

Amaterasu

The sun-goddess was brilliant in feature, dignified in attire, magnanimous and gracious in character, and shone gloriously in the sky. The rule over the heavens was given to her. On the other hand, the youngest brother, the Storm-god, was gloomy in appearance, full-bearded, furious, impulsive, and brash in temper and strong in physique. The sea was the realm entrusted to his rule. While the Sun-goddess fulfilled her duties and cared for the promotion of life and light, the Storm-god was unruly, neglected his realm and caused every sort of riot and tumult. Crying and raging he declared that he longed for the mother's abode, and in his transports of fury he ravaged all the orderly arrangements made by his sister, such as the irrigation works of the rice-fields, and even the holiest place prepared for the feast of the new harvest. The division of realms made by the Father-god led to endless conflicts between the agent of life, light, order and civilization and the originator of disorder, destruction, darkness and death.

The Storm-god did not cease his outrageous conduct. He went so far as to destroy the rice-fields built by the Sun-goddess and to pollute her holiest observances. After these unbearable offenses not only against her but against the holy ceremonies she had established, the Sun-goddess hid herself from her atrocious brother in a heavenly cave. The source of light disappeared, the whole world became dark, and evil spirits ran riot throughout the world.

Now eight millions of gods and goddesses, embarrassed and confused, assembled in front of the cave, and consulted among themselves how the light might be restored. As the result of their meeting, many things of divine power were produced, such as mirrors, swords, and cloth offerings. Trees were set up and decorated with jewels; cocks were brought that they might keep up a perpetual crowing; bonfires were lighted; and a dance was performed by a goddess called Uzume, with merry musical accompaniment. The curious dance of Uzume so amused all the assembled gods that their laughter filled the air and made the earth tremble.

The Sun-goddess in the cave heard the merry noise and was curious to know what was going on outside. No sooner had she opened an aperture of the cave and peeped out, than a goddess widened the opening and drew her out, while the other gods and goddesses prevented her from slipping back into the cave. When the Sun-goddess re-appeared, the eight million deities joined in joyful tumult and their happy laughter surrounded the universe.