

shall be kept as my territory and I will dwell in it forever. I will protect it like a precious jewel. Green hills and mountains shall surround Izumo, and I shall protect it. Therefore, the place will be called Mori, meaning 'to defend.' (The [new] graphs for *mori* were adopted in 726.)

*Township of Yashiro.* Yashiro is located thirteen miles east of the district office. "This is the shrine in which I will reside," said the God Amatsuko, the ancestor of Iki of Yashiro, when he came down from heaven with Ame no Hohi. That is why the place is called Yashiro, meaning shrine.

[Aoki, *Izumo no kuni fudoki*, pp. 80, 82]

#### ENSHRINEMENT OF AMATERASU

The following entries in the *Nihongi*, for the twenty-fifth year of Emperor Suinin's reign (5 B.C.E., according to traditional dating, but more probably around 200 C.E.), describe the founding of the great shrine to Amaterasu at Ise. The moving of the Sun Goddess no doubt refers to the transporting of the mirror thought to be her embodiment.

25th year, Spring, 2nd month, 8th day. The emperor commanded the five officers, Takem Kaha-wake, ancestor of the Abe no Omi; Hiko-kuni-fuku,<sup>39</sup> ancestor of the imperial chieftains; Okashima, ancestor of the Nakatomi deity chieftains; Tochine, ancestor of the Mononobe deity chieftains; and Take-hi, ancestor of the Ōtomo deity chieftains, saying: "The sagacity of our predecessor on the throne, the Emperor Minaki-iri-hiko-tine, was displayed in wisdom: he was reverential, intelligent, and capable. He was profoundly unassuming, and his disposition was to cherish self-abnegation. He adjusted the machinery of government and did solemn worship to the gods of Heaven and Earth. He practiced self-restraint and was watchful as to his personal conduct. Every day he was heedful for that day. Thus the weal of the people was sufficient, and the empire was at peace. And now, under our reign, shall there be any remissness in the worship of the Gods of Heaven and Earth?"<sup>40</sup>

3rd month, 10th day. The Great Goddess Amaterasu was taken from [the princess] Toyosuki-iri-hime<sup>41</sup> and entrusted to [the princess] Yamato-hime no Mikoto. Now Yamato-hime sought for a place where she might enshrine the Great Goddess. So she proceeded to Sasabata in Uda. Then turning back from

thence, she entered the land of Ōmi and went round eastward to Mino, whence she arrived in the province of Ise.

Now the Great Goddess Amaterasu instructed Yamato-hime, saying: "The province of Ise, of the divine wind,<sup>42</sup> is the land whither repair the waves from the eternal world, the successive waves. It is a secluded and pleasant land. In this land I wish to dwell." In compliance, therefore, with the instruction of the Great Goddess, a shrine was erected to her in the province of Ise. Accordingly an Abstinence Palace<sup>43</sup> was built at Kawakami in Isuzu. This was called the palace of Ise. It was there that the Great Goddess Amaterasu first descended from Heaven.

[Adapted from Aston, *Nihongi*, I, pp. 175-176]

#### SHINTO PRAYERS (NORITO)

The *norito* are prayers or mantras uttered on ritual occasions or festivals. Those presented here are mostly preserved in the *Engi-shiki* of 927 C.E., a compilation of the Heian court that reflects the codification of Shinto practice in relation to the unification and bureaucratization of the state but that also records many aspects of Japanese religion long antedating the process of state building.

Most of the *norito* thus preserved are highly formulaic, ritualized, and repetitive. Typically they consist of an invocation of a god or gods; a recollection of the founding of the shrine, which is the site of the ceremony; an identification of the recipient and his status; a list of offerings; a petition for certain benefits or blessings; a promise of recompense to be made in return; and a final salutation. Along with this generalized formula, there is great specificity in regard to particular deities, places, and details of local history and myth. Here, however, the main focus is on the imperial house and its Grand Shrine at Ise.

#### NORITO FOR THE FESTIVAL OF THE SIXTH MONTH

This prayer was offered in the sixth month by a priest of the Nakatomi clan to pray for the well-being of the emperor and imperial house. It is similar to one offered at Ise for the success of the grain-growing season. Although much of it is addressed to the Sovereign Deities in general, the following excerpts focus on a prayer to Amaterasu on behalf of the reigning emperor, spoken of here as the Sovereign Grandchild.

39. Both these men are named in Emperor Sujin's reign, tenth year, eighth-five years earlier, according to the traditional reckoning.

40. This speech is thoroughly Chinese and Confucian. Much of the language comes from the Canon of Yao in the *Classic of Documents*.

41. To whom she had been entrusted in 92 B.C.E., eighty-seven years earlier.

42. This is a stock epithet (*mukuru koto*) for this province.

43. Abstinence Palace or Worship Palace: "On the accession of an Emperor, an unmarried Princess of the Imperial House was selected for the service of the Shrine of Ise, or if there was no such unmarried Princess, then another Princess was fixed upon by divination and appointed worship-princess. The Worship-Palace was for her residence." (Aston, *Nihongi*, I, p. 176).

Hear me, all of you assembled priests (*kami-nusi*) and exorcists (*hafuri*). Thus I speak.

I humbly speak before you,

The Sovereign Deities whose praises are fulfilled as

Heavenly Shrines and Earthly Shrines

By the command of the Sovereign Ancestral Gods and Goddesses

Who divinely remain in the High Heavenly Plain. . . .

I humbly speak with special words in the solemn presence

Of the deity *Amaterasu-oho-mikami*,

Who dwells at Ise:

The lands of the four quarters, upon which you gaze out,

As far as the heavens stand as partitions,

As far as the land extends in the distance,

As far as the bluish clouds trail across the sky,

As far as the white clouds hang down on the horizon;

On the blue ocean

As far as the prows of the ships can reach,

Without stopping to dry their oars,

On the great ocean the ships teem continuously;

On the roads by land

As far as the horses' hooves can penetrate,

The ropes of the [tribute] packages tightly tied,

Treading over the rocks and roots of trees,

They move over the long roads without pause, continuously;

The narrow land is made wide,

The steep land is made level;

And you entrust the distant lands [to the Sovereign Grandchild]

As if casting myriad ropes about them and drawing them hither,

[If you vouchsafe to do all this], then in your presence

The first fruits of the tribute will be piled up

Like a long mountain range,

And of the rest [the Sovereign Grandchild] will partake tranquilly.

Also because you bless the reign of the Sovereign Grandchild

As a long reign, eternal and unmoving,

And prosper it as an abundant reign,

As my Sovereign Ancestral Gods and Goddesses,

Like a cormorant bending my neck low,

I present to you the noble offerings of the Sovereign Grandchild

And fulfill your praises. Thus I speak.

[Adapted from Philippi, *Norito*, pp. 36-39]

# THE BLESSING OF THE GREAT PALACE

This prayer, invoking the gods' protection of the Imperial Palace, was recited by a member of the Imbe (Imbe) clan, professional abstainers whose role thus is connected with purification rituals. Note that in the absence of a supreme god, by certifying the rule of the imperial line, this polytheistic pantheon acts "in council," that is, by consensus.

The Sovereign Ancestral Gods and Goddesses,

Who divinely remain in the High Heavenly Plain,

Commanded the Sovereign Grandchild to occupy the heavenly high seat,

And presenting unto him the mirror and sword, the heavenly signs [of the imperial succession],

Said in blessing:

"Our sovereign noble child, oh Sovereign Grandchild,

"Occupying this heavenly high seat,

"[Retain] the heavenly sun-lineage for myriads of thousands of long

autumns,

"And rule tranquilly the Great Eight-Island Land of the Plentiful

Reed Plains and of the Fresh Ears of Grain as a peaceful land"

Thus entrusting the land to him,

By means of a heavenly council,

They silenced to the last leaf

The rocks and the stumps of the trees,

Which had been able to speak,

And [caused him to] descend from the heavens

To reign over this kingdom

[As] the Sovereign Grandchild ruling the heavenly sun-lineage. . . .

Because you protect the reign of the Sovereign Grandchild as eternal and

unmoving,

And prosper it as an abundant reign, an overflowing reign, a long reign;

Therefore, onto the long strings of myriad *mi-fu* noble beads,

Which have been purified and sanctified by the sacred bread-makers,

Have been attached colored cloth, radiant cloth;

And I, Imbe-no-sukune So-and-so, hanging a thick sash over my weak

shoulders,

Bless and pacify—

Grant that any error or omission in this

May be heard rectified and behold rectified

By [the rectifying deities] *Kama-naho-bi-no-mikoto* and

*Oh-no-naho-bi-no-mikoto*,

And that they may hear and receive it tranquilly and peacefully.  
Thus I humbly speak.

[Philippi, *Norito*, pp. 4<sup>r</sup>-43]

# THE GREAT EXORCISM OF THE LAST DAY OF THE SIXTH MONTH

This *norito* is of special interest because it details the sins to be exorcised, some of them in the nature of moral faults but others simply baneful occurrences—misfortunes or things that have just gone wrong and need to be remedied. Notice again that the gods act in concert; also notice the means of purification that they use: washing away, blowing away, and "losing" them (keeping away).

By the command of the Sovereign Ancestral Gods and Goddesses,  
Who divinely remain in the High Heavenly Plain,

The eight myriad deities were convoked in a divine convocation.

Consulted in a divine consultation,

And spoke these words of entrusting:

"Our Sovereign Grandchild is to rule

"The Land of the Plentiful Reed Plains of the Fresh Ears of Grain.

"Tranquilly as a peaceful land."

Having thus entrusted the land,

They inquired with a divine inquiry

Of the unruly deities in the land.

And expelled them with a divine expulsion. . . .

The lands of the four quarters thus entrusted,

Great Yamato, the Land of the Sun-Seen-on-High,

Was pacified and made a peaceful land;

The palace posts were firmly planted in the bed-rock below,

The cross-beams soaring high towards the High Heavenly plain,

And the noble palace of the Sovereign Grandchild constructed,

Where, as a heavenly shelter, as a sun-shelter,

he dwells hidden,

And rules [the kingdom] tranquilly as a peaceful land.

The various sins perpetrated and committed

By the heavenly ever-increasing people to come into existence

In this land which he is to rule tranquilly as a peaceful land.

First, the heavenly sins:

Breaking down the ridges,

Covering up the ditches,

Releasing the irrigation sluices,

Double planting,

Setting up stakes,

Skimming alive, skinning backwards,

Defecation—

Many sins [such as these] are distinguished and called the heavenly sins.

The earthly sins:

Cutting living flesh, cutting dead flesh,

While leprous, skin excrescences,

The sin of violating one's own mother,

The sin of violating one's own child,

The sin of violating a mother and her child,

The sin of violating a child and her mother,

The sin of transgression with animals,

Woes from creeping insects,

Woes from the deities on high,

Woes from the birds on high,

Killing animals, the sin of witchcraft—

Many sins [such as these] shall appear.

When they thus appear,

By the heavenly shrine usage. . . .

Pronounce the heavenly ritual, the solemn ritual words.

When he thus pronounces them . . . the heavenly deities

Will hear and receive [these words].

When they thus hear and receive,

Then, beginning with the court of the Sovereign Grandchild,

In the lands of the four quarters under the heavens,

Each and every sin will be gone.

As the gusty wind blows apart the myriad layers of heavenly clouds;

As the morning mist, the evening mist is blown away by the

morning wind, the evening wind. . . .

As a result of the exorcism and the purification,

There will be no sins left.

They will be taken into the great ocean

By the goddess called Se-ori-tsu-hime,

Who dwells in the rapids of the rapid-running rivers

Which fall surging perpendicular

From the summits of the high mountains and the summits of the

low mountains.

When she thus takes them,

They will be swallowed with a gulp

By the goddess called Haya-aki-tsu-hime. . . .

When she thus swallows them with a gulp,

The deity called Iruki-do-mushi,