*A Japanese tale of why we have different seasons-*

*This story was performed for us during the Fall Equinox 2013 ritual by our facilitators. (See the outline for the complete ritual here.) The words in odd type below were handed out to the rest of us so that we were part of the play. As the narrator read the story, the other two other two facilitators acted out and raised fans that had the words we were to speak on them. It was interesting, fun, and funny. The facilitators were dressed in traditional Kabuki costumes.*

The Story of Amaterasu as interpreted by Nancy Fort

Amaterasu was born in Japan to a Goddess mother and a HUMAN father. As she grew up she learned from her mother how to rise above the EVERYDAY MUNDANE world and rest in Divine bliss. As she grew up she learned from her father how to catch frogs, plant rice and play with the neighbor children, and weave.

When Amaterasu balanced what she learned from her mother and what she learned from her FATHER an amazing thing happened. Divine Bliss and life on EARTH came together in her heart and she felt pure LOVE AND JOY that shone from her heart as a light so bright that the villagers called her their sunshine. Amaterasu made everyone feel LOVE AND JOY and gratitude. The people were happy, the crops grew well and the birds sang.

Amaterasu balanced the Divine and the EVERYDAY as she worked in her garden and had tea with the neighbors and felt LOVE AND JOY for everyone and everything. Her light shone for all the village and all the crops and all the animals to grow and be healthy.

Amaterasu had a brother, Tsukuyomi, who was god of the moon. She also had a brother from the dark side of life who was god of storms and the sea, Susanoo. As he got older he started to cause trouble for his sister, Amaterasu. One day she caught him ripping out plants in her garden. She could not get him to stop. He threw a horse at her loom, breaking her loom and hurting the horse. She was infuriated and devastated. When he killed her beloved weaving assistant, she felt grief stricken and hopeless.

She could no longer feel any connection to the Divine. Her heart was completely off balance with these EARTHLY atrocities. She did not know what to do so she started to run. She ran and ran and came to a cave. She ran deeper and deeper into the cave. When she was exhausted from running she came to a mountain spring that cut through the cave.

She sat on a rock and in her exhaustion she leaned back and realized the rock was cut out in such a way that it cradled her body and she took comfort resting on the earth. She listened to the running of the water and was comforted by the sound. She stared into the mist that hung just above the water and her eyes relaxed and her gaze softened. She took a deep breath and smelled the moist rich earth along the steam -- she was home. She again rested in the Divine bliss of her mother. Amaterasu stayed in the cave for many weeks. She was happy resting in Divine bliss.

Then one day she heard a noise outside the cave. She went closer to the cave opening. It was an old familiar sound that attracted her closer and closer. It was the laughter of people. She looked out the cave door and saw Uzume dancing and causing much hilarity, lifting her skirts, batting her eyes, pulling out all the stops in an effort to get Amaterzu's attention. The laughter lit the fire in Amaterasu's heart again and the Divine and EVERYDAY was brought back into balance and she felt LOVE AND JOY in her heart.

She stepped yet closer to the opening of the cave and a brilliant light shone in her eyes. She felt tremendous LOVE AND JOY. The people applauded. She was confused. The people kept applauding as she walked out of the cave. It was then that she saw some of the villagers were holding a mirror. It was her own LOVE AND JOY that was being reflected back to her.

She had been happy resting in the Divine bliss of the cave but she had forgotten the pleasure she received from the LOVE AND JOY of a balanced life. She did not realize she had such an effect on others. The people begged her not to go back into the cave again.

Amaterasu LOVED the people of her village. She stepped up to the boulder that had blocked the entrance of the cave. She placed both hands on it and the boulder crumbled into hundreds of small heart shape quartz crystals. She scooped up a handful and placed one in the hand of each villager—expressing her LOVE AND JOY....

But Amaterazu feared losing her balance again when confronted by her evil brother. A wise woman came forward and suggested that Amaterasu could live in the cave half the time connecting with the Divine. When she was amongst the people they would call it day and when she took refuge in the cave they would call it night. The people would work when it was light and sleep when it was dark.

Amaterazu's brother, the moon god, came forward. He shyly admitted that he enjoyed the celebrity status he had received the past weeks of darkness. People would forget him if they were just sleeping at night.

The wise woman called together the town mediator, counselors and mathematician. They met for some time and came back to the villagers. They revealed a plan. Today Amaterasu and her brother would each have equal time. Tskuyomi's time would gradually increase until the longest night of the year and then the balance would shift. Over the course of the year there would be a perfect balance of light and dark but each sibling would have their own season of predominance.

The wise woman told the villager what they needed to do—

"Go home and prepare a feast and give thanks to the sun and the earth and the bounty that is yours. Let there be LOVE AND JOY and laughter. Harvest season begins. You must learn to store your grains and pickle everything else for the winter season ahead. You will remember the feast of food and the feeling of LOVE AND JOY in those times that are dark. You will know in your heart that every day is part of a perfect plan and in the end there is absolute balance."

The solution was a good one. Amaterasu balanced the Divine and the EVERYDAY in her heart and LOVE AND JOY emanated. Her brother, Susanoo of the storms, continued to be a challenge for her but with the refuge of the cave at night she was able to keep the balance of the Divine and the EVERYDAY in her heart and shine out LOVE AND JOY for all.