

The Myths of Japan: The Island of Onogoro

The Japanese creation myth begins with the emergence of heaven, earth, and seven successive generations of primordial deities. The last of these generations includes the creator gods Izanagi and Izanami, brother and sister, who become the main protagonists of the myth. The other deities command Izanagi and Izanami to “give form” to earth, which at this point is a fluid mass of drifting matter. Standing in heaven, the siblings lower a divine halberd into the sea and stir. When they pull it up, clumps of salt drip from the weapon’s tip and form an island called Onogoro. Izanagi and Izanami descend to the island, building on it a temple and a heavenly pillar.