

KOJIKI

Translated
with an Introduction and Notes
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you as the land you are to rule. In accordance with the command, descend from the heavens!"

8 Then, as PIKO-PO-NÖ-NINIGI-NÖ-MIKÖTÖ was about to descend from the heavens, there appeared in the myriad heavenly crossroads⁶ a deity whose radiance shone above through TAKAMA-NÖ-PARA and below through the Central Land of the Reed Plains.⁷

9 Then AMA-TERASU-OPO-MI-KAMĪ and TAKA-KI-NÖ-KAMĪ commanded AMĒ-NÖ-UZUME-NÖ-KAMĪ, saying:

10 "Although you are a graceful maiden,⁸ you are [the type of] deity who can face and overwhelm [others].⁹ Therefore go alone and inquire: 'Who is here on the path of my offspring descending from the heavens?'"

11 When she inquired, the reply was:

"I am an earthly deity¹⁰ named SARUTA-BIKO-NÖ-KAMĪ. I have come out because I have heard that the offspring of the heavenly deities is to descend from the heavens, and I have come forth to wait that I might serve as his guide."¹¹

assumption of rule over the Land of the Reed Plains was related to the appearance of a grain-spirit to sanctify the grain; his name may be translated as 'Lad of the rice-ears which are peaceful [or rugged] Deity'. A primary rôle of the emperors, the descendants of this deity, was to officiate in the harvest festival and other agricultural rituals. *Kojiki taisei*, V, 96.

⁶ *Amē nō ya-timigai*; literally, 'heavenly eight crossroads.' Because of this reference, some commentators have connected this deity with the roadside phallic deity of later times, the *Sai-nō-kami*.

⁷ The *Nihon shoki* passage gives a more vivid description of Saruta-biko:

"As they were about to descend, the forerunner returned and said:

"There is a deity in the myriad heavenly crossroads, whose nose is seven hands long and who is over seven feet tall. . . . Also the corners of his mouth [or: his mouth and his posterior] are brightly lit up, and his eyes resemble huge mirrors, shining brilliantly like red ground-cherries." *Asahi* ed., I, 142. See also Aston, I, 77.

⁸ *Ta-uwaya-me*; cf. 16:1.

⁹ Or 'who can overwhelm the opposing deities.' Matsumura (III, 567-70) cites a number of examples of female shamans being sent ahead to meet the enemy and to gain the advantage by their superior magic powers.

¹⁰ *Kuni-ku-kami*; cf. note on 19:6.

¹¹ Although the *Kojiki* version of this episode is without drama, in the *Nihon shoki* Saruta-biko appears clearly as a hostile figure who intended to oppose the descent of the heavenly deities. See Aston, I, 77-78.

Matsumura (III, 559-84) shows that Saruta-biko was a priestly figure of the earthly deities performing a magic rite to keep the heavenly deities out; Amē-nō-uzume-nō-mikötō was a priestly figure (a female shaman) of the heavenly deities who performed a counter-rite, a spell against his evil influence.

CHAPTER 39

PIKO-PO-NÖ-NINIGI-NÖ-MIKÖTÖ DESCENDS
FROM THE HEAVENS BEARING THE THREE ITEMS
OF THE SACRED REGALIA AND ACCOMPANIED BY
VARIOUS DEITIES. HE ESTABLISHES HIS PALACE
AT TAKA-TI-PO.¹

1 Then assigning [their respective] rôles to AMĒ-NÖ-KO-YANE-NÖ-MIKÖTÖ, PU-TO-TAMA-NÖ-MIKÖTÖ, AMĒ-NÖ-UZUME-NÖ-MIKÖTÖ, ISI-KÖRI-DOME-NÖ-MIKÖTÖ, and TAMA-NÖ-YA-NÖ-MIKÖTÖ, altogether five clan heads, they² had them descend from the heavens.³

2 Hereupon, she⁴ imparted [unto him⁵] the myriad MACA-TAMA beads and the mirror which had been used to lure,⁶ as well as the sword *Kusa-nagi*;⁷ and also [sent along] TÖKÖ-YÖ-NÖ-OMÖPI-KANE-

This chapter is the central point of the first book of the *Kojiki*, the climax to which the preceding narratives have been leading, and the antecedent for the narratives to come. Matsumura (III, 510-17), quoting many Korean sources, concludes that the myth of the heavenly descent is a very old myth of North Asiatic (Tungusic?) origin. The common elements of all these myths—Korean as well as Japanese—are the deities' or rulers' descent from heaven to a mountain-top, a divine mandate, and certain sacred regalia.

¹ Ama-terasu and Taka-ki-nō-kami.

² The five clan heads (*ifu tômō-nō-wo*) were the ancestors of the families who were involved in the religious observances of the imperial family. They first appeared in Chapter 17, where they played the chief rôles in the rites to lure the sun-goddess out of her place of concealment (cf. note on 17:10). Mishina quotes similar Korean descent myths to prove that the clan heads were originally those who performed the rites necessary to induce Piki-po-nō-ninigi-nō-mikötō—the grain-deity—to descend and who greeted him on his descent, rather than descending with him. In Korea the Heavenly Being always descends alone, and is met by priestly figures. *Kojiki taisei*, V, 92-93.

³ Ama-terasu-opo-mi-kami.

⁴ Piko-po-nō-ninigi-nō-mikötō.

⁵ To lure Ama-terasu-opo-mi-kami out of the rock-cave; cf. 17:11. The passage seems to include the beads as well.

⁶ Cf. 19:20-22, 82:6, 85:33. The beads, the mirror, and the sword are the famous Three Sacred Articles, regarded as the Japanese regalia. They were either symbols of divinely-given authority or magic fetishes. Similar symbols were stolen by Opo-kuni-*hime* from Susa-nō-wo in 24:9.

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- NŌ-KAMĪ, TA-DIKARA-WO-NŌ-KAMĪ, and AMĒ-NŌ-IPA-TO-WAKĒ-NŌ-KAMĪ,⁸ and said:
- 3 "This mirror—have [it with you] as my spirit,⁹ and worship it just as you would worship in my very presence. Next, let OMŌPI-KANE-NŌ-KAMĪ take the responsibility for the affairs of the presence¹⁰ and carry on the government."¹¹
- 4 These two deities¹² are worshipped at the shrine of ISUZU of the bell-bracelets.¹³
- 5 Next [was] TŌYU-UKĒ-NŌ-KAMĪ; this is the deity who dwells in WATARAPI, the Outer Shrine.¹⁴
- 6 Next [was] AMĒ-NŌ-IPA-TO-WAKĒ-NŌ-KAMĪ, also named KUSI-IPA-MADO-NŌ-KAMĪ, also named TŌYŌ-IPA-MADO-NŌ-KAMĪ. This deity is the deity of the Gate.¹⁵
- 7 Next, TA-DIKARA-WO-NŌ-KAMĪ dwells in SANANAGATA.
- 8 AMĒ-NŌ-KO-YANE-NŌ-MIKŌTŌ is the ancestor of the MURAZI of the NAKATŌMI.
- 9 PUTO-TAMA-NŌ-MIKŌTŌ is the ancestor of the ŌBRO of the IMUBE.
- 10 AMĒ-NŌ-UZUME-NŌ-MIKŌTŌ is the ancestor of the KIMI of the SARUME.
- 11 ISI-KŌRI-DOME-NŌ-MIKŌTŌ is the ancestor of the MURAZI of the KAGAMI-TUKURI.

⁸ The first two of these deities figure in Chapter 17; Amē-nō-īpa-to-wakē-nō-kami (meaning 'Heavenly-Rock-Door-Youth Deity,' a name in harmony with the events in Chapter 17—see GLOSSARY) appears only in this chapter. Motoori says: "These three deities did not descend from the heavens in their material visible bodies (their visible bodies remained in Takama-nō-para to serve Ama-terasu-ōpo-mi-kami). Their spirit-substitutes [*mi-tama-sirō*], an article to which the spirit of a deity is expected to become attached] were sent down. For this reason they are not enumerated in the same place as the five clan heads [39:1] but are named after the three treasures." *Kojiki-den*, II, 799.

⁹ *Mi-tama*. Motoori comments that the sun-goddess attached her very spirit to the mirror, which was thus endowed with all of her spiritual attributes; at the same time, her material body which remained in Takama-nō-para was not in the least deprived of its spiritual force. *Ibid.*, 800.

¹⁰ Or 'my presence'; 'their presence.'

¹¹ The ideograph for 'politics,' 'government' is read *matari-gōtō*, which means both 'religious worship' and 'government.' Probably this deity took charge of the ritual aspects of government.

¹² It is not clear which two deities are meant: the mirror and Omōpi-kane-nō-kami?

¹³ *Saku-kusirō*; an epithet for Isuzu. The Grand Shrine of Ise is located at Isuzu.

¹⁴ *Tō-ū-miya*; the Outer Shrine (*Gékiti*) of Ise.

¹⁵ *Mi-kado*.

- 12 TAMA-NŌ-YA-NŌ-MIKŌTŌ is the ancestor of the MURAZI of the TAMA-NŌ-YA.

13 Then AMA-TU-PIKO-PO-NŌ-NINIGI-NŌ-MIKŌTŌ was commanded to leave the Heavenly Rock-Seat. Pushing through the myriad layers of the heavens' trailing clouds, pushing his way with an awesome pushing, he stood on a flat floating island¹⁶ by the Heavenly Floating Bridge,¹⁷ and descended from the heavens to the peak KUZU-PURU-TAKĒ of Mount TAKA-PI-PO of PIMUKA in TUKUSI.¹⁸

14 Then the two deities AMĒ-NŌ-OSI-PI-NŌ-MIKŌTŌ and AMA-TU-KUMĒ-NŌ-MIKŌTŌ took on their backs heavenly stone-quivers, wore at their sides mallet-headed swords,¹⁹ took up heavenly bows of PAZI wood,²⁰ held heavenly deer[-slaying] arrows,²¹ and standing in front of him served him.

15 AMĒ-NŌ-OSI-PI-NŌ-MIKŌTŌ—this is the ancestor of the MURAZI of the OPO-RŌMŌ.

16 AMA-TU-KUMĒ-NŌ-MIKŌTŌ—this is the ancestor of the ATAPE of the KUMĒ.

17 At this time he²² said:

²³"This place is opposite the land of KARA; [it is a place to which one] comes directly through the Cape of KASASA,²⁴ a land where the morning sun shines directly, a land where the rays of the evening sun are brilliant.²⁵ This is a most excellent place."

18 Thus saying, he²⁶ rooted his palace-posts firmly in the bedrock below, raised high the crossbeams unto TAKAMA-NŌ-PARA itself, and dwelt [there].²⁷

¹⁶ *Uki-zimari sori tatasite*; the meaning of this phonetically written phrase is unclear.

¹⁷ *Amē nō ūki-pasi*; cf. 3:3, 32:3.

¹⁸ See ADDITIONAL NOTE 18.

¹⁹ *Kūbi-tūi nō tati*; *kōbu-tūi nō tati*; ancient swords with knob-headed handles. Archæologists have found swords of this description in late tomb period sites.

²⁰ *Amē nō pazi-yumi*.

²¹ *Amē nō makako-ya*.

²² Piko-po-nō-ninigi-nō-mikōtō; or, possibly, 'they,' i.e., the two deities mentioned in verse 14.

²³⁻²⁴ The passage is probably textually corrupt; cf. *Kojiki taisei*, VII, 106.

²⁵ Cf. 133:19-22. Bright, sunny places were regarded as desirable sites for palaces or shrines.

²⁶ Piko-po-nō-ninigi-nō-mikōtō; or, perhaps, 'they,' as in verse 17.

²⁷ Cf. 24:14, 37:3.