

## **KILLING STONE HOLDING EVIL SPIRIT TAMAMO NO MAE SPLITS IN JAPAN**

The story begins in China, circa 1500-1000 BC, when the first accounts of [an evil nine-tailed fox spirit](#) began to appear. Legend has it that once, long ago, there was a powerful sorceress who transmorphed into the fox spirit with supreme magical powers. For thousands of years since, she has been wielding those powers to wreak havoc upon the Earth at pivotal times in history.

Specifically, she appears over and over again in legends from China, India, and Japan. Her modus operandi is to take the form of a beautiful woman who would tempt powerful men into doing very bad things that caused the people much suffering. One of her appearances happened in Japan during the early 1100s, when she transmorphed into none other than Tamamo no Mae.

### **THE EMPEROR'S FAVORITE COURTESAN**

During the reign of Emperor Toba, the fox spirit took the shape of a female human baby, who was found and raised by a generous couple. She grew up to be exceptionally beautiful, intelligent, and charming. Her many talents made her a favorite at court, where she eventually became treated as a reincarnated holy spirit who was given the name, Tamamo no Mae. Naturally, Emperor Toba made her his consort.

Soon after, the Emperor grew ill. Court physicians simply could find no cause. They began to suspect an evil spirit might be to blame. It didn't take long for them to suspect that the perhaps too-talented, too-beautiful Tamamo no Mae might be making him sick magically, in order to succeed him. So, they asked her to hold a healing ritual in order to prove her loyalty.

Tamamo no Mae recognized the trap for what it was. When the ritual was performed, she donned her most beautiful attire and played the part to perfection. When it came time to wave the ceremonial staff, she disappeared. The Emperor's warriors tracked her down and slayed her. The nine-tailed fox spirit escaped the spent flesh, hiding in a boulder that has since become known as the Sessho-seki, or the Killing Stone.

### **EVIL SPIRIT ON THE LOOSE?**

Today, the Sessho-seki lies in the volcanic mountains of Nasu in Tochigi Prefecture near Tokyo. The infamous stone sits behind a fence with clear markers as a precaution, in an area known for its toxic sulfurous hot springs. It is believed that anyone foolish enough to come in contact with the Sessho-seki soon dies. And sometime around 7 March 2022, this cursed stone [split in half](#).

Social media in Japan instantly became alight with rumors of Tamamo no Mae being on the loose once again, in search of another beautiful, intelligent, and charming woman to inhabit for the sole purpose of destruction. Locals, however, believe nature has simply taken its course, as the old stone had been starting to crack over the past few years. It does lie in a spot infamous for spewing noxious gas, after all.

Either way, the breaking of the Sessho-seki should serve as an important reminder about the legends of our past, which teach us perhaps our most important lessons. In Tamamo no

Mae's case, it is that evil walks among us often, on the hunt for a soul to overtake in times of strife, such as the one we live in now.