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TEACHING TUESDAY

STORY OF SUSANOO

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*Long, long ago the storm god, Susanoo-no-Mikoto was expelled from the heavens and landed in Izumo (current day Shimane Prefecture). Upon arriving, he discovered elderly parents crying with their young and beautiful daughter. They explained that the eight-headed monster named Yamata-no-Orochi has taken one of their daughters each year, and now only their youngest daughter remained. Susanoo promised to save the young girl if her parents allowed him to marry her. Her parents agreed. To protect her safe during the upcoming fight, Susanoo changed the young woman into a comb.**

Susanoo prepared eight barrels of sake sake (Japanese rice wine) and hid in the bushes, waiting for the monster to appear. Lured by the sake, Yamata-no-Orochi eventually appeared. The monster drank all eight barrels of sake and fell asleep. Susanoo then took out his sword and defeated the monster. During the battle, Susanoo chipped his sword. When investigating what could have damage his weapon he discovered the legendary sword, Kusanagi-no-Tsurugi, in the monster's tail. After the battle Susanoo married the young daughter and set off to build a palace for the two of them to live. Upon finding the perfect location in Suga not far from Izumo, he sang the first Waka (Japanese poem) ever recorded:

八雲(やくも)立つ(たつ) 出雲(いづも)八重(やえ)垣(がき) 妻(つま)籠(ご)み
に 八重(やえ)垣(がき)作る(つくる) その八重(やえ)垣(がき)を
(Yakumo-tatsu/Yakumo-Yaegaki/Tsuma-gomi-ni/Yaegaki-tsukuru/Sono-Yaegaki-wo)

"Oh the multiple layers of clouds over Yakumo, I shall build my palace with multiple layers of barricades like the clouds to protect my precious wife"

**The daughter's name is 奇(くし)稲田(いなだ)姫(ひめ) (Kushi-Inada-Hime). The first sound, Kushi is a homophone of "comb" (櫛-Kushi). Some versions of this story will use 櫛 instead of 奇 as her name.*