



# ***Japanese Mythology***



# THE HISTORY SETTING

© Probably about 10,000 b.c. people whom we now call the Jōmon were living in Japan.

© The name *Jō mon* ("ropepattern") comes from a type of pottery they made.

© It looks as if rope was pressed onto it to make markings, or it was made by coiling strips of clay.





A large clay vessel imprinted with the distinctive rope pattern of the Jōmon period of early Japanese history.

© By fourth century B.C. a new culture emerged in Japan.

© These people—named Yayoi, after the place where their homes were first found by archaeologists.

© The archeologists thought that in those periods, they came from China and Korea or persons who were traded with.

© In Yayoi period, there were called prominent people. YAMATO CLAN

© Yamato leaders extended their rule over the Japanese islands through warfare and diplomacy.

© To justify their control, the Yamato rulers associated their clan with a story about the beginning of the world that linked them to the gods who had created it.

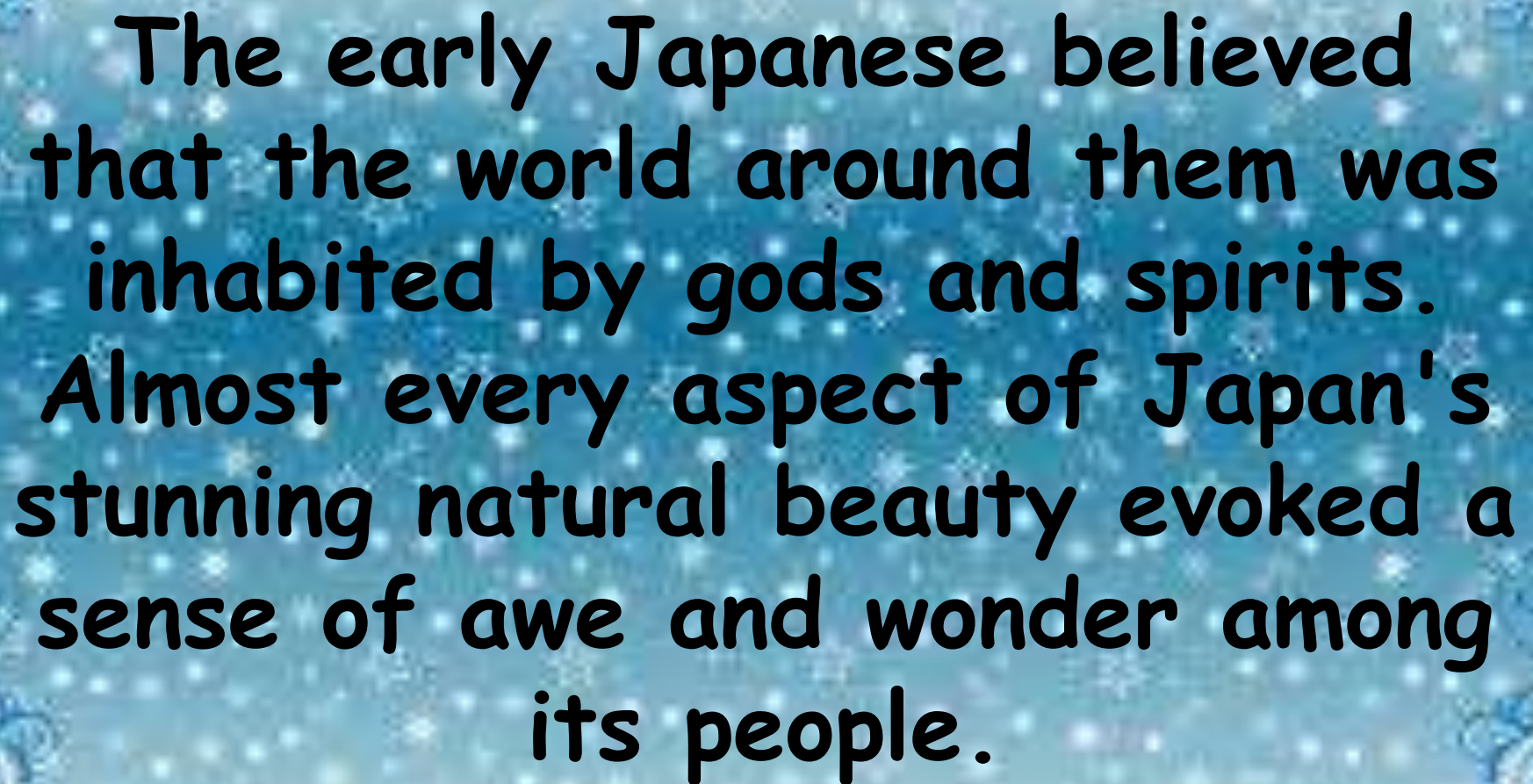
© This creation myth, or story about the creation of the world, became central to the Shinto religion. Once writing was introduced in Japan, those oral traditions were recorded in the Kojiki (Book of Ancient Things) and the Nihongi (Chronicles of Japan, compiled in the eighth century).



# **Mythology and Religion**



**Japanese Mythology is largely derived from the state religion of Shinto. While Buddhism has overtaken much of Japan, many people still practice Shinto, mostly for tradition rather than actual belief in the surrounding mythology.**



The early Japanese believed that the world around them was inhabited by gods and spirits. Almost every aspect of Japan's stunning natural beauty evoked a sense of awe and wonder among its people.



Ancient Japanese elevated  
this fascination with nature  
into what was later called  
*Shinto, the Way of the kami.*

**Kami**

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graph TD; Kami[Kami] --> NP[Natural Phenomena]; Kami --> Ujikami[Ujikami (Clan deities)]; NP --> Mountain[Mountain]; NP --> Stream[Stream]; Ujikami --> AS[Ancestral Spirits];
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**Natural  
Phenomena**

**Ujikami  
(Clan deities)**

**Mountain**

**Stream**

**Ancestral  
Spirits**





# The Creation

# **The birth of Japan**

**In the beginning, there was nothing but a shapeless egg of swirling gases. Slowly, the lighter areas rose up to form the heavens, and the darker, denser material sank to form the earth. Three gods created themselves, and hid in heaven. Landmasses floated about on the surface of the earth until eventually something appeared drifting between heaven and earth. It looked like the first shoot of a new reed and two gods were born from it, who also hid. Seven more gods were born in this way, the last two being Izanagi and Izanami.**





# **Izanagi and Izanami**







Izanagi and Izanami were commanded by the heavenly deities "to complete and solidify the drifting land" - in other words to form the Japanese islands. Standing on the "Floating Bridge of Heaven," they wondered whether there was anything below them, and so dipped the heavenly Jeweled Spear into the sea below to find out. They stirred the brine with a churning sound, and when they lifted up the spear again, the dripping brine from the tip of the spear piled up and became the island of Onogoro. Descending from the heavens, Izanagi and Izanami decided to make their home there, and stuck the spear into the ground to form the Heavenly Pillar.





# **The Creation of the Land**



Discovering that their bodies were differently formed, Izanagi asked his spouse Izanami if she was agreeable to giving birth to the land in order to produce more islands. When she agreed, they devised a marriage ritual: they walked around the Heavenly Pillar in opposite directions; when they met, Izanami said "How lovely! I have met a handsome man!" and then they made love. Instead of producing an island, however, she gave birth to a deformed leech-child, which they cast a drift on the sea in a reed boat

. They returned to heaven to consult the gods who told them that their mistake lay in the marriage ritual: Izanami should not have spoken first when they met around the pillar, as it is not a woman's place to initiate a conversation. In order to have children, they repeated the ritual, but this time, Izanagi spoke first.

On their return to earth, Izanagi and Izanami tried again and were successful. Over time, Izanami bore all the islands of Japan. They produced gods to beautify the islands, and also made gods of wind, trees, rivers, and mountains, completing the creation of Japan.



The last god produced by Izanami was the fire god, whose birth scorched her genitals so badly that she died. However, as she died, she continued to produce more gods from her vomit, urine, and excreta. Izanagi was so angry that he cut off the fire god's head, but drops of his blood fell on the earth, producing still more deities.

# Gods and Goddesses





# Izanagi and Izanami



**They are the  
creator god  
and  
goddesses.**

# Aizen-Myoo

- God of Love
- Worshipped by prostitutes, landlords, singers and musicians.





# Amaterasu



- The goddess of the sun.
- Leader of the Shinto pantheon.
- Born from the left eye of Izanagi.

# Susanoo-no-mikoto

**God of the  
sea and  
storms, as  
well as  
snakes and  
farming.**



# TSUKUYOMI-NO-MIKOTO

**The moon god  
Born from the  
right eye of  
Izanagi.**





# Benten or Benzaiten

Goddess of  
love, the arts,  
wisdom,  
poetry, good  
fortune and  
water.



# Ame-No-Mi-Kumari

Shinto  
water  
goddess.





# Ryo-Wo



God of the  
sea. known  
as the  
Dragon King

# Hachiman

The god  
of war and  
the divine  
protector of  
Japan and its  
people.





# Uke- mochi



Goddess of  
food who  
blesses the  
Earth with  
abundance.

# Tenjin

God of  
learning,  
language and  
calligraphy.  
He taught  
humans to  
write.





# Fujin



Shinto god of  
the wind.  
Seen as a  
terrifying  
dark demon in  
a leopard skin



# **Demons and other Creatures**



# Abumi-guchi



**A furry creature  
formed from the  
stirrup of a  
mounted military  
commander  
works for Yama  
Orochi**

# Abura-akago

**An  
infant ghost who  
licks the oil out  
of andon lamps.**





# Akaname



**The spirit  
who licks  
the untidy  
bathroom.**



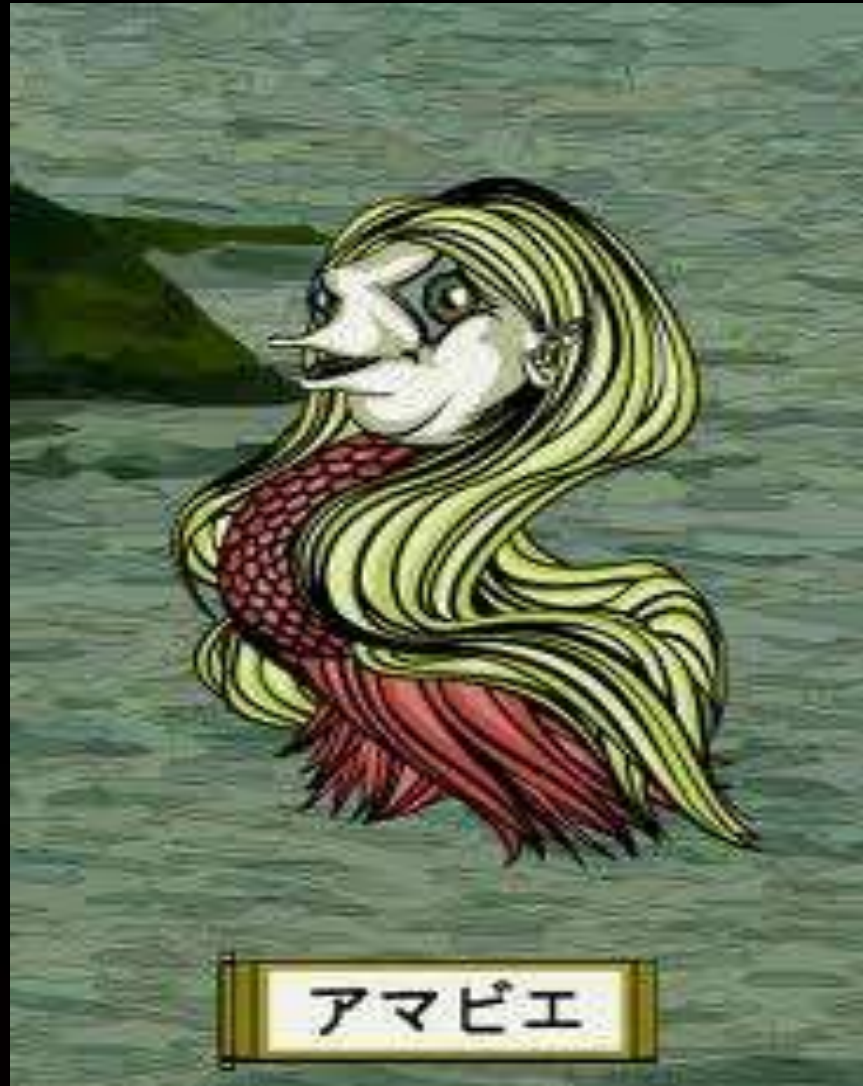


# Abura-sumashi

**A spirit who  
lives on a  
mountain pass  
in Kumamoto  
Prefecture**



# Amabie



**A Japanese mermaid who prophesied either an abundant harvest or an epidemic.**





# Baku

**An  
auspicious  
beast who  
can devour  
nightmares.**



# AKASHITA



**A red tounge  
beast with hairy  
clawed hands  
and hairy  
face,with most  
of its body  
hidden in the  
dark clouds.**



# AME-ONNA

**“Rain woman”**

**A female spirit  
standing in  
the middle of  
the rain  
while licking  
her hand.**



# FUTAKUCHI-ONNA



**“two mouthed woman”**

**A woman with a second mouth behind her head under her hair.**

# HONE-ONNA

**“bone woman”**

**Monster who kills  
men by  
grabbing their  
hands &  
holding them  
until the victim  
becomes a  
skeleton itself**





# HYOSUBE



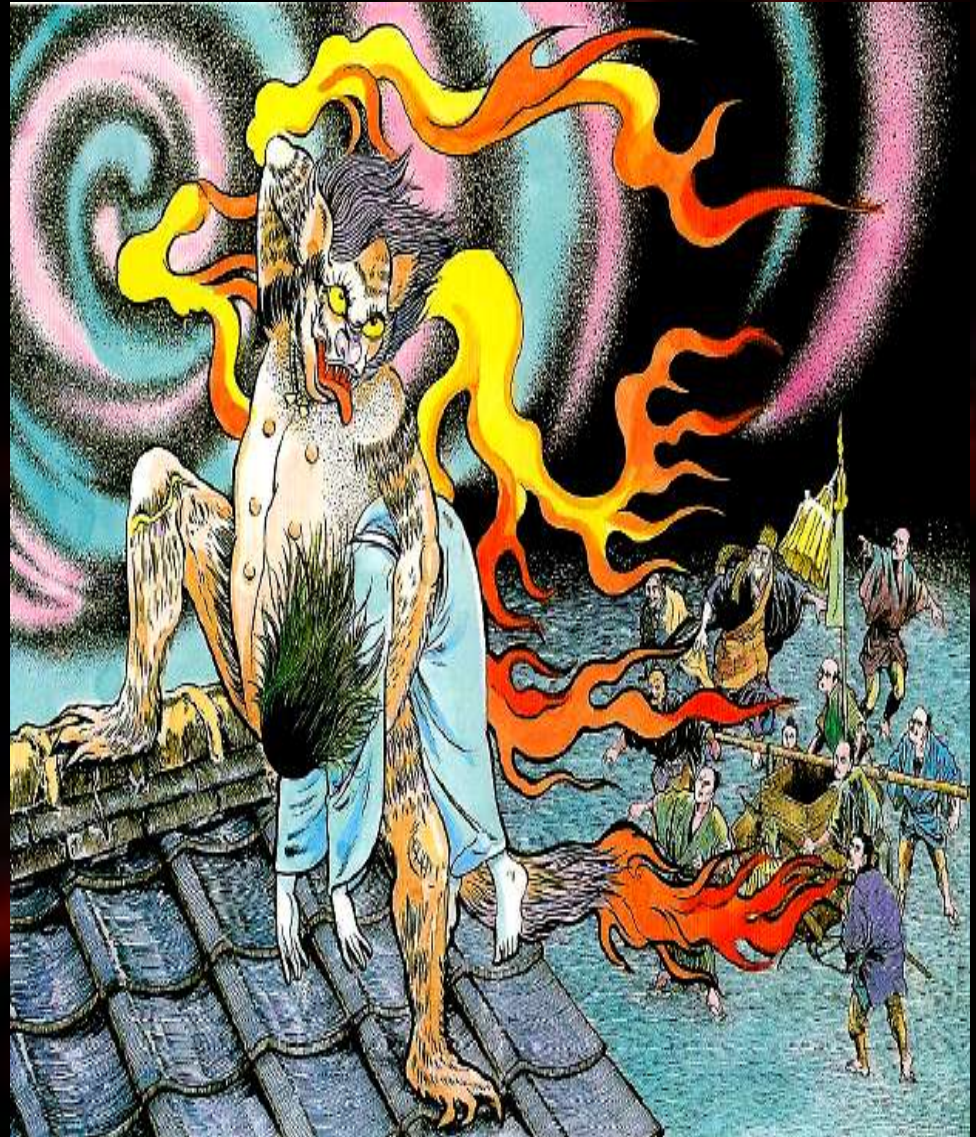
**A child-size river monster.**  
**Lives in underwater cave,**  
**ventures onto land at night to**  
**eat rice plants**



# KASHA

**A humanoid cat-demon with the head of a cat or demon and with a burning tail.**

**They steal corpses of not yet buried and who had been sinful in life.**







**THANK YOU!!!**





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