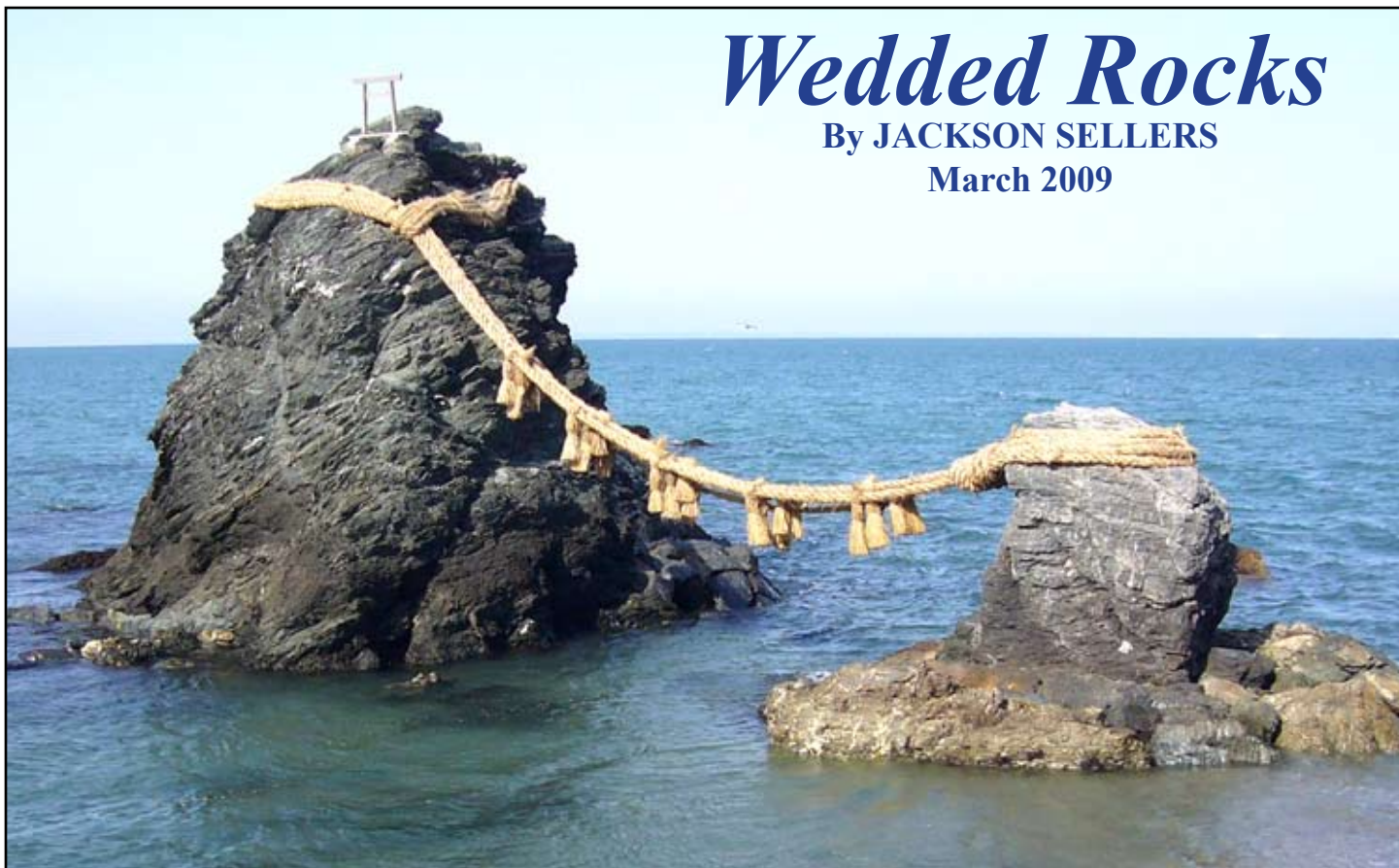


Wedded Rocks

By JACKSON SELLERS

March 2009



IT WAS March, the 44th March since our Tokyo marriage, and we were spending ten days on the Shima Peninsula, which juts out from a much larger peninsula that marks the point where the Pacific Ocean joins Japan's Inland Sea. So Yoshi and I had to pay a passing visit to famed Meoto Iwa, or "Wedded Rocks," a sacred Shinto spot among the many on this small peninsula. A masculine rock and a feminine rock were linked with braided rice straw weighing more than a ton, symbolizing, of course, the heavy bonds between a husband and a wife. People come here at dawn to see the sun rise between

the linked rocks. On the shoreline path where we posed for a picture was a Shinto shrine whose name, Okitama Jinja, suggested it was the "Shrine of the Rock Where God Comes." But Japanese often call it "the Frog Shrine." Makes sense to me, actually. Frog statuary was everywhere, inspired surely by the

sea stack seen beyond our heads in the photo below. The rocky protuberance looks like a frog, doesn't it? Then I learned that the ancient Shinto goddess of food, Miketsu, resides at the shrine, and I became confused. Food? Frogs? Well, fried frog legs are pretty good. Tastes a bit like chicken and a bit like fish.

