

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,⁴² 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 Palace⁴³ was built at Kawakami in Isuzu. This was called the palace of Iso. 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 recitant 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 formality, 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.

42. This is a stock epithet (*makura kotoba*) 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 (*kamu-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 Ama-terasu-oho-mi-kami,
 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 Imibe (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-fuki* noble beads,
 Which have been purified and sanctified by the sacred bead-makers,
 Have been attached colored cloth, radiant cloth;

And I, Imibe-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 beheld rectified

By [the rectifying deities] Kamu-naho-bi-no-mikoto and
 Oho-naho-bi-no-mikoto,

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

[Philippi, *Norito*, pp. 41-43]

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,

Skinning 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,

White leprosy, 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 Ibuki-do-nushi,

Who dwells in the Ibuki-do,⁴⁴
 Will blow them away with his breath to the land of Hades,
 the under-world.
 When she thus loses them,
 Beginning with the many officials serving in the Emperor's court,
 In the four quarters under the heavens,
 Beginning from today,
 Each and every sin will be gone.

[Philippi, *Norito*, pp. 45-48]

MOVING THE SHRINE OF THE GREAT DEITY AT ISE

The Grand Shrine was relocated every twenty years so that the premises could be cleansed and purified—a ritual signifying both conservation and renewal and again stressing purification as a main theme of Shinto ritual.

By the solemn command of the Sovereign Grandchild,
 I humbly speak in the solemn presence of the Great Sovereign Deity:

In accordance with the ancient custom,
 The great shrine is built anew once in twenty years,
 The various articles of clothing of fifty-four types,
 And the sacred treasures of twenty-one types are provided,
 And exorcism, purification and cleansing are performed.

I, the functionary participating (rank, surname, name), have been dispatched
 To say the manner in which the offerings are to be presented,
 Thus I humbly speak.

[Philippi, *Norito*, p. 67]

DRIVING AWAY A VENGEFUL DEITY

In this *norito* the deities are again described as consulting together on the way to deal with unruly deities disturbing the land entrusted to the Heavenly Grandchild. The solution is to mollify them with gifts and persuade them to go elsewhere and live in peace.

By the command of the Ancestral Gods and Goddesses,
 Who divinely remain in the High Heavenly Plain,
 And who began matters,

44. Literally, "breath-blowing entrance."

The eight myriad deities were convoked in a divine convocation
in the high meeting-place of Heaven,

And consulted in a divine consultation, [saying]:

“Our Sovereign Grandchild is to rule

“The Land of the Plentiful Reed Plains and of
the Fresh Ears of Grain

“Tranquillity as a peaceful land.”

Thus he left the heavenly rock-seat,

And descended from the heavens,

Pushing with an awesome pushing through the myriad layers
of heavenly clouds

And was entrusted [with the land]—

Then they consulted with a divine consultation, [saying]:

“Which deity should first be dispatched

“To expel with a divine expulsion and to pacify

“The unruly deities in the Land of the Fresh Ears of Grain?”

Then the numerous deities all consulted and said:

“Amè-no-ho-hi-no-mikoto should be sent to pacify them. . . .”

Then, after the unruly deities have been removed by a “divine expulsion,” there is a ritual reenactment in which the priest speaks of the propitiatory offerings.

With this prayer I present offerings,

Providing garments of colored cloth, radiant cloth, plain cloth,
and coarse cloth;

A mirror as something to see clearly with,

A jewel as something to play with,

A bow and arrow as something to shoot with,

A sword as something to cut with,

A horse as something to ride on;

Wine, raising high the soaring necks

Of the countless wine vessels, filled to the brim;

In rice and in stalks;

That which lives in the mountains—

The soft-furred and the coarse-furred animals—

That which grows in the vast fields and plains—

The sweet herbs and the bitter herbs—

As well as that which lives in the blue ocean—

The wide-finned and the narrow-finned fishes,

The sea-weeds of the deep and the sea-weeds of the shore—

I place these noble offerings in abundance upon tables

Like a long mountain range and present them

Praying that the Sovereign Deities

Will with a pure heart receive them tranquilly
 As offerings of ease,
 As offerings of abundance,
 And will not seek vengeance and not ravage,
 But will move to a place of wide and lovely mountains and rivers,
 And will as deities dwell there pacified.
 With this prayer, I fulfill your praises. Thus I humbly speak.
 [Philippi, *Norito*, pp. 68-70]

CONGRATULATORY WORDS OF THE CHIEFTAIN OF IZUMO

When the deities of High Heaven:
 Take-mi-musu-bi
 And Kamu-musu-bi-no-mikoto
 Entrusted to the rule of the Sovereign Grandchild
 the Great Eight-Island land,
 The distant ancestor of the omi of Izumo,
 Ame-no-ho-hi-no-mikoto,
 Was dispatched to inspect the land.
 Pushing through the myriad layers of heavenly clouds,
 Flying the heavens and flying the earth,
 He looked throughout the kingdom,
 And then reported on his search:
 "The Land of the Plentiful Reed Plains and of the Fresh
 Ears of Grain
 "During the day seethes as with summer flies,
 "And during the night is overrun with gods which shine
 as sparks of fire.
 "The very rocks, the stumps of trees,
 "The bubbles of water all speak,
 "And it is truly an unruly land.
 "But I shall pacify and subjugate it,
 "And shall have it ruled tranquilly
 "By the Sovereign Grandchild as a peaceful land."
 Thus saying, he dispatched his son
 Ame-no-hina-dori-no-mikoto,
 Together with Futsu-nushi-no-mikoto,
 And caused them to descend from the heavens.
 The two swept away and subjugated the unruly deities,
 Propitiated and pacified the great Land-creator,
 And caused him to relinquish the rule
 Of the visible, material things in the Great Eight-Island Land.
 Then, Ō-namochi-no-mikoto said:

“The Sovereign Grandchild will dwell peacefully in the land of Yamato.”

Thus saying, he attached his peaceful spirit

To a mirror of large dimensions,

Eulogizing it by the name

Yamato-no-Ō-mono-nushi-Kushi-mika-tama-no-mikoto,

And had it dwell in the sacred grove of Ō-miwa.

He caused the spirit of his son

Aji-suki-taka-hiko-ne-no-mikoto

To dwell in the sacred grove of Kamo in Kaduraki;

Caused the spirit of Koto-shiro-nushi-no-mikoto

To dwell in Unade;

And caused the spirit of Kayanarumi-no-mikoto

To dwell in the sacred grove of Asuka.

[These deities] he presented to the Sovereign Grandchild

As his close protector-deities,

And himself dwelt peacefully

In the shrine of Kizuki of the myriad clay.

Then the Sovereign Ancestral Gods and Goddesses said:

“Do you, oh Ame-no-ho-hi-no-mikoto, bless the long reign,
the great reign of the Emperor

“As eternal and unmoving,

“And do you prosper it as an abundant reign.”

Thus do I, inheriting this tradition,

Perform the worship service,

And as the morning sun rises in effulgent glory

Do present, as tokens of homage of the deities and as tokens of
homage of the omi,

The sacred treasures of blessing. Thus I humbly speak.

In the manner of wiping clean and viewing

The surface of a smooth, clear mirror,

May you, the incarnate deity, rule [clearly] the Great Eight-Island land

Together with heaven and earth, sun and moon,

Peacefully and tranquilly; as a sign thereof

I bear the divine treasures of blessing

[And present them] as tokens of homage of the deities and tokens of
homage of the omi,

And fearfully and reverently,

Do humbly speak the congratulatory words of divine blessing of
heavenly tradition. Thus I humbly speak.