–25.

relationships.[9]

Further comment: Types of creation myths and Japanese mythology. Myths are tales that relate various types of "beginnings," from the large story of how the world itself came into existence to accounts of the beginning of human life and death to more immediate accounts of the origin of a particular mountain or river. Many creation myths describe an evolution from chaos to cosmos or from the abstract to the particular. Hesiod's *Theogony*, a key source for Greek mythology, for instance, relates that first Chaos appeared, followed by Gaia (earth), Tartarus (the depths of the earth), and Eros. Eros is held to represent the force and impulse that binds different entities together. The gods thereupon began to conjoin, and when Gaia bore Uranus (heaven), the two of them went on to bear the mountains and seas.

In the *Kojiki*, too, Amenominakanushi no kami, whose name means "center of heaven," appears first, and then the "musuhi" and other deities, and finally Izanaki and Izanami, who are clearly differentiated as male and female. Engaging in sexual intercourse, they go on to bear the land, mountains and rivers, and vegetation. One can see in this *Kojiki* narrative the common origin myth pattern of an evolution from chaos to cosmos, from the abstract to the particular.

Researchers identify the creation myths found in world mythology as falling into several motif categories. Some of the most well-known include creation out of nothing, production through world parents, "earth-diver" (creation of the world out of something brought up from the ocean depths), transformation of the corpse of a giant, and generation from a cosmic egg. Often creation myths present not just one of these motifs but combine elements from several. Researchers hold this to be true of the *Kojiki* myths as well. The Izanaki-Izanami myth, for instance, shares elements with the world-parent motif, which conceptualizes the formation of the world as analogous to the process of human birth. The myth of Gaia and Uranus found in Hesiod's *Theogony* may also be said to fit the world-parent pattern, as does the following *Theogony* story of Cronus and Rhea producing the gods. In the ancient Babylonian Enuma Elish myth, the mingling of Apsu (fresh water, male) and Tiamat (salt water, female) leads to the birth of deities. The Egyptian Heliopolis myth depicts Atum as emerging from Nu (the waters of primordial chaos). Atum produces by himself Shu (air) and Tefnut (moisture), who jointly produce the earth deity Geb and the female sky deity Nut. The latter two then give birth to other deities, including Osiris, Isis, and Set. Siblings become parents and give birth to deities, and out of this process the world takes shape. Apart from these examples, Maori myth relates how the sky deity Rangi and earth deity Papa were locked in a tight embrace. The deities they produce pull them apart, creating space and light.

The earth-diver motif is found widely throughout North America and Northern Eurasia. Examples of this motif typically depict the world as originally covered by water. An animal of one sort or another dives deep into the water and brings up earth, out of

[9] See Maruyama Masao, *Rekishi shisō shū*, pp. 3–46.

which the land takes shape. The *Kojiki* does not include an account of diving into the water to gather earth, but the Izanaki-Izanami myth describes the two deities stirring the sea water with a spear and Onogoroshima 淤能碁呂嶋 island forming from the brine that drips from the spear. As Ōbayashi Taryō 大林太良 has pointed out, this episode can be seen as incorporating elements of the earth-diver motif.[10] Matsumoto Nobuhiro 松本信広 has similarly noted that the same episode shares aspects of the Polynesian creation myth in which the hero Maui catches and pulls up islands from the sea much as if the land were a large fish.[11] Researchers describe creation myths like that of Maui as examples of the island-fishing motif. The earth-diver and island-fishing motifs differ as to the action that secures land, but they can be said to invoke a similar mythological image in that both involve obtaining earth from a primeval sea.

The *Kojiki* presents yet another kind of motif in its description of the creation of the sun and moon. In its account, Izanaki performs ablutions after returning from the Land of Yomi, and Amaterasu appears when he washes his left eye, Tsukuyomi when he washes his right eye, and Susanoo when he washes his nose. Researchers have noted similarities between this myth and the creation-myth motif of transformation from the corpse of a giant. A typical example of this motif is the northern European story of the giant Ymir found in the Norse Snorri Edda. Odin, the leader of the gods, and his brothers kill the giant Ymir. From the flesh of Ymir's corpse they fashion the land, from his blood they make the ocean and lakes, from his bones they make the mountains, from his hair they make trees, and from his skull they make the sky. In the Babylonian Enuma Elish, too, Marduk, after killing Tiamat, splits her corpse into two, making one half into the sky and the other half into the earth. Her head becomes the mountains, while her two eyes become the sources of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

Researchers have also noted parallels between the Izanaki myth and ancient Indian and Chinese mythology. According to the "Hymn of Purusha" incorporated in the Indian Rig Veda, the gods kill the giant Purusha, who has a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, and a thousand legs, to offer in sacrifices. Thereupon the moon is born from his mind, the sun from his eyes, and the wind from his breath. According to the Chinese *Shuyiji* 述異記 (late fifth century?), the giant Pangu 盤古 was born when heaven and earth appeared and yin and yang began their interaction. When he died, his breath became the wind and clouds, his voice the thunder, his left eye the sun, his right eye the moon, his hands and feet and body the mountains, his blood the rivers, his flesh the soil, his hair and beard the stars, his body hair grass and trees, his bones metal and stones, his sweat the rain. Stories of the world forming from the body of a deity or giant are found widely rather than being unique to a particular culture, but in the case of the *Kojiki* myths it makes sense to presume that the most direct influence came from China.

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[10] Ōbayashi, *Shinwagaku nyūmon*.
[11] Matsumoto Nobuhiro, *Nihon shinwa no kenkyū*.

3. Takamanohara 高天原

Several instances of this term for the realm where the deities come into being and exist can be found in the variants (*aru fumi* 一書) of the Age of Deities chapter of the *Nihon shoki*, but it does not appear in the main text (*honsho* 本書). There the term used is simply "heaven" (*ame* 天) or "heaven above" (also read *ame* in the original, but transcribed with the digraph *tenjō* 天上). It thus has been argued that the specific term Takamanohara ("high heavenly plain") emerged together with the formation of the version of the myths found in the *Kojiki*.[12] As the Japanese-style posthumous name of Empress Jitō 持統 is Takaamanohara no hironohime no sumeramikoto 高天原広野姫天皇, researchers surmise that the term Takamanohara probably was coined in the period of her reign.

The *Kojiki* includes a gloss indicating that the graphs 天原 ("heavenly plain") should be read *amanohara*, not *amenohara*. In other words, the graph for "heaven" (天) should not be read as a single, discrete unit (*ame*), but with the pronunciation used when it is part of a compound term (*ama*). This suggests that "heavenly" and "plain" were understood to be closely linked and that the structure of the trigraph 高天原 is not 高天 ("high heaven") + 原 ("plain"), but 高 ("high") + 天原 ("heavenly plain"). As Komatsu Hideo 小松英雄 has pointed out, the *Kojiki* preface indicates that such glosses are intended to clarify a particular term's structure and meaning.[13] The word *amanohara* 天原 appears in the *Man'yōshū* as a term for "sky" in phrases such as "looking up at the sky" (*amanohara furisake mireba* 天原振離見者; MYS 289). By adding the prefix "high" (*taka* 高), the *Kojiki* compilers seem to have intended to convey the sense of a heavenly realm where the deities lived and that was the basis for ruling over what lay "below Heaven."

4. Amenominakanushi no kami 天之御中主神

This deity's name means literally "the deity that exists at the center of and governs heaven." An alternative version contained within the fourth variant of the first section of the Age of Deities chapter of the *Nihon shoki* mentions this deity in conjunction with the two deities that follow in the *Kojiki*, Takamimusuhi and Kamumusuhi. (The variant refers to them not as *kami* 神 but *mikoto* 尊, in line with the note appended to the main text of first section indicating that *mikoto* will be used as the appellation for the most exalted entities.)[14]

This deity is also mentioned in *Kogo shūi* 古語拾遺 and *Ise no kuni fudoki itsubun* 伊勢国風土記逸文. In all such instances, however, only the name is introduced, and

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[12] Nakamura, *Kojiki no honsei*, pp. 73–75. In line with this gloss, the original Japanese version of *Studies on the Kojiki* reads the term as Takaamanohara. The translation preserves the elided transcription Takamanohara conventional in English. (TN)

[13] Komatsu, *Kokugo shigaku kisoron*, pp. 217–23.

[14] Kojima et al., *Nihon shoki*, SNKBZ 2, pp. 20–21.

nothing is said about the deity's activities. Researchers thus have held that this deity was not rooted in longstanding rituals and beliefs, but took shape under the influence of Chinese Daoist thought. Chinese works identify the center of Heaven with the Pole Star; which also was deified as a supreme divinity under the name Tianhuang taidi 天皇太帝 (Jp. Tennō taitei, "Heavenly Ruler Great Monarch"). Some scholars see the theonym Tennō taitei as the source of the title *tennō* assumed by Japan's ruling lineage and have hypothesized that the idea of the deity Amenominakanushi took shape in conjunction with adoption of the title *tennō*.[15]

Further comment: Amenominakanushi no kami and notions of a supreme deity. The myths do not say anything about this deity's activities, and there is no evidence from antiquity of its actual worship. It is thus generally held that the notion of it took shape under the influence of Daoist thought. Scholars of comparative religion, however, have investigated evidence from various parts of the world suggesting that beliefs in a heavenly supreme deity may be of extremely ancient origin. Investigating the world view of Australian Aborigines, regarded at the time as "savage," the nineteenth-century Scottish folklorist Andrew Lang found evidence of worship of a heavenly supreme deity. On this basis he argued that worship of a sole supreme deity was the original form of religious belief. The Austrian historical ethnologist Wilhelm Schmidt, who was influenced by Lang's ideas, gathered examples from around the world of an original belief in a monotheistic supreme deity and analyzed them in his *Der Ursprung der Gottesidee* (The Origin of the Idea of God), published in twelve volumes between 1912 and 1954. He, too, argued that such beliefs constituted the oldest form of religion, characterizing them as "primitive monotheism."

The scholar of the history of religions Mircea Eliade developed the hypothesis that the remoteness of the supreme heavenly deity made it difficult for people to engage in its worship, leading to its omission from myths and rites. As other religious forms gradually displaced the supreme deity, it became a *deus otiosus* ("inactive deity"). In the case of Mesopotamia, for instance, the sky deity Anu or Anum (Sumerian An) is held to have occupied the highest position in the pantheon, but because of its abstract nature, it did not play an important mythological role and was not worshiped. By the historical era it had already become a *deus otiosus*. The sky deity Uranus similarly figures in Greek mythology as a primordial central deity but was not the object of any cult.

Under the influence of these approaches, Yoshida Atsuhiko 吉田敦彦 has proposed that Amenominakanushi, too, may have been a supreme deity separated from the human world that had already become a *deus otiosus* by the time of the compilation of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*.[16]

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[15] Terada, "Amenominakanushi no shinmei o megutte"; Fukunaga, *Dōkyō to kodai Nihon*, pp. 178–81.
[16] Yoshida Atsuhiko, *Nihon shinwa to in'ō shinwa*, pp. 152–53.

5. Takamimusuhi no kami 高御産巣日神 and Kamumusuhi no kami 神産巣日神

Almost none of the deities mentioned in the opening section of the *Kojiki* prior to the advent of Izanaki and Izanami reappear in later sections. The two *musuhi* deities, however, are an exception. This point relates to the question of how to interpret the issue, discussed below, of deities who hide their bodies (*mi o kakushiki* 身隠). In the *Nihon shoki*, Takamimusuhi appears in the ninth section of the Age of Deities chapter, which describes the "cession of the land" (*kuniyuzuri* 国譲) and the "descent of the Heavenly Grandson" (*tenson kōrin* 天孫降臨). There he acts as the commanding deity of the heavenly realm. Indeed, in the main text, he plays a more prominent role than Amaterasu. This circumstance has led to a debate as to which of these two deities, Amaterasu or Takamimusuhi, should be regarded as the original commanding deity.

Kamumusuhi, by contrast, is mentioned in the *Nihon shoki* solely in the alternative version contained within the fourth variant of the first section of the Age of Deities chapter (the same subvariant in which Amenominakanushi is named) and does not reappear in subsequent episodes. This deity does figure, however, as a major Izumo deity in the *Izumo no kuni fudoki* 出雲国風土記, with the name transcribed as Kamumusuhi no mikoto 神魂命. It remains uncertain whether by origin this deity is a central deity related to the imperial house or a deity with roots in beliefs indigenous to Izumo.

In the *Kojiki*, Takamimusuhi acts together with Amaterasu as the commanding deity of Takamanohara. At the same time, Kamumusuhi, who is also called Kamumusuhi mioya no mikoto 神産巣日御祖命, or, "August Parent Kamumusuhi," appears in conjunction with Izumo deities such as Susanoo and Ōkuninushi, toward whom it acts as a protector. Although the process by which the myths took shape is not well understood, the compilers can be said to have structured the opening section of the *Kojiki* to juxtapose the Takamanohara and Izumo deity lineages, pairing the representative or ancestral deities of these two worlds that will eventually interact in the "cession of the land" episode.[17]

Interpretation of the element *musuhi* generally follows Motoori Norinaga's view of it as combining the two morphemes *musu* ("generative impetus") and *hi* ("spiritual impetus").[18] Opinion divides whether to consider the verb *musu* as transitive or intransitive (Norinaga, too, wavers on this point). Kurano Kenji 倉野憲司, by contrast, takes *musuhi* to be a single lexeme deriving from the verb *musubu* 結ぶ ("to bind," "to produce," "to form").[19] This argument's dependence on usages from later periods leaves it open to question. Nakamura Hirotoshi 中村啓信, regarding the hearth deity (*kamadogami* 竈神) as the commanding deity, sees the original form as *umusuhi*.[20] Kōnoshi Takamitsu and Yamaguchi Yoshinori postulate the existence of an intransitive

[17] Mizoguchi Mutsuko 溝口睦子 has discussed extensively the temporal and spatial shifts in the relationship between Takamimusuhi and Amaterasu. See her *Ōken shinwa no nigen kōzō*.
[18] Motoori Norinaga, *Kojiki den*, MNZ 9, pp. 128–31.
[19] Kurano, *Kojiki zenchūshaku*, vol. 2, pp. 25–26.
[20] Nakamura, *Kojiki no honsei*, pp. 99–113.

verb *umusu* expressing the notion of spontaneous generation in contrast to the transitive verb *umu* ("to give birth") and argue for a combination of *umusu* and *hi*.[21] In our view, such interpretations are not sufficiently persuasive to refute that deriving from Norinaga.

6. "Solitary deity" (*hitorigami* 独神)

The term "solitary deity" is the counterpart of the "paired" (*tagueru* 双) deities that appear subsequently (see chapter 2). As the latter are male and female deities that form a pair, *hitorigami* indicates a solitary entity without a partner. The corresponding passage in the *Nihon shoki* main text uses the formulation "pure male" (*hitao* 純男).[22] It thus would be possible to interpret the *Kojiki*'s "solitary deities" as also being male. The following passage describing the paired deities of the "seven generations of the age of deities" (*kamuyo nanayo* 神世七代), however, uses expressions indicating gender to identify the pairs, beginning with the deity Uhijini and his "sister-spouse" (*imo* 妹) Suhijini. It therefore seems preferable to interpret the "solitary deities" of the opening passage as entities without a defining gender. Objections may be raised, such as interpretations of Kamumusuhi as a female deity or the typically male suffix *hiko* in the name of the fourth deity mentioned in this passage, Umashi ashikabi hikoji. On the other hand, Kamumusuhi's gender cannot be specified unequivocally, and even if Umashi ashikabi hikoji's name may contain a male-like element, is it not beside the point to try to assign either male or female gender to this first group of deities who do not form pairs? Understanding them as being without specific gender bears on the following issue of "hid their bodies."

7. "Hid their bodies" (*mi o kakushiki* 隠身)

Urabe-bon lineage manuscripts gloss the graphs 隠身 as *mi o kakushimasu* ("hid their bodies"). In his edition of 1887, Tanaka Yoritsune 田中頼庸 glossed them as *kakurimi ni masu* ("remained hidden").[23] Subsequently, however, Mitsuya Shigematsu 三矢重松 argued that the character sequence 而隠身也 does not allow syntactically for the reading *kakurimi*.[24] Since then the reading *mi o kakusu* has been widely accepted.[25]

Further comment: How should we understand the statement that deities who have just appeared "hid their bodies"? One interpretation might be that it presents them as bodiless entities without a definite form, but this presumes the syntactically problematic reading *kakurimi* ("remain hidden"). Was not the digraph 隠身 likely intended to indicate that these deities migrated to an invisible world or transformed themselves into something invisible? The expression *mi* 身 (body) offers a key to thinking about this issue. Izanaki and Izanami subsequently engage in a dialogue about their respective

[21] Kōnoshi and Yamaguchi, *Kojiki chūkai,* vol. 2, pp. 27–29.
[22] Kojima et al., *Nihon shoki*, SNKBZ 2, pp. 18–19.
[23] Tanaka Yoritsune, *Kōtei Kojiki*, vol. 1, p. 1a.
[24] Mitsuya, *Kojiki ni okeru tokushu naru kunpō no kenkyū*, p. 19.
[25] Mitsuya, *Kojiki ni okeru tokushu naru kunpō no kenkyū*, pp. 18–19.

bodies, and the land (*kuni* 国) to which they give birth is also described in terms of "bodies" (see chapters 4 and 5). In other words, the physical bodies of a pair of male and female deities give birth to the physical bodies of the land. Izanaki and Izanami represent the culmination of ten sets of "paired" (*tagueru* 双) male and female deities. The entities preceding these paired deities are "solitary deities" (*hitorigami*) who hide their bodies. Izanaki and Izanami act by making use of their bodies. The "solitary deities," by contrast, have neither a definite sex nor a partner to couple with. They are presented as entities who cannot put their bodies to use (in other words, give birth through the act of procreation). Is not the expression "hid their bodies" intended to convey this circumstance?

Some would argue that the phrase "hid their bodies" is intended to indicate that the first deities to appear refrained from claiming the foreground in deference to Amaterasu ōmikami, who would subsequently become the central figure in Takamanohara, and instead took parts as supporting figures. Such an approach, however, cannot account for the role played by Takamimusuhi. The reference to "body" in the opening passage of the text should rather be considered in relation to the repeated focus on the body in the Izanaki and Izanami myths. We might also note that the relationship between Izanaki and Izanami as deities who act with their bodies and the initial deities who precede them is also that between deities who receive a "command" and those who give it (see chapter 3). In other words, it might be understood as a relationship between "acting" deities and "commanding" deities. Also pertinent is that many references to the body in the *Kojiki* have to do with conception, suggesting a close association between "body" and "giving birth."[26]

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8. Umashi ashikabi hikoji no kami 宇摩志阿斯訶備比古遲神

Umashi is an expression of praise. *Ashikabi* (reed shoot) epitomizes a young vital force springing forth. The name of this deity thus expresses the circumstances of the world when it emerged "from a thing that sprouted forth like a reed shoot." The *hiko* of *hikoji* is the same as that in the paired terms *hime* and *hiko* used to denominate female and male deities and personages. *Hikoji* would thus seem to indicate male gender, and it is possible that Umashi ashikabi hikoji was originally thought of as a male deity. As discussed above, however, the *Kojiki* narrative presents this deity as part of a category of deities without specific gender, and it is best seen from that perspective.

Some variants of the corresponding passage in the *Nihon shoki* list Umashi ashikabi hikoji as the first deity to appear (variants 2 and 3), but the main text and variants 1, 4, and 5 name Kuninotokotachi no mikoto 国常立尊 as the first to appear. These disparities likely reflect different transmissions rooted in divergent conceptualizations of the beginning of the world: one type that emphasized the origin of the land (the *Nihon shoki* main text and variants 1, 4, and 5), another that emphasized the origin of life (*Nihon*

[26] For further discussion, see Taniguchi, "Kojiki shinwa no mi o kangaeru."

shoki variants 2 and 3), and a third that emphasized the centrality of the heavens and the emergence of deities possessing the capacity to generate all creatures and things (the *Kojiki*). Even versions that put Kuninotokotachi first, however, tend to postulate "a thing" as the premise for the advent of deities. The *Nihon shoki* main text, for instance, states, "Between Heaven and Earth a thing was born. In form it was like a reed shoot, and thereupon it became a deity." The first *Nihon shoki* variant states, "A thing existed in the midst of emptiness; its form is difficult to describe. From within it a deity was generated spontaneously."[27] Along with the advent of the first deity being associated with a "thing," in many cases this "thing" is likened to a "reed shoot." In other words, deities were conceptualized as being generated from "a thing"; this "thing" did not have a definite shape, but it was presented as possessing an impetus for growth like that of a reed shoot.[28]

These examples suggest that the notion of *naru* (coming into existence) did not necessarily presume "existence" as arising out of absolute nothingness and that the first deities originally may have been understood as emerging out of a "thing." Seen from this perspective, the *Kojiki*'s presentation of the three deities preceding Umashi ashikabi hikoji may stand alone in depicting "existence" as produced out of "nothingness."

9. Amenotokotachi no kami 天之常立神

This deity's name makes a pair with that of the next deity to be mentioned, Kuninotokotachi no kami 国之常立神 (see chapter 2). The main text of the first section of the Age of Deities chapter of the *Nihon shoki* situates Kuninotokotachi as the first deity to appear. By contrast, Amenotokotachi is mentioned only in the sixth variant of the first section. Amenotokotachi has thus been hypothesized to be a late invention, devised as a counterpart to Kuninotokotachi. The morpheme *toko* transcribed here by the graph 常 has been thought to mean *toko* in the sense of "floor" (床), that is "foundation" or "base." The graph 常, however, usually carries the meaning "eternal." Thus even if the *toko* of this deity's name derives from *toko* meaning "foundation," was not the transcription of it as 常 intended to convey also the sense "eternally unchanging"? The following element *tachi* 立 means "to appear."

As the land existed in only an unstable form at this stage, a deity whose name signifies the emergence of an eternal foundation might plausibly be important. The world of Takamanohara, however, already existed. It is difficult to see a comparable need for a deity to guarantee its "eternal foundation," and, as has been hypothesized, Amenotokotachi was likely devised as a counterpart to Kuninotokotachi.

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[27] Kojima et al., *Nihon shoki*, SNKBZ 2, pp. 18–20.

[28] Saijō Tsutomu 西条勉, Mibu Sachiko 壬生幸子, and Masuda Katsumi 益田勝実 have pointed out that both this initial *Kojiki* passage and the later "contest of oaths" episode (in which deities are produced out of objects exchanged between Amaterasu and Susanoo) bespeak a view of deities as emerging from "things." For further discussion, see the commentary to chapter 16 and Taniguchi, "'Kojiki' shinwa no naka no saigai."

10. "Set-apart heavenly deities" (*koto amatsu kami* 別天神)

The edition of *Kojiki* put together by Watarai Nobuyoshi 度会延佳 (1615−1691) and published in 1687 glosses the graphs 別天 as *wake ame no*, and Kanda Hideo 神田秀夫 and Ōta Yoshimaro 太田善麿 read the three graphs as *wake amatsu kami*.[29] All other editions follow the reading *koto amatsu kami* adopted by Motoori Norinaga in his *Teisei kokun Kojiki* 訂正古訓古事記 (1799).[30]

Further comment: Norinaga took the deities who appear from this point on as having come into existence in "this land"; as such, they were different from the "heavenly" deities who had appeared in the heavens. He argues that the term "set-apart heavenly deities" does not occur in the *Nihon shoki* because that text does not say anything about the deities who came into existence in the heavens and instead starts its account from the deities who appeared in the earthly realm. He introduces as well but rejects the possibility that the phrase "set-apart heavenly deities" was used to demarcate the five deities listed in the opening passage from Amaterasu and other heavenly deities.[31]

In both instances Norinaga takes the graph *betsu* 別 as equivalent to *i/koto* 異 ("different"). It is questionable whether the graph has this direct equivalence. Apart from in deity and human names, the *Kojiki* uses 別 elsewhere to mean to divide up jurisdictions or responsibilities.[32] There are no instances of its being read *koto* or used in the sense of "different" or "special." The graph, on the other hand, incorporates the idea that one thing has been demarcated from another. In this regard it can be said to convey that something is different from something else or special in comparison to something else. Opinions divide as to whether the object of comparison in this case are the deities that appear from Kuninotokotachi on or the heavenly deities that figure later together with Amaterasu ōmikami. Within the world of the myths do the five deities of the opening passage have an absolute status in comparison to other deities? Or should they be distinguished as heavenly deities from Amaterasu and those heavenly deities associated with her? These are important questions in considering the overall structure of the *Kojiki* mythological world, but they are not easily answered.

As for the reading of the graph 別, elsewhere, where it appears in names, the *Kojiki* compilers include glosses indicating it should be read as *wake*, but they do not do so here. It is possible that they simply overlooked providing a gloss because the opening section of the text was added at a later stage. Provisionally, however, we have assumed that they did not provide one because they intended the graph to be read differently here. We have thus kept the prevailing reading of *koto*. It may be noted that all other instances of the graph 別 in the *Kojiki* apart from here and its use in deity and personal names are verbal forms. It thus might be appropriate to take the phrase 別天神 to mean "are set apart as heavenly deities," but we will reserve this possibility for future consideration.

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[29] Watarai Nobuyoshi, *Gōtō Kojiki*, p. 21; Kanda and Ōta, *Kojiki*, vol. 1, p. 173.
[30] Motoori Norinaga, *Teisei kokun Kojiki*, p. 537.
[31] Motoori Norinaga, *Kojiki den*, MNZ 9, pp. 141–42, 154.
[32] See, for instance, Yamaguchi and Kōnoshi, *Kojiki*, pp. 38–39, 60–61, 214–15, 260–61.

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