

Creation Stories from around the World

*Encapsulations of some traditional stories
explaining the origin of the Earth, its life, and its peoples*

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Preface

This booklet is a compilation of stories about the creation of the earth. I have compiled these stories to illustrate the many ways that people have traditionally explained the origin of the earth and its life. Some persons would select one of these as a literal recounting of the origin of the earth, and they would select that one story as the only correct and only acceptable explanation of that origin. Regardless of which one they choose, I would ask how they justify their choice of one and their exclusion of the others. Such a choice seems debatable because all the stories seem equally improbable as literal accounts, although many are attractive as metaphorical or mythical treatments. Choosing one story as literal truth and exclusion of the others also seems problematic in view of the dignity and sanctity with which all the other stories have been regarded for centuries, if not millennia, in various parts of the world.

I have paraphrased these stories to make them more intelligible and relevant to modern readers. In doing so, I have also undoubtedly Westernized the stories. Thus much of their flavor and perhaps some of their meaning have been lost in translation by others and in paraphrasing by me. I encourage readers to consult the original translations cited in the text or, better, the stories as told in their original languages.

The fourth edition differs from the third in having a Potawatomi rather than Winnebago story, and in having a Menominee story. The third differed from the first two in having two Hebrew creation stories. The first two editions sought consistency with their treatment of other cultures' stories by melding the two main Hebrew creation stories into one. The third and later editions violate that consistency, but more adequately address the two Hebrew stories, by recounting the two separately. The third and later editions also have a more authentic version of Chief Seattle's speech as their Afterword.

Two colleagues should be thanked for their help. Dr. Sally Walker loaned her copy of the Hopi story that begins this collection, and Barbara Ruff kindly read the entire collection and marked the errors that marred the first edition.

These stories are best read one at a time. I have kept them short to suit the tastes of modern readers, but they are best taken singly and savored, rather than read in quick succession. I hope you enjoy reading the stories as much as I have enjoyed preparing them.

This story comes from the Hopi people of northern Arizona. "Hopi" means "People of Peace". The stories here were recorded in the 1950s by Oswald White Bear Fredericks and his wife Naomi from the storytelling of older Hopi at the village of Oraibi, which tree-ring dating indicates has been inhabited by the Hopi since at least 1150 AD.

The Four Creations

The world at first was endless space in which existed only the Creator, Taiowa. This world had no time, no shape, and no life, except in the mind of the Creator. Eventually the infinite creator created the finite in Sotuknang, whom he called his nephew and whom he created as his agent to establish nine universes. Sotuknang gathered together matter from the endless space to make the nine solid worlds. Then the Creator instructed him to gather together the waters from the endless space and place them on these worlds to make land and sea. When Sotuknang had done that, the Creator instructed him to gather together air to make winds and breezes on these worlds.

The fourth act of creation with which the Creator charged Sotuknang was the creation of life. Sotuknang went to the world that was to first host life and there he created Spider Woman, and he gave her the power to create life. First Spider Woman took some earth and mixed it with saliva to make two beings. Over them she sang the Creation Song, and they came to life. She instructed one of them, Poqanghoya, to go across the earth and solidify it. She instructed the other, Palongawhoya, to send out sound to resonate through the earth, so that the earth vibrated with the energy of the Creator. Poqanghoya and Palongawhoya were dispatched to the poles of the earth to keep it rotating.

Then Spider Woman made all the plants, the flowers, the bushes, and the trees. Likewise she made the birds and animals, again using earth and singing the Creation Song. When all this was done, she made human beings, using yellow, red, white, and black earth mixed with her saliva. Singing the Creation Song, she made four men, and then in her own form she made four women. At first they had a soft spot in their foreheads, and although it solidified, it left a space through which they could hear the voice of Sotuknang and their Creator. Because these people could not speak, Spider Woman called on Sotuknang, who gave them four languages. His only instructions were for them to respect their Creator and to live in harmony with him.

These people spread across the earth and multiplied. Despite their four languages, in those days they could understand each other's thoughts anyway, and for many years they and the animals lived together as one. Eventually, however, they began to divide, both the people from the animals and the people from each other, as they focused on their differences rather than their similarities. As division and suspicion became more widespread, only a few people from each of the four groups still remembered their Creator. Sotuknang appeared before these few and told them that he and the Creator would have to destroy this world, and that these few who remembered the Creator must travel across the land, following a cloud and a star, to find refuge. These people began

their treks from the places where they lived, and when they finally converged Sotuknang appeared again. He opened a huge ant mound and told these people to go down in it to live with the ants while he destroyed the world with fire, and he told them to learn from the ants while they were there. The people went down and lived with the ants, who had storerooms of food that they had gathered in the summer, as well as chambers in which the people could live. This went on for quite a while, because after Sotuknang cleansed the world with fire it took a long time for the world to cool off. As the ants' food ran low, the people refused the food, but the ants kept feeding them and only tightened their own belts, which is why ants have such tiny waists today.

Finally Sotuknang was done making the second world, which was not quite as beautiful as the first. Again he admonished the people to remember their Creator as they and the ants that had hosted them spread across the earth. The people multiplied rapidly and soon covered the entire earth. They did not live with the animals, however, because the animals in this second world were wild and unfriendly. Instead the people lived in villages and built roads between these, so that trade sprang up. They stored goods and traded those for goods from elsewhere, and soon they were trading for things they did not need. As their desire to have more and more grew, they began to forget their Creator, and soon wars over resources and trade were breaking out between villages. Finally Sotuknang appeared before the few people who still remembered the Creator, and again he sent them to live with the ants while he destroyed this corrupt world. This time he ordered Poqanghoya and Palongawhoya to abandon their posts at the poles, and soon the world spun out of control and rolled over. Mountains slid and fell, and lakes and rivers splashed across the land as the earth tumbled, and finally the earth froze over into nothing but ice.

This went on for years, and again the people lived with the ants. Finally Sotuknang sent Poqanghoya and Palongawhoya back to the poles to resume the normal rotation of the earth, and soon the ice melted and life returned. Sotuknang called the people up from their refuge, and he introduced them to the third world that he had made. Again he admonished the people to remember their Creator as they spread across the land. As they did so, they multiplied quickly, even more quickly than before, and soon they were living in large cities and developing into separate nations. With so many people and so many nations, soon there was war, and some of the nations made huge shields on which they could fly, and from these flying shields they attacked other cities. When Sotuknang saw all this war and destruction, he resolved to destroy this world quickly before it corrupted the few people who still remembered the Creator. He called on Spider Woman to gather those few and, along the shore, she placed each person with a little food in the hollow stem of a reed. When she had done this, Sotuknang let loose a flood that destroyed the warring cities and the world on which they lived.

Once the rocking of the waves ceased, Spider Woman unsealed the reeds so the people could see. They floated on the water for many days, looking for land, until finally they drifted to an island. On the island they built little reed boats and set sail again to the east. After drifting many days, they came to a larger island, and after many more days to

an even larger island. They hoped that this would be the fourth world that S?tuknang had made for them, but Spider Woman assured them that they still had a long and hard journey ahead. They walked across this island and built rafts on the far side, and set sail to the east again. They came to a fourth and still larger island, but again they had to cross it on foot and then build more rafts to continue east. From this island, Spider Woman sent them on alone, and after many days they encountered a vast land. Its shores were so high that they could not find a place to land, and only by opening the doors in their heads did they know where to go to land.

When they finally got ashore, Sotuknang was there waiting for them. As they watched to the west, he made the islands that they had used like stepping stones disappear into the sea. He welcomed them to the fourth world, but he warned them that it was not as beautiful as the previous ones, and that life here would be harder, with heat and cold, and tall mountains and deep valleys. He sent them on their way to migrate across the wild new land in search of the homes for their respective clans. The clans were to migrate across the land to learn its ways, although some grew weak and stopped in the warm climates or rich lands along the way. The Hopi trekked and far and wide, and went through the cold and icy country to the north before finally settling in the arid lands between the Colorado River and Rio Grande River. They chose that place so that the hardship of their life would always remind them of their dependence on, and link to, their Creator.

This Norse story of the origin of the earth, sky, and humanity is paraphrased from Snorri Sturluson's Edda, as translated by Anthony Faulkes. Sturluson lived in Iceland from 1179 to 1241, and he apparently composed the Edda as a compilation of traditional stories and verse. Many of verses he included appear to date from the times when Norse sagas were conveyed only in spoken form by Viking bards.

Odin and Ymir

In the beginning of time, there was nothing: neither sand, nor sea, nor cool waves. Neither the heaven nor earth existed. Instead, long before the earth was made, Niflheim was made, and in it a spring gave rise to twelve rivers. To the south was Muspell, a region of heat and brightness guarded by Surt, a giant who carried a flaming sword. To the north was frigid Ginnungagap, where the rivers froze and all was ice. Where the sparks and warm winds of Muspell reached the south side of frigid Ginnungagap, the ice thawed and dripped, and from the drips thickened and formed the shape of a man. His name was Ymir, the first of and ancestor of the frost-giants.

As the ice dripped more, it formed a cow, and from her teats flowed four rivers of milk that fed Ymir. The cow fed on the salt of the rime ice, and as she licked a man's head began to emerge. By the end of the third day of her licking, the whole man had emerged, and his name was Buri. He had a son named Bor, who married Bestla, a daughter of one of the giants. Bor and Bestla had three sons, one of whom was Odin, the most powerful of the gods.

Ymir was a frost-giant, but not a god, and eventually he turned to evil. After a struggle between the giant and the young gods, Bor's three sons killed Ymir. So much blood flowed from his wounds that all the frost-giants were drowned but one, who survived only by building an ark for himself and his family. Bor's sons dragged Ymir's immense body to the center of Ginnungagap, and from him they made the earth. Ymir's blood became the sea, his bones became the rocks and crags, and his hair became the trees. Bor's sons took Ymir's skull and with it made the sky. In it they fixed sparks and molten slag from Muspell to make the stars, and other sparks they set to move in paths just below the sky. They threw Ymir's brains into the sky and made the clouds. The earth is a disk, and they set up Ymir's eyelashes to keep the giants at the edges of that disk.

On the sea shore, Bor's sons found two logs and made people out of them. One son gave them breath and life, the second son gave them consciousness and movement, and the third gave them faces, speech, hearing, and sight. From this man and woman came all humans thereafter, just as all the gods were descended from the sons of Bor.

Odin and his brothers had set up the sky and stars, but otherwise they left the heavens unlit. Long afterwards, one of the descendants of those first two people that the brothers created had two children. Those two children were so beautiful that their father named the son Moon and the daughter Sol. The gods were jealous already and, when they heard of

the father's arrogance, they pulled the brother and sister up to the sky and set them to work. Sol drives the chariot that carries the sun across the skies, and she drives so fast across the skies of the northland because she is chased by a giant wolf each day. Moon likewise takes a course across the sky each night, but not so swiftly because he is not so harried.

The gods did leave one pathway from earth to heaven. That is the bridge that appears in the sky as a rainbow, and its perfect arc and brilliant colors are a sign of its origin with the gods. It nonetheless will not last for ever, because it will break when the men of Muspell try to cross it into heaven.

Snorri Sturluson 1987, *Edda* (trans. by Anthony Faulkes): London, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 252 p. (PT 7312.E5 F380 1987)

This Maori story explaining the origin of nature and humanity was compiled by Sir George Grey in the 1840's and 1850's when he was British governor of New Zealand. Faced with the need to communicate with Maori tribes then in rebellion against British rule, Grey compiled the tales to which many chiefs alluded in their negotiations with him. Grey's compilation was published in Maori in 1854 and in English in 1855.

The Separation of Heaven and Earth

All humans are descended from one pair of ancestors, Rangi and Papa, who are also called Heaven and Earth. In those days, Heaven and Earth clung closely together, and all was darkness. Rangi and Papa had six sons: Tane-mahuta, the father of the forests and their inhabitants; Tawhiri-ma-tea, the father of winds and storms; Tangaroa, the father of fish and reptiles; Tu-matauenga, the father of fierce human beings; Haumia-tikitiki, the father of food that grows without cultivation; and Rongo-ma-tane, the father of cultivated food. These six sons and all other beings lived in darkness for an extremely long time, able only to wonder what light and vision might be like.

Finally the sons of Heaven and Earth decided something must be done. Tu-matauenga, the father of fierce human beings, urged his brothers to slay their parents. However, Tane-mahuta, the father of the forests and their inhabitants, argued that they should separate their parents, making Rangi the distant sky over their heads and Papa the earth close to them like a mother. After long debate, the brothers agreed to this plan, except for Tawhiri-ma-tea, the father of winds and storms, who was distraught at the idea of separating their parents. The other brothers nonetheless proceeded with their plan.

Rongo-ma-tane, the father of cultivated food, rose and struggled to separate his parents, but he could not do it. Tangaroa, the father of fish and reptiles, also struggled but could not tear them apart. Haumia-tikitiki, the father of food that grows without cultivation, had no better luck at separating their parents. Tu-matauenga, the father of fierce human beings, likewise failed. Tane-mahuta, the father of the forests and their inhabitants, slowly rose up and struggled, but with little success. Then he put his head against the earth and, with his feet against the skies, slowly pushed them apart. His parents cried out in anguish, asking how their sons could do this, but Tane pushed and pushed until the sky was far above. As light spread across the earth, the multitude of humans that Rangi and Papa had parented were revealed.

Tawhiri-ma-tea, the father of winds and storms, was furious that his brothers had so cruelly separated their parents and thrust their father away. Tawhiri-ma-tea followed his father and hid in the sky and plotted his revenge. Soon he sent down storms and squalls and fiery clouds and hurricanes to punish his brother Tane-mahuta, the father of the forests and their inhabitants, breaking off the tall trees and leaving the forests in shambles. Likewise the storms swept down on the oceans of Tangaroa, the father of fish and reptiles, and piled up waves and generated great whirlpools. Tangaroa, frightened by

the havoc in oceans, dove deep to escape Tawhiri-ma-tea's wrath.

Tangaroa abandoned his two grandchildren, the father of the fish and the father of the reptiles. The fish and reptiles were left not knowing what to do, and they debated how to escape the storm. Finally, the reptiles fled to the land and hid in the forests, and the fish fled for refuge to the sea. Tangaroa, angered at the reptiles' desertion and the forests' willingness to receive and protect them, now struggled with Tane-mahuta, the father of the forests and their inhabitants, who in turn fought back. Thus Tane provided the canoes, spears, and fish-hooks from the trees, and nets woven from fibrous plants, to capture the fish of Tangaroa's seas, and Tangaroa's waves attacked the shores of the forests, washing away the land and all the life it holds.

Tawhiri-ma-tea, the god of winds and storms, also lashed out at his brothers Haumia-tikitiki, the father of food that grows without cultivation, and Rongo-ma-tane, the father of cultivated food, for their role in the separation of his parents and exile of his father. However, Papa, the earth-mother whom the brothers had taken as their home, clasped up Haumia-tikitiki and Rongo-ma-tane and held them close in her to save them from Tawhiri-ma-tea's fury.

Only Tu-matauenga, the father of fierce human beings, withstood Tawhiri-ma-tea's wrath as the winds and storms attacked. Tu-matauenga was impervious, having planned the death of their parents and having been abandoned by his brothers on the Earth. When Tawhiri-ma-tea's gales finally subsided, Tu-matauenga began to plan his revenge on his cowardly and weak brothers. First he turned to Tane-mahuta, the father of the forests and their inhabitants, both because Tane had abandoned him and because he knew Tane's offspring were increasing and might ultimately overwhelm Tu-matauenga's human progeny. Taking the leaves of the whanake tree, he made them into snares and hung them in the forests, where he caught Tane's offspring and subdued the forest. Then he took on Tangaroa, the father of the seas and its life, and with nets he dragged Tangaroa's children from the seas. With a hoe and basket he dug up the children of Haumia-tikitiki, the god of food that needs no cultivation, and Rongo-ma-tane, the god of cultivated food. He dug up all kinds of plants and left them in the sun to dry, to gain revenge on those two brothers.

Tu-matauenga, the father of fierce human beings, thus consumed all his four brothers on Earth, and they became his food. Only one brother, Tawhiri-ma-tea, the god of winds and storms, remained unconquered, and to this day his storms attack human beings on both land and sea in revenge for the rending of Heaven and Earth.

George Grey, 1956, *Polynesian Mythology* (ed. by William W. Bird): Christchurch, Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd., 250 p. (BL 2615.G843p 1956)

This is a synthesis of several stories from the Cherokee, who were the native people of northern Georgia and Alabama, western North Carolina, central and eastern Tennessee, and Kentucky. The stories were told to James Mooney of the Bureau of American Ethnology in the late 1800's by older Cherokee men in western North Carolina. The principal story teller was Ayúnini ("Swimmer"), who was born in 1835 and never spoke English, although he served as sergeant in the Confederate infantry in the Civil War. He died in 1899.

The Story of Corn and Medicine

The earth began as nothing but water and darkness, and all the animals were in Galúnlati, above the stone vault that makes up the sky. Eventually Galúnlati became so crowded that the animals needed more room, and they wanted to move down to earth. Not knowing what was below the water, they sent down the Water-beetle to explore. Water-beetle dove below the water and eventually came back with some mud from below. That mud grew and grew, and finally it became the island that we call earth. This island of earth is suspended at its four corners from ropes that hang down from the sky, and legend has it that some day the ropes will break and the earth will sink back into the water.

Because it grew from mud, the new earth was very soft. Many of the birds flew down to explore the new land, but it was too wet for them to stay. Finally Buzzard flew down, hoping it was dry, but the earth was still wet. Buzzard searched and searched, especially in the Cherokee country, and finally he became so tired that his wings flapped against the ground. His wings dug valleys where they hit the ground and turned up mountains where they pulled away, leaving the rugged country of the Cherokee.

Eventually the earth was dry and the animals moved down. There still was no light, however, and so the animals set the sun passing from east to west just over their heads. With the sun so close, many of the animals were burned, giving the red crawfish its crimson color. The animals raised the sun again and again, until it was high enough that all could survive.

When the plants and animals first came to earth, they were told to stay awake for seven nights, as in the Cherokee medicine ceremony. The animals all stayed awake the first night, and many stayed awake the next few nights, but only the owl and the panther and a couple of others stayed awake all seven nights. They were given the ability to see at night and so to hunt at night when the others are asleep. The same thing happened among the trees, and only the cedar, pine, spruce, holly and laurel stayed awake all seven nights, which is why they can stay green all year when the others lose their leaves.

Humans came after the animals. At first they multiplied rapidly, and the first woman give birth every seven days. Eventually there were so many of them that it seemed they might not all survive, and since then to this day each woman has been able to have just

one child each year. Among these early people were a man and a woman name Kanáti and Selu, whose names meant "The Lucky Hunter" and "Corn", respectively. Kanáti would go hunting and invariably return with game, which Selu would prepare by the stream near their home. She also would always return home with baskets of corn, which she would pound to make meal for bread.

Kanáti and Selu had a little boy, and he would play by the stream. Eventually they realized that he was playing with another little boy who had arisen from the blood of the game washed by the stream. With their son's help they caught the other boy, and eventually he lived with them like he was their own son, although he was called "the Wild Boy".

Kanáti brought home game whenever he went hunting, and one day the two boys decided to follow him. They followed him into the mountains until he came to a large rock, which he pulled aside to reveal a cave from which a buck emerged. Kanáti shot the buck and, after covering the cave, he headed home. The boys got home before him and didn't reveal what they had learned, but a few days later they returned to the rock. With a struggle they pulled it aside and had great fun watching the deer come out of the cave. They lost track of what they were doing, however, and soon all sorts of game animals - rabbit and turkeys and partridges and buffalo and all - escaped from the cave. Kanáti saw all these animals coming down the mountain and knew what the boys must have done, and he went up the mountain after them. He opened four jars in the cave, and from them came fleas and lice and gnats and bedbugs that attacked the boys. He sent them home, hoping he could find some of the dispersed game for the supper. Thus it is that people must now hunt for game.

The boys went home, and Selu told them there would be no meat for dinner. However, she went to the storehouse for food, and told the boys to wait while she did so. They followed her instead to the storehouse and watched her go inside. She put down her basket and then rubbed her stomach, and the basket was partly full with corn. Then she rubbed her sides, and it was full to the top with beans. Watching through a crack in the storehouse wall, the boys saw all this. Selu knew that they had seen her, but she went ahead and fixed them a last meal. Then she and Kanáti explained that, because their secrets were revealed, they would die, and with them would end the easy life they had known. However, Selu told them to drag her body seven times around a circle in front of their house, and then to drag her seven times over the soil inside the circle, and if they stayed up all night to watch, in the morning they would have a crop of corn. The boys, however, only cleared a few spots and they only dragged her body over it twice, which is why corn only grows in certain places on the earth. They did sit up all night, though, and in the morning the corn was grown, and still it is grown today, although now it takes half a year.

In these early days, the plants, the animals, and the people all lived together as friends. As the people multiplied, however, the animals had less room to roam, and they were either slaughtered for food or trampled under the humans' feet. Finally the animals

held a council to discuss what to do. The bears experimented with using bows and arrows to fight back, but they concluded that they would have to cut off their claws to use the bows. The deer held a council and decided to send rheumatism to any hunter who killed a deer without asking its pardon for having done so. When a deer is shot by a hunter, the fleet and silent Little Deer, leader of the deer, runs to the blood-stained spot to ask the spirit of the killed deer if the hunter prayed for pardon for his affront. If the answer is no, Little Deer follows the trail of blood and inflicts the hunter with rheumatism so that he is crippled.

The fish and reptiles likewise met, and resolved that the people would suffer from dreams in which snakes twined about them. The birds and smaller animals and insects all met too, and talked long into the night about how they had suffered from the humans. Eventually they created all sorts of new diseases to afflict humans, which have since become a scourge to the animals' oppressors.

After this the plants met, and they resolved that something must be done to counteract what the animals had done. That is why so many trees and shrubs and herbs, and even the mosses, provide remedies for diseases. It was thus that medicine first came into the world, to counteract the revenge of the animals.

James Mooney, 1900, *Myths of the Cherokee*: Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology for 1897-1898, Part 1, p. 1-576. (J84.SI2.1 pt. 1 1897-98)

This story is from the Kojiki, the Japanese "Record of Ancient Things". The Kojiki was compiled in the 500s to 700s A.D., at the direction of various emperors intent on standardizing and preserving Japan's mythic history. The Kojiki does not tell the story of the origin of the world and its peoples per se, but it is the story of the origin of Japan and of Japan's aristocratic families.

The Origin of Japan and her People

When heaven and earth began, three deities came into being, The Spirit Master of the Center of Heaven, The August Wondrously Producing Spirit, and the Divine Wondrously Producing Ancestor. These three were invisible. The earth was young then, and land floated like oil, and from it reed shoots sprouted. From these reeds came two more deities. After them, five or six pairs of deities came into being, and the last of these were Izanagi and Izanami, whose names mean "The Male Who Invites" and "The Female who Invites".

The first five deities commanded Izanagi and Izanami to make and solidify the land of Japan, and they gave the young pair a jeweled spear. Standing on the Floating Bridge of Heaven, they dipped it in the ocean brine and stirred. They pulled out the spear, and the brine that dripped of it formed an island to which they descended. On this island they built a palace for their wedding and a great column to the heavens.

Izanami examined her body and found that one place had not grown, and she told this to Izanagi, who replied that his body was well-formed but that one place had grown to excess. He proposed that he place his excess in her place that was not complete and that in doing so they would make new land. They agreed to walk around the pillar and meet behind it to do this. When they arrive behind the pillar, she greeted him by saying "What a fine young man", and he responded by greeting her with "What a fine young woman". They procreated and gave birth to a leech-child, which they put in a basket and let float away. Then they gave birth to a floating island, which likewise they did not recognize as one of their children.

Disappointed by their failures in procreation, they returned to Heaven and consulted the deities there. The deities explained that the cause of their difficulties was that the female had spoken first when they met to procreate. Izanagi and Izanami returned to their island and again met behind the heavenly pillar. When they met, he said, "What a fine young woman," and she said "What a fine young man". They mated and gave birth to the eight main islands of Japan and six minor islands. Then they gave birth to a variety of deities to inhabit those islands, including the sea deity, the deity of the sea-straits, and the deities of the rivers, winds, trees, and mountains. Last, Izanami gave birth to the fire deity, and her genitals were so burned that she died.

Izanagi grieved over Izanami, and a deity was born from his tears. Distraught after burying Izanami, he used his long sword to behead his son, the deity of fire, whose birth

had killed Izanami. From the blood on the sword came three deities of rocks, two deities of fire, and one of water, all of which are needed to make a sword. Eight more deities arose from the body of Izanagi and Izanami's slain son.

Izanagi still longed for Izanami, and he went to the underworld in search of her. Finding her in the darkness, he called to her and asked her to come back to the land of the living with him. She promised him that she would go ask the gods of the underworld, but she begged him to not look at her as she did so. She was gone long, however, and eventually he broke off the end of a comb in his hair and set it afire for a light. He found her body with maggots consuming it, and these maggots were the eight deities of thunder. Ashamed to be seen in this condition, Izanami chased Izanagi out of the underworld. First she sent the thunder deities after him, and then she herself pursued him. At last he grasped a huge rock and used it to close the passage to the underworld. Enraged, she shouted to him that she would each day strangle one thousand people of Japan. He responded that if she did so, he would each day cause fifteen hundred Japanese people to be born. This is why fifteen hundred children are born each day and one thousand people die each day.

Izanagi returned to his home and bathed to purify himself after this terrible experience. As he disrobed, new deities arose from his clothing, and more arose from the water as he bathed. Three of these were ancestors of Japanese families. The last of the deities was a son, Susa-no-wo, who became the deity of the sea. He was eventually exiled to earth for his behavior in the heavens, but he and his sister, the Goddess of the Sun, parented eight deities. Among these was the ancestor of Yamato family that ruled Japan, and two others were ancestors of nineteen of its highest families.

When the deities had pacified the land, the Goddess of the Sun dispatched Japan's first ruler from the heavens to the earth. Descending from the Floating Bridge of Heaven to the mountain tops, he built his palace. Eventually he met a beautiful young woman, Princess Brilliant Blossoms, and asked her to marry him. She deferred to her father's judgment, and her father gave him both Princess Brilliant Blossoms and her older sister, Princess Long as the Rocks. The new emperor refused the older sister, however, because of her ugliness. When the father heard this, he explained that he had offered Princess Long as the Rocks because her children would have lived eternally. Instead, the children of Princess Brilliant Blossoms were mortal, which is why the emperors have never had long lives.

Princess Brilliant Blossoms was soon with child, so soon that the emperor could hardly believe that she bore his children. To prove herself, she built a palace and shut herself in it and set fire to it, knowing as he did that the children of anyone but the emperor could not survive the flames. Amidst the flames she gave birth to three deities, and ultimately their descendants were the imperial family of Japan.

Donald L. Philippi, trans., 1969, *Kojiki*: Princeton, Princeton University Press, 655 p.,
and Joseph M. Campbell, 1962, *The Masks of God: Oriental Mythology*: New York,
Viking Press, 561 p.

This story comes from the Kono people of Guinea. Like many African stories, it is as concerned with the origin of death as with the origin of life, and with the origin of the many races that inhabit the earth.

Death, and Life and Death

In the beginning there was nothing: neither matter nor light existed. In this world lived only Death, whose name is Sa, and his wife and their only daughter. Needing a place for his family to live, Sa eventually used his magical powers to create a vast sea of mud. They lived in this filth and instability for many years.

Finally the god Alatangana came to visit Sa and his family. Alatangana was appalled at the mess in which they lived, and he condemned Sa for creating such a dirty place that lacked light and life. To set things right, Alatangana first consolidated the mud into the solid earth. However, this lifeless expanse across which he could now walk still depressed him. First he made plants to cover the new earth, and then animals to live on it. Even Sa realized that Alatangana had made the world a much better place, and he took Alatangana in as his guest.

Alatangana was wifeless, and eventually he decided he wanted Sa's daughter for his wife. Sa at first was diplomatic in refusing to let Alatangana marry his daughter, but finally he explicitly refused Alatangana's request. Alatangana, however, wooed Sa's daughter, and eventually they eloped to a distant region of the earth.

Alatangana and his new wife set up a happy home amidst the paradise that Alatangana had created from Sa's sea of mud. They had fourteen children. Seven were girls and seven were boys, and of each four had light skin and three had dark. This did not distress Alatangana, but he and his wife were shocked to find that their children spoke different languages that the parents did not understand.

Frustrated with this state of affairs, Alatangana finally went to Sa for advice. Sa explained that this was a curse that he had put on Alatangana's children because of the way Alatangana had stolen his daughter. Alatangana returned home, and eventually his children went off to found the peoples of the world, the French, the English, and the other European peoples, and the Kono, the Guerze, the Manon Malinke, and the Toma Yacouba of Africa.

All these descendants of Alatangana and his wife still lived in darkness, because although Alatangana had made the life that covered the earth, he had could not find a way to make light. As before, his frustration forced him to call on Sa for help, but rather than face his hostile father-in-law, he decided to send two messengers. He chose the tou-tou bird, a small red bird that is one of the first to arise each morning in the forest, and the rooster. These two birds went to ask Sa how the world could be lit so that the new peoples of the earth could see to work.

When the two presented their problem to Sa, he invited them into his home and taught them a song with which they could call forth daylight. When the two returned to Alatangana, he was furious at the nonsense they reported about a song they had learned. He nearly killed them, but eventually he sent them on their way.

Not long afterward, the rooster broke into song, and the tou-tou bird sang its first notes. For the first time, dawn began to appear, and soon it was day. The sun that they had called forth made its way across the sky, and when it set the stars appeared to provide faint light at night. Every day since has begun the same way, with the call of the tou-tou bird and the cry of the rooster.

Alatangana was grateful for the gift that he now realized Sa had given to him and his children. Sa was not long, however, in calling for payment of the debt. He came to Alatangana and pointed out the good things that he had done despite Alatangana's theft of his daughter. Now he demanded that in return he could, whenever he liked, claim any of Alatangana's offspring. Knowing his guilt and his debt to Sa, Alatangana agreed, and so it is that Alatangana's children, the human people, must meet with Death whenever he calls for them.

Ulli Beier, 1966, *The Origin of Life and Death? African Creation Myths*: London, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 65 p. (GR355.B4)

This story is condensed from five very detailed stories told by the Jicarilla Apaches. The Jicarilla are one of six tribes of the Apaches of the southwestern U.S., and they have a voluminous folklore. These stories were compiled and translated by Morris Opler in the 1930's. In addition to telling the story of the creation and emergence and explaining the world, the stories reflect the Jicarilla disregard for the shamans found in some other Native American religions, and they reflect the sacredness of fours in every thing and every behavior.

The Creation and the Emergence

In the beginning there was nothing - no earth, no living beings. There were only darkness, water, and Cyclone, the wind. There were no humans, but only the Hactcin, the Jicarilla supernatural beings. The Hactcin made the earth, the underworld beneath it, and the sky above it. The earth they made as a woman who faces upward, and the sky they made as a man who faces downward. The Hactcin lived in the underworld, where there was no light. There were mountains and plants in the underworld, and each had its own Hactcin. There were as yet no animals or humans, and everything in the underworld existed in a dream-like state and was spiritual and holy.

The most powerful of the Hactcin in the underworld was Black Hactcin. One day Black Hactcin made the first animal with four legs and a tail made of clay. At first he thought it looked peculiar, but when he asked it to walk and saw how gracefully it walked, he decided it was good. Knowing this animal would be lonely, he made many other kinds of animals come from the body of the first. He laughed to see the diversity of the animals he had created. All the animals wanted to know what to eat and where to live, so he divided the foods among them, giving grass to the horse, sheep, and cow, and to others he gave brush, leaves, and pine needles. He sent them out to different places, some to the mountains, some to the deserts, and some to the plains, which is why the animals are found in different places today.

Next Black Hactcin held out his hand and caught a drop of rain. He mixed this with some earth to make mud and made a bird from the mud. At first he wasn't sure he would like what he had made. He asked the bird to fly, and when it did he liked it. He decided the bird too would be lonely, so he grabbed it and whirled it rapidly clockwise. As the bird became dizzy, it saw images of other birds, and when Black Hactcin stopped whirling it, there were indeed many new kinds of birds, all of which live in the air because they were made from a drop of water that came from the air. Black Hactcin sent the birds out to find places they liked to live, and when they returned he gave each the place that they liked. To feed them, he threw seeds all over the ground. To tease them, however, he turned the seeds into insects, and he watched as they chased after the insects. At a river nearby, he told the birds to drink. Again, however, he couldn't resist teasing them, so he took some moss and made fish, frogs, and the other things that live in water. This frightened the birds as they came to drink, and it is why birds so often hop back in

fright as they come down to drink. As some of the birds took off, their feathers fell in the water, and from them came the ducks and other birds that live in the water.

Black Hactcin continued to make more animals and birds. The animals and birds that already existed all spoke the same language, and they held a council. They came to Black Hactcin and asked for a companion. They were concerned that they would be alone when Black Hactcin left them, and Black Hactcin agreed to make something to keep them company. He stood facing the east, and then the south, and then the west, and then the north. He had the animals bring him all sorts of materials from across the land, and he traced his outline on the ground. He then set the things that they brought him in the outline. The turquoise that they brought became veins, the red ochre became blood, the coral became skin, the white rock became bones, the Mexican opal became fingernails and teeth, the jet became the pupil, the abalone became the white of the eyes, and the white clay became the marrow of the bones. Pollen, iron ore, and water scum were used too, and Black Hactcin used a dark cloud to make the hair.

The man they had made was lying face down, and it began to rise as the birds watched with excitement. The man arose from prone, to kneeling, to sitting up, and to standing. Four times Black Hactcin told him to speak, and he did. Four times Black Hactcin told him to laugh, and he did. It was likewise with shouting. Then Black Hactcin taught him to walk, and had him run four times in a clockwise circle.

The birds and animals were afraid the man would be lonely, and they asked Black Hactcin give him company. Black Hactcin asked them for some lice, which he put on the man's head. The man went to sleep scratching, and he dreamed that there was a woman beside him. When he awoke, she was there. They asked Black Hactcin what they would eat, and he told them that the plants and the cloven-hoofed animals would be their food. They asked where they should live. He told them to stay anywhere they liked, which is why the Jicarilla move from place to place.

These two, Ancestral Man and Ancestral Woman, had children, and the people multiplied. In those days no one died, although they all lived in darkness. This lasted for many years. Holy Boy, another Apache spirit, was unhappy with the darkness, and he tried to make a sun. As he worked at it, Cyclone came by and told him that White Hactcin had a sun. Holy Boy went to White Hactcin, who gave him the sun, and he went to Black Hactcin, who gave him the moon. Black Hactcin told Holy Boy how to make a sacred drawing on a buckskin to hold the sun and moon, and Holy Boy, Red Boy, Black Hactcin, and White Hactcin held a ceremony at which White Hactcin released the sun and Black Hactcin released the moon. The light grew stronger as the sun moved from north to south, and eventually it was like daylight is now.

The people didn't know what this was, and the shamans each began to claim that they had power over the sun. On the fourth day, there was an eclipse. After the sun had disappeared, the Hactcins told the shamans to make the sun reappear. The shamans tried all kinds of tricks, but they couldn't make the sun come back. To solve the problem, White Hactcin turned to the animals and had them bring the foods they ate. With the food

and some sand and water, they began to grow a mountain. The mountain grew, but it stopped short of the hole in the sky that led from the underworld to the earth. It turned out that two girls had gone up on the mountain and had trampled the sacred plants and even had defecated there. White Hactcin, Black Hactcin, Holy Boy, and Red Boy had to go up the mountain and clean it. When they came down and the people sang, and the mountain grew again. It stopped, however, just short of the hole, and when the four went up again they could only see to the other earth. They sent up Fly and Spider, who took four rays of the sun and built a rope ladder to the upper world. Spider was the first one to climb to the upper world, where the sun was bright.

White Hactcin, Black Hactcin, Holy Boy, and Red Boy climbed up the ladder, and they found much water on the earth. They sent for the four winds to blow the water away, and Beaver came up to build dams to hold the water in rivers. Spider made threads to catch the sun, and they made the sun go from east to west to light the entire world, not just one side. Hactcin called for the people to climb up, and for four days they climbed the mountain. At the top they found four ladders. Ancestral Man and Ancestral Woman were the first people to climb up, and the people climbed up into the upper world that we know today. Thus the earth is our mother, and the people climbed up as from a womb. Then the animals came up, and before long the ladders were worn out. Behind the animals came an old man and an old woman, and they couldn't climb the ladders. No one could get them up, and finally the two realized they had to stay in the underworld. They agreed to stay but told the others they must come back to the underworld eventually, which is why people go to the underworld after death.

Everything in the upper world is alive - the rocks, the trees, the grass, the plants, the fire, the water. Originally they all spoke the Jicarilla Apache language and spoke to the people. The Hactcin, however, decided that it was boring to have all these things speaking the same, so they gave all these things and all the animals different voices.

Eventually the people travelled out clockwise across the land. Different groups would break off and stay behind, and their children would begin to play games in which they used odd languages. The people in these groups began to forget their old languages and use these new ones, which is why now there are many languages. Only one group kept on traveling in the clockwise spiral until they reached the center of the world, and these are the Jicarilla Apaches.

Morris Edward Opler, 1938, *Myths and Tales of the Jicarilla Apache Indians: Memoirs of the American Folklore Society* Vol. 31, 406 p. (Reprinted by Kraus Reprint Co., New York, 1969). (E99.J5 O6 1938a)

This story is from the the second and fourth Brahmanas of the Brhad-arayaka Upanishad, which was written in India in the 700s or 600s B.C. The principal acter in this story can be taken to be Praja-pati, the Lord of Creation, or Brahma the Creator. Like the original, however, this story uses "he" as its subject, because "he" may taken more metaphorically as any sentient being who creates by his or her own thought.

Creation By and From the Self

In the beginning there was absolutely nothing, and what existed was covered by death and hunger. He thought, "Let me have a self", and he created the mind. As he moved about in worship, water was generated. Froth formed on the water, and the froth eventually solidified to become earth. He rested on the earth, and from his luminence came fire. After resting, he divided himself in three parts, and one is fire, one is the sun, and one is the air.

Thus in the beginning the world was only his self, his being or essence, which then took the shape of a person. At first he was afraid, but realizing that he was alone and had nothing of which to be afraid, his fear ceased. However, he had no happiness because he was alone, and he longed for another. He grew as large as two persons embracing, and he caused his self to split into two matching parts, like two halves of a split pea, and from them arose husband and wife.

They mated, and from their union arose the human beings of the earth. The female reflected on having mated with someone of whom she was once a part, and she resolved that she should hide so that it would not happen again. She changed to a cow to disguise herself, but he changed to a bull and mated with her, and from their union cows arose. She changed to the form of a mare, but he changed to that of a stallion and mated with her, and from that union came horses. She changed to the form of a donkey, but he did likewise, and from them arose the single-hoofed animals. She became a ewe, but he became a ram, and from their union came the sheep and goats. It continued thus, with her changing form to elude him but he finding her and mating with her, until they had created all the animals that live in pairs, from humans and horses to ants.

After all this work, he reflected that he was indeed Creation personified, for he had created all this. Rubbing back and forth, he made Fire, the god of fire, from his hands, and from his semen he made Soma, the god of the moon. This was his highest creation because, although mortal himself, he had created immortal gods.

S. Radhakrishnan, (editor and translator), 1953, *The Principal Upanisads*: New York, Harper and Brothers Publishers, 958 p. (BL1120.E5 R2)

This Babylonian story of creation comes largely from the Enuma Elish and the Astrahasis, which appear to have been written between 1900 and 1500 BC, perhaps during the time of the Babylonian King Hammurabi. The tablets of both are broken and incomplete. At the end of the story here, the details of the creation of humans are supplemented with material from fragments of later writings. The latter may date as late as the 500's BC, but their consistency with the earlier Enuma Elish suggests that they tell the same story. The main actor in these tablets is Marduk, the most powerful of the Babylonian gods. Like most Babylonian gods, he has many names, and elsewhere he is sometimes known as Bel.

Marduk Creates the World from the Spoils of Battle

In the beginning, neither heaven nor earth had names. Apsu, the god of fresh waters, and Tiamat, the goddess of the salt oceans, and Mummu, the god of the mist that rises from both of them, were still mingled as one. There were no mountains, there was no pasture land, and not even a reed-marsh could be found to break the surface of the waters.

It was then that Apsu and Tiamat parented two gods, and then two more who outgrew the first pair. These further parented gods, until Ea, who was the god of rivers and was Tiamat and Apsu's great-grandson, was born. Ea was the cleverest of the gods, and with his magic Ea became the most powerful of the gods, ruling even his forebears.

Apsu and Tiamat's descendants became an unruly crowd. Eventually Apsu, in his frustration and inability to sleep with the clamor, went to Tiamat, and he proposed to her that he slay their noisy offspring. Tiamat was furious at his suggestion to kill their clan, but after leaving her Apsu resolved to proceed with his murderous plan. When the young gods heard of his plot against them, they were silent and fearful, but soon Ea was hatching a scheme. He cast a spell on Apsu, pulled Apsu's crown from his head, and slew him. Ea then built his palace on Apsu's waters, and it was there that, with the goddess Damkina, he fathered Marduk, the four-eared, four-eyed giant who was god of the rains and storms.

The other gods, however, went to Tiamat and complained of how Ea had slain her husband. Aroused, she collected an army of dragons and monsters, and at its head she placed the god Kingu, whom she gave magical powers as well. Even Ea was at a loss how to combat such a host, until he finally called on his son Marduk. Marduk gladly agreed to take on his father's battle, on the condition that he, Marduk, would rule the gods after achieving this victory. The other gods agreed, and at a banquet they gave him his royal robes and scepter.

Marduk armed himself with a bow and arrows, a club, and lightning, and he went in search of Tiamat's monstrous army. Rolling his thunder and storms in front of him, he

attacked, and Kingu's battle plan soon disintegrated. Tiamat was left alone to fight Marduk, and she howled as they closed for battle. They struggled as Marduk caught her in his nets. When she opened her mouth to devour him, he filled it with the evil wind that served him. She could not close her mouth with his gale blasting in it, and he shot an arrow down her throat. It split her heart, and she was slain.

After subduing the rest of her host, he took his club and split Tiamat's water-laden body in half like a clam shell. Half he put in the sky and made the heavens, and he posted guards there to make sure that Tiamat's salt waters could not escape. Across the heavens he made stations in the stars for the gods, and he made the moon and set it forth on its schedule across the heavens. From the other half of Tiamat's body he made the land, which he placed over Apsu's fresh waters, which now arise in wells and springs. From her eyes he made flow the Tigris and Euphrates. Across this land he made the grains and herbs, the pastures and fields, the rains and the seeds, the cows and ewes, and the forests and the orchards.

Marduk set the vanquished gods who had supported Tiamat to a variety of tasks, including work in the fields and canals. Soon they complained of their work, however, and they rebelled by burning their spades and baskets. Marduk saw a solution to their labors, though, and proposed it to Ea. He had Kingu, Tiamat's general, brought forward from the ranks of the defeated gods, and Kingu was slain. With Kingu's blood, with clay from the earth, and with spittle from the other gods, Ea and the birth-goddess Nintu created humans. On them Ea imposed the labor previously assigned to the gods. Thus the humans were set to maintain the canals and boundary ditches, to hoe and to carry, to irrigate the land and to raise crops, to raise animals and fill the granaries, and to worship the gods at their regular festivals.

Alexander Heidel, 1952, *The Babylonian Genesis* (2nd edn.): Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 153 p. (BS1236.H4 1963).

Tikva Fryer-Kensky, (trans), *Astrahasis*, in O'Brien, Joan, and Major, Wilfred, 1982, *In the Beginning: Creation Myths from Ancient Mesopotamia, Israel, and Greece*: Chico, CA, Scholars Press, 211 p. (BL226.O27 1982)

This creation story comes from the Yoruba people of Nigeria, Togo and Benin. In the religion of the Yoruba, the supreme being is Olorun, and assisting Olorun are a number of heavenly entities called orishas. This story was written down by David A. Anderson/Sankofa, who learned it from his father, who learned it from his mother, and so on back through the Yoruba people and through time.

The Golden Chain

Long ago, well before there were any people, all life existed in the sky. Olorun lived in the sky, and with Olorun were many orishas. There were both male and female orishas, but Olorun transcended male and female and was the all-powerful supreme being. Olorun and the orishas lived around a young baobab tree. Around the baobab tree the orishas found everything they needed for their lives, and in fact they wore beautiful clothes and gold jewelry. Olorun told them that all the vast sky was theirs to explore. All the orishas save one, however, were content to stay near the baobab tree.

Obatala was the curious orisha who wasn't content to live blissfully by the baobab tree. Like all orishas, he had certain powers, and he wanted to put them to use. As he pondered what to do, he looked far down through the mists below the sky. As he looked and looked, he began to realize that there was a vast empty ocean below the mist. Obatala went to Olorun and asked Olorun to let him make something solid in the waters below. That way there could be beings that Obatala and the orishas could help with their powers.

Touched by Obatala's desire to do something constructive, Olorun agreed to send Obatala to the watery world below. Obatala then asked Orunmila, the orisha who knows the future, what he should do to prepare for his mission. Orunmila brought out a sacred tray and sprinkled the powder of baobab roots on it. He tossed sixteen palm kernels onto the tray and studied the marks and tracks they made on the powder. He did this eight times, each time carefully observing the patterns. Finally he told Obatala to prepare a chain of gold, and to gather sand, palm nuts, and maize. He also told Obatala to get the sacred egg carrying the personalities of all the orishas.

Obatala went to his fellow orishas to ask for their gold, and they all gave him all the gold they had. He took this to the goldsmith, who melted all the jewelry to make the links of the golden chain. When Obatala realized that the goldsmith had made all the gold into links, he had the goldsmith melt a few of them back down to make a hook for the end of the chain.

Meanwhile, as Orunmila had told him, Obatala gathered all the sand in the sky and put it in an empty snail shell, and in with it he added a little baobab powder. He put that in his pack, along with palm nuts, maize, and other seeds that he found around the baobab tree. He wrapped the egg in his shirt, close to his chest so that it would be warm during his journey.

Obatala hooked the chain into the sky, and he began to climb down the chain. For seven days he went down and down, until finally he reached the end of the chain. He hung at its end, not sure what to do, and he looked and listened for any clue. Finally he heard Orunmila, the seer, calling to him to use the sand. He took the shell from his pack and poured out the sand into the water below. The sand hit the water, and to his surprise it spread and solidified to make a vast land. Still unsure what to do, Obatala hung from the end of the chain until his heart pounded so much that the egg cracked. From it flew Sankofa, the bird bearing the spirits of all the orishas. Like a storm, they blew the sand to make dunes and hills and lowlands, giving it character just as the orishas themselves have character.

Finally Obatala let go of the chain and dropped to this new land, which he called "Ife", the place that divides the waters. Soon he began to explore this land, and as he did so he scattered the seeds from his pack, and as he walked the seeds began to grow behind him, so that the land turned green in his wake.

After walking a long time, Obatala grew thirsty and stopped at a small pond. As he bent over the water, he saw his reflection and was pleased. He took some clay from the edge of the pond and began to mold it into the shape he had seen in the reflection. He finished that one and began another, and before long he had made many of these bodies from the dark earth at the pond's side. By then he was even thirstier than before, and he took juice from the newly-grown palm trees and it fermented into palm wine. He drank this, and drank some more, and soon he was intoxicated. He returned to his work of making more forms from the edge of the pond, but now he wasn't careful and made some without eyes or some with misshapen limbs. He thought they all were beautiful, although later he realized that he had erred in drinking the wine and vowed to not do so again.

Before long, Olorun dispatched Chameleon down the golden chain to check on Obatala's progress. Chameleon reported Obatala's disappointment at making figures that had form but no life. Gathering gasses from the space beyond the sky, Olorun sparked the gasses into an explosion that he shaped into a fireball. He sent that fireball to Ife, where it dried the lands that were still wet and began to bake the clay figures that Obatala had made. The fireball even set the earth to spinning, as it still does today. Olorun then blew his breath across Ife, and Obatala's figures slowly came to life as the first people of Ife.

David A. Anderson/Sankofa, 1991, *The Origin of Life on Earth: An African Creation Myth*: Mt. Airy, Maryland, Sights Productions, 31 p. (Folio PZ8.1.A543 Or 1991)

This story comes from the Menominee or Menomoni people of northern Wisconsin. The Menominee derived much of their food from the sturgeon that came into the Menominee River and Wolf River each year to spawn. When forced to accept life on a reservation by the U.S. government, the tribe chose a reservation on the Wolf River so that they could continue their way of life. However, in 1892 a dam was built downstream, and the sturgeon have since been barred from coming upstream. A Sturgeon Ceremony is still held each year, but only with sturgeon hauled from downriver.

The Menominee and Manabush

When Mashé Manido, the Great Spirit, first made the earth, he also created a large numbers of manidos or spirits. Some of these spirits were benevolent, but many were malevolent, and they went to live beneath the earth. Kishā Manido, the Good Spirit, was one of these spirits. He took a bear who lived near where the Menominee River flows into Green Bay and Lake Michigan and allowed the bear to change his form. The Bear, pleased at this gift from the Good Spirit, came out of the ground and changed into the first human.

Bear found himself alone and called to an eagle to join him. The eagle descended from the sky and took the form of a human too. Bear and Eagle were deciding whom else to ask to join them when a beaver came by and asked to join their tribe. Beaver too became a human and, as a female, became the first woman. When Bear and Eagle came to a stream, they found a sturgeon, and Sturgeon became part of their tribe as well. It is from these early people that the Bear, Eagle, and Sturgeon clans of the Menominee originated.

One day when Bear was going up a river, he got tired and stopped to rest. As he was talking to a wolf, a crane flew up to them. Bear asked the crane to fly him up the river, promising to take Crane into his tribe in return. As Crane and Bear were leaving, Wolf asked if he could join them, both for the trip and in their tribe. Crane took both of them on his back and flew them up the river, and this is how the Crane and Wolf clans came into the tribe of Menominee people.

Bear took the name Sekatcokemau. He built the first wigwam for his people, and built a canoe so that he and his people could catch fish like sturgeon. The Good Spirit provided the people with corn, and with medicinal plants. However, the Good Spirit realized that the Menominee were afflicted by hardship and disease from the malevolent spirits. To help his people, the Good Spirit sent his kindred spirit Manabush down to earth.

Once there was an old woman named Nokomis who had an unmarried daughter, and the daughter gave birth to twin boys. One of the boys and his mother died. Nokomis wrapped the surviving boy in dry grass and put him under a wooden bowl to protect him while she buried the other boy and his mother. When she returned, she picked up the bowl and found a little white rabbit. She raised the rabbit, and he became the Great

Rabbit, which is "Mashé Wabösh" in Menominee, or "Manabush".

When Manabush came of age, he had his grandmother make two drum sticks with which he drummed to call the people together to a long wigwam he had built. He taught them many useful things and gave them powerful medicines to cure diseases. He gave them medicine bags that were made of the hides of mink and weasel and rattlesnake and panther. From that first meeting comes the Grand Medicine Society of the Menominee today.

Manabush went on to accomplish many great feats for his people. Once there was a great water monster who killed many people, especially fishermen. Manabush let the monster eat him and then stabbed it from inside and killed it. To get his people fire, Manabush went far to the east across the water to the wigwam of an old man and his daughters. The daughters found a little rabbit shivering outside their wigwam and took it in to warm it by their fire. Manabush grabbed an ember from the fire and fled back with it across the water, bringing fire to his people. Once he climbed a mountain and stole tobacco from a giant who kept it there, and he had to flee from the giant to bring tobacco back to his people. As he fled, he hid himself just before a cliff, and the giant ran past him and over the cliff. When the giant climbed back up the cliff, bleeding and bruised, Manabush grabbed him and threw him to the ground, making him the grasshopper that today can only chew at the tobacco plants in the fields.

Once Manabush was out hunting and deceived some birds into singing with him. When they were close, he caught a swan and a goose on a sand bar and killed them for his dinner. However, by then he was tired, so he buried the birds up to their necks in sand, built a fire around them to cook them, and lay down to take a nap. When he awoke, he was hungry, and so he went to get his cooked birds. When he pulled at the necks, he came up with the heads and necks, but the bodies of the birds were missing. He ran out on the sand bar just in time to see people in canoes disappearing around a point of land. Realizing they had stolen his meal, he ran after them yelling "Winnebago! Winnebago!", which is the name the Menominee have used ever since for their thievish neighbors to the south.

Walter James Hoffman, 1890, *Mythology of the Menomoni Indians: American Anthropologist*, p. 243-258, reprinted by Judd and Detweiler, Washington, D.C., 1890. (Mfc E151.P350 I 311). A shorter version of this story and other versions can be found at <http://www.menominee.nsn.us> or via <http://www.menominee.edu> .

This story comes from the Mossi people. Before the colonization of Africa, the Mossi lived in the Mogho kingdom, which today would be in Upper Volta. The story was first written down by Frederic Guirma, who learned it from his Mossi ancestors.

The Naba Zid-Wendé

In the beginning there was no earth, no day or night, and not even time itself. All that existed was the Kingdom of Everlasting Truth, which was ruled by the Naba Zid-Wendé. The Naba Zid-Wendé made the earth, and then they made the day and the night. To make the day a time to be busy, they made the sun, and to make the night a time of rest, they made the moon. In doing so, they made time itself.

At first the earth was covered with fire, but the Naba Zid-Wendé blew on the earth to cool the fire. They ordered the fire to live inside the earth, so that the surface would be safe for the humans they were going to make. Only very resentfully did the fire go into the earth.

First the Naba Zid-Wendé made a chameleon, to see if the earth's outer crust would hold it up. When the crust held it up, the Naba Zid-Wendé made snakes to crawl on the earth, to see if it was cool enough to live on. When the snakes did not complain about their bellies, the Naba Zid-Wendé made the large animals, the elephant, the rhinoceros, and the buffalo. The crust was strong enough to hold up even them, and so the crust was solid and cool.

Finally the Naba Zid-Wendé were ready to create humans. They made them very black, because black is a strong color, and to make them different from the sun, which is red, and from the moon, which is white. The Naba Zid-Wendé used their breath to blow a soul into the humans that they had made.

The smile of the Naba Zid-Wendé at their human creations became the sky, and they hung the sky so low that humans could reach it and eat it for their food. They made stars out beyond the sky, and they made many other wonderful things for their humans. The humans nonetheless became arrogant and suspicious, and the humans began to claim that the Naba Zid-Wendé had hidden something valuable from them under the mountains. The humans dug under the mountains, but they only found a leper living there, and they let the leper go free from his subterranean prison.

This leper, however, was really the fire, and he soon burst into flames. Still angry at the Naba Zid-Wendé and jealous of the humans, the fire was evil, and it burned the sky. The sky withdrew in pain, and withdrew all the way beyond the stars, back to the Kingdom of Everlasting Truth.

No longer could the humans get their food from the sky ? their arrogance had ended that. The Naba Zid-Wendé nonetheless made clouds and rivers and streams to keep the

earth wet, and they made plants for humans to have food and trees that produce fruit for them. They made flowers to make the earth beautiful, and made the scents of the flowers to provide the smell of life.

The humans, however, multiplied and became more and more arrogant. To wash away the arrogance, the Naba Zid-Wendé made a big blue lake in which the humans should bathe. The humans were too busy to come to the lake, however, and that gave the evil fire time to throw hatred and envy in the lake. Only when the Naba Zid-Wendé sent the sun to dry up the lake did the humans finally go there to bathe. The first group that went in bathed in the waters of hatred and division, and they came out white from head to toe. The second group that went in come out yellow from head to toe. The same happened to third group that went in, except that they came out copper-red. By the time the last group went in, only a little water was left from the sun's efforts to dry up the lake, and the last group could only wash their hands and feet. They came out with soles and palms of white, yellow, or red, but the rest of their bodies were still black.

The Naba Zid-Wendé came to earth later to see what they had created, and they were shaping one last animal out of a lump of clay as they came. The plants and animals celebrated the coming of the Naba Zid-Wendé, but the human races were too busy dividing up the land and enslaving each other to notice. The Naba Zid-Wendé were so sad to see what the humans were doing that they forgot their last creation, until it cried out to be given a head, legs, and a tail. The Naba Zid-Wendé sadly finished their lump of clay, which is why the turtle has the shape it has.

Frederic Guirma, 1971, *Tales of Mogho*: New York, Macmillan, 113 p.

This story is a synthesis of three stories from classical Chinese mythology. The stories come from *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, an anthology of stories collected in the first century B.C. that were nearly as ancient then as the anthology seems to us today.

Pan Gu and Nü Wa

Long, long ago, when heaven and earth were still one, the entire universe was contained in an egg-shaped cloud. All the matter of the universe swirled chaotically in that egg. Deep within the swirling matter was Pan Gu, a huge giant who grew in the chaos. For 18,000 years he developed and slept in the egg. Finally one day he awoke and stretched, and the egg broke to release the matter of the universe. The lighter purer elements drifted upwards to make the sky and heavens, and the heavier impure elements settled downwards to make the earth.

In the midst of this new world, Pan Gu worried that heaven and earth might mix again; so he resolved to hold them apart, with the heavens on his head and the earth under his feet. As the two continued to separate, Pan Gu grew to hold them apart. For 18,000 years he continued to grow, until the heavens were 30,000 miles above the earth. For much longer he continued to hold the two apart, fearing the return of the chaos of his youth. Finally he realized they were stable, and soon after that he died.

With the immense giant's death, the earth took on new character. His arms and legs became the four directions and the mountains. His blood became the rivers, and his sweat became the rain and dew. His voice became the thunder, and his breath became the winds. His hair became the grass, and his veins became the roads and paths. His teeth and bones became the minerals and rocks, and his flesh became the soil of the fields. Up above, his left eye became the sun, and his right eye became the moon. Thus in death, as in life, Pan Gu made the world as it is today.

Many centuries later, there was a goddess named Nü Wa who roamed this wild world that Pan Gu had left behind, and she became lonely in her solitude. Stopping by a pond to rest, she saw her reflection and realized that there was nothing like herself in the world. She resolved to make something like herself for company.

From the edge of the pond she took some mud and shaped it in the form of a human being. At first her creation was lifeless, and she set it down. It took life as soon as it touched the soil, however, and soon the human was dancing and celebrating its new life. Pleased with her creation, Nü Wa made more of them, and soon her loneliness disappeared in the crowd of little humans around her. For two days she made them, and still she wanted to make more. Finally she pulled down a long vine and dragged it through the mud, and then she swung the vine through the air. Droplets of mud flew everywhere and, when they fell, they became more humans that were nearly as perfect as the ones she had made by hand. Soon she had spread humans over the whole world. The ones she

made by hand became the aristocrats, and the ones she made with the vine became the poor common people.

Even then, Nü Wa realized that her work was incomplete, because as her creations died she would have to make more. She solved this problem by dividing the humans into male and female, so that they could reproduce and save her from having to make new humans to break her solitude.

Many years later, Pan Gu's greatest fear came true. The heavens collapsed so that there were holes in the sky, and the earth cracked, letting water rush from below to flood the earth. At other places, fire sprang forth from the earth, and everywhere wild beasts emerged from the forests to prey on the people. Nü Wa drove the beasts back and healed the earth. To fix the sky, she took stones of many colors from the river and built a fire in which she melted them. She used the molten rock to patch the holes in the sky, and she used the four legs of a giant turtle to support the sky again. Exhausted by her labors, she soon lay down to die and, like Pan Gu, from her body came many more features to adorn the world that she had restored.

Jan Walls and Yvonne Walls (translators and editors), 1984, *Classical Chinese Myths*: Hong Kong, Joint Publishing Company, 135 p. (BL1825.C48 1984)

A note on the next two stories:

The Hebrew Bible, or the Old Testament, is known to modern readers from the Masoretic text, a compilation of Hebrew texts assembled by Jewish scholars in the seventh to tenth centuries A.D. from older scrolls and codices. That text, and thus the Old Testament, contain two creation stories. It is not unusual for cultures to have multiple creation stories, and throughout this booklet the paraphrases have melded two or more variations of a culture's creation story into one. However, because the two stories in the Old Testament are so different, the two stories are recounted separately here as "Yahweh" and then "The Elohim".

This creation story is from Genesis 2:4 to 3:24 of the Hebrew Bible or the Old Testament. Extensive analysis of its style and content have led scholars of the Bible to conclude that the story was written in about the Tenth Century B.C.. That was around the time of King Solomon's reign and in a time when Israel was a powerful nation. In contrast, the story in Genesis 1:1 to 2:3 was written three or four centuries later and under very different circumstances.

The author of the story in Genesis 2:4 to 3:24 is known to scholars as "J". That is because J referred to the creator as Yahweh (or "YHVH" in ancient Hebrew, or "Jahweh" in the German native to many scholars of the Bible, or ultimately "Jehovah" in modern usage). The paraphrase below maintains J's use of the Hebrew name "Yahweh" rather than the English word "God". The latter is, after all, only a derivative of the German word "Gott" and is in no way tied to the Hebrew language of the Old Testament or even the Greek of the New Testament.

Some scholars have considered J the more primitive or rural of the two authors of the creation stories in Genesis. Others are more generous and characterize J as a poet rather than a priest. J was probably recording his or her people's oral traditions in written form. Certainly J's story is a more human story of temptation and punishment than the austere story written later by the author known as "P", and J's creator is more anthropomorphic.

In J's story, the humans that are created have names. To English speakers, "Adam" and "Eve" are just names, but "Adam" meant "man" in ancient Hebrew and may also have been a play on "adamah", the Hebrew word for "earth" or "clay". "Eve" was the word for "life".

Yahweh

On the day that Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, the land was dry and barren until a mist came up from the earth and wetted the land. Then Yahweh took dust from the earth and shaped it into the form of a man, and he breathed life into that form, and it came to life.

Yahweh created a garden in a place called Eden. In this garden Yahweh placed all the

trees that bear fruit, including the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. A river flowed out of Eden and watered the garden, and there it divided to become four rivers that flow to the four corners of the world. Yahweh put the man there and instructed him to cultivate the garden and to eat of whatever fruit he liked, except for fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Then Yahweh decided that the man should not be alone, and that he should have a helper. Thus Yahweh made the beasts of the field and the birds of the air, and the man gave a name to each of them. However, none were fit to be his helper, so Yahweh made the man fall into a deep sleep and took one of the man's ribs, and he made it into a woman. This man was Adam, and the woman's name was Eve.

In the garden was a snake, and the snake persuaded the woman that she could eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil without dying, and that eating the fruit would give her Yahweh's knowledge of good and evil. She ate the fruit, and she gave some to the man too. For the first time they were ashamed of being naked, and so they made aprons for themselves.

When the man and woman heard Yahweh in the garden, they hid from him, but Yahweh called them out and asked why they had hidden. The man explained that they hid because of their scanty clothing. Yahweh asked the man how they knew to be ashamed of nudity, and if they had eaten the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The man explained that the woman had eaten of the fruit and given him some too. When Yahweh asked the woman, she explained that the snake had beguiled her into eating the fruit.

Yahweh said to the snake, "Because of what you have done, you are cursed more than any other animal, and you will have to crawl on your belly in the dust, and you will be beaten by the offspring of this woman". To the woman Yahweh said, "You will be cursed with great pain in giving birth to children, yet you will have the desire to reproduce, and your husband will rule you." Finally, to the man Yahweh said, "Because of what you have done, the ground is cursed and you will never eat of this fruit again. You will grow plants and fields and eat bread until you die, until you become the dust from which you were made."

Then Yahweh said, "This man has become like us, knowing good and evil - next he will seek the tree of life and try to live forever." Therefore Yahweh made the man and woman clothing and drove them out of the Garden of Eden, and he placed a winged half-human, half-lion creature at the Garden's gate to keep them out.

Sources: See the list after the next story.

This, the second of our two Hebrew creation stories, is from Genesis 1:1 to 2:3. It thus appears first in the Hebrew Bible's Book of Genesis, but it is actually the younger of the two stories presented there. A considerable body of scholarship over the last two or three centuries has concluded that this story was written in about the sixth century B.C.. That was after Israel was conquered by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. and at a time when the Hebrews were faced with exile in Babylon.

The author of this later story is known to scholars as "P", because he or she wrote from a much more "priestly" perspective than J, the author of the chronologically earlier story that appears in Genesis 2:4 to 3:24 (see "Yahweh", above). P's story is one of creation ex nihilo (from nothing), and the creation is a much more stately process than that in J's story. Because of the timing of its writing and the grandeur of its language, P's story has been interpreted by scholars "as an origin story created for the benefit of a lost nation in the need of encouragement and affirmation" (Leeming and Leeming 1994, p. 113). In fact, some scholars have suggested that P's story was actually written in Babylon.

P used the name "Elohim" for the creator, and that usage is continued in the paraphrase below. "Elohim" (, pronounced "e lo HEEM") is actually a plural word perhaps best translated as "the powerful ones". P also used plural phrasing in the Elohim's creation of humankind "after our own likeness". Scholars have suggested that the use of the plural "Elohim" rather than the singular "Eloha" may hearken back to polytheistic roots of Middle Eastern religions and was a way to emphasize the magnitude of the deity in question. P's first people have no names at all, in keeping with the story's focus on the grandeur of the creator rather than on the created.

The Elohim

In the beginning the Elohim made the sky and the earth, but the earth was shapeless and everything was dark. The Elohim said "Let there be light," and there was the light that made day different from night. And that was the first day.

The Elohim said, "Let there be a dome to separate the heavens from the waters below," and there were the heavens. And that was the second day.

The Elohim said, "Let the waters of the earth gather so that there are seas and there is dry land," and so it was. The Elohim said, "Let there be vegetation on the land, with plants to yield seeds and fruits," and so it was. And that was the third day.

The Elohim said, "Let there be light in the heavens, and let them change with the seasons," and so there were stars. Then the Elohim made a sun and a moon to rule over the day and to rule over the night. And that was the fourth day.

The Elohim said, "Let there be creatures in the waters, and let there be birds in the skies," and so there were sea monsters and sea creatures and birds. The Elohim blessed

them, saying "Be fruitful and multiply". And that was the fifth day.

The Elohim said, "Let the earth have animals of various kinds", and so it was. Then the Elohim said, "Let us make humans after our own likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, over the cattle and creeping things of the land, and over all the earth." The Elohim said to these humans, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, ruling over the fish and the birds and the animals of the land. We have given you every plant and tree yielding seed. To every beast and bird of the Earth we have given every green plant for food." And that was the sixth day.

And on the seventh day the making of the heavens and earth was finished, and the Elohim rested.

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Other web pages of interest include

<http://www.highfiber.com/~dfbeck/CESE/Viewpoint/contributions/bible/authorship.html>

<http://www.highfiber.com/~dfbeck/CESE/Viewpoint/contributions/bible/CREATIONSTORIES.html>

<http://freedomlaw.com/torahweb.htm>

<http://www.newberry.edu/acad/phil/r110/L03.htm> (and succeeding lessons as well)

<http://patriot.net/~jeb/dochyp.htm>

<http://www.eb.com:180/cgi-bin/g?DocF=micro/725/56.html>

<http://www.eb.com:180/cgi-bin/g?DocF=micro/379/87.html>

This story is really two stories that come from the Native American peoples of Wisconsin. The first story is a Potawatomi story of the origin of humans, and the second concerns the Potawatomi, Ojibwe, and Ottawa peoples.

A Potawatomi Story

Earthmaker made the world with trees and fields, with rivers, lakes, and springs, and with hills and valleys. It was beautiful. However, there weren't any humans, and so one day he decided to make some.

He scooped out a hole in a stream bank and lined the hole with stones to make a hearth, and he built a fire there. Then he took some clay and made a small figure that he put in the hearth. While it baked, he took some twigs and made tongs. When he pulled the figure out of the fire and had let it cool, he moved its limbs and breathed life into it, and it walked away. Earthmaker nonetheless realized that it was only half-baked. That figure became the white people.

Earthmaker decided to try again, and so he made another figure and put it on the hearth. This time he took a nap under a tree while the figure baked, and he slept longer than he intended. When he pulled the second figure out of the fire and had let it cool, he moved its limbs and breathed life into it, and it walked away. Earthmaker realized that this figure was overbaked, and it became the black people.

Earthmaker decided to try one more time. He cleaned the ashes out of the hearth and built a new fire. Then he scooped up some clay and cleaned it of any twigs or leaves, so that it was pure. He made a little figure and put it on the hearth, and this time he sat by the hearth and watched carefully as the figure baked. When this figure was done, he pulled it out of the fire and let it cool. Then he moved its limbs and breathed life into it, and it walked away. This figure was baked just right, and it became the red people.

The red people became many tribes, and they spread across the land. Among these tribes were the Ojibwe, the Ottawa, and the Potawatomi. These three tribes were enemies and fought many battles. One Potawatomi man had ten sons, all of whom were killed in battle. Unbeknownst to him, there was an Ojibwe man who had lost ten sons in these battles, and there was an Ottawa man who had likewise lost ten sons. Each man mourned so much that they wandered away from their tribes, each looking for a place to die in the woods.

The Ojibwe man walked and walked, and eventually he came to a huge tree. The tree had four long roots stretching to the north, east, south, and west, and four huge branches that extended in the same directions. The tree also had one huge root that ran straight toward the center of the earth, and its center limb ran straight up into the sky. The tree was so beautiful, and the view from under it was so tranquil, that the man forgot his sorrow, and eventually he was happy.

As the Ojibwe man sat under the tree, he saw another man approaching in the distance. This newcomer was crying as he walked toward the tree, but eventually he saw the tree's beauty and stopped under it. The Ojibwe man said, "I lost ten sons in war and was so heartbroken that I wandered away to die, until I came to this tree. Why have you come here?" The newcomer, an Ottawa, said, "I too lost ten sons in war, and I lost myself in grief until I came to this place". The two men sat and talked of their troubles.

As the two men talked, a third approached weeping. The first two watched as this third came to the tree. When they asked, the third man, a Potawatomi, told how he had lost ten sons in war and had walked in grief until he came to this beautiful place.

The three men talked and realized that their sons had died fighting in the same wars. They concluded that the Great Spirit had brought them together to this tranquil place, where they could hear the spirits speak. They agreed that there had been too much fighting between their tribes, and too much grief. They resolved to go back to their tribes and get them to live in peace. They made three pipes, and each took a pipe of tobacco home to his people as a symbol of peace.

Ten days later, the three old men led their people to the great tree. Each man brought wood from which they built a fire together, and they cooked food from each tribe. They filled a pipe and offered its smoke to the Great Spirit above, to the spirits of the four directions, and then downward to the spirit that keeps the earth from sinking into the water. The tribes each smoked from the pipe of peace and ate of the common meal, and their chiefs agreed that they should live in peace. The three old men agreed to a set of rules to preserve the peace and to guide their peoples. This is how the Potawatomi, the Ojibwe, and Ottawa came to live in peace and to intermarry, as one people.

Dorothy Moulding Brown, 1947, *Indian Fireside Tales*: Madison, Wisconsin Folklore Society, 7 p. Harry H. Anderson, ed., 1992, *Myths and Legends of Wisconsin Indians*, *Milwaukee History*, vol. 15, no. 1, p. 2-36. (as available at <http://192.206.48.3/wirp/ICW-137.html>)

Dorothy Moulding Brown, 1947, *Indian Fireside Tales*: Madison, Wisconsin Folklore Society, 7 p.

Harry H. Anderson, ed., 1992, *Myths and Legends of Wisconsin Indians*, *Milwaukee History*, vol. 15, no. 1, p. 2-36. (as available at <http://192.206.48.3/wirp/ICW-137.html>)

This story comes from Hawaii, where it was part of the Kumulipo, a chant recounting both the origin of the world and the genealogy of Hawaii's reigning family. The Kumulipo is a work of poetry with many shades of meaning and plays on words, and it also contains many subtle parables and parodies of rivals of the royal family. It is difficult to render the native Hawaiian word-play and rhyme into English prose, and while this version tries to maintain some of the juxtaposition of organisms with similar names, it can do so only in a limited way. In each section of the story, shades of darkness, each of which have their own names in Hawaiian, progress toward daylight and give birth to the life of the world.

Birth in the Dawn

When the earth first became hot and the heavens churned and the sun was dark, land emerged from the slime of the sea. The deepest darkness of caverns, a male, and the moonless darkness of night, a female, gave birth to the simple lifeforms of the sea. The coral that builds islands was born, and the grub, the sea cucumber, the sea urchin, the barnacle, the mussel, the limpet, and cowry, and the conch and other shellfish. Born was the seagrass, guarded by the tough landgrass on land; born was the Manauea moss of the sea, matched by the Manauea taro plant on land; born was the Kele seaweed, and the Ekele plant of the land.

Next the deep darkness of the deep sea and darkness broken by slivers of light in the moonlit forest gave birth to the fish of the sea. The porpoise was born, and the shark, and the goatfish, and the eel, and the octopus, and the stingray, and the bonito, and the albacore, and the mackerel and mullet, and the sturgeon. Born was the Kauila eel of the sea, matched by the Kauila tree on land; born was the Kupoupou fish of the sea, and the Kou tree on land; born was the A'awa fish of the sea, guarded by the 'Awa plant of the land. Trains of walrus and schools of fish swam past the coral ridges, still in the darkness of night.

Next darkness of night and night that just barely breaks into dawn gave birth to the flying creatures. The caterpillar was born, and the moth to which it leads; the ant was born, and the dragonfly that it becomes; the grub was born, and the grasshopper that it becomes. The snipe was born, and the turnstone and the mudhen, and the crow and the rail, and the albatross and the curlew, and the stilt and the heron. Born was the sea-duck of the islands, and the wild duck that lives on land; born was Hehe bird of the sea, matched by the Nene goose on land.

Next, as the sea advanced onto the land and passed back and forth across it, the light of earliest dawn and half-darkness produced the crawling creatures that come from the sea. The rough-backed turtle was born, and the horn-billed turtle and the dark-red turtle. The lobster and gecko were born and the mud-dwelling creatures that leave their tracks in the sand. Born was the Wili sea-borer of the sea, and the Wilwili tree on land; born was the Opeope jellyfish of the sea, and the Oheohe bamboo of the land. Thus the crawling

animals were born in the night, creeping and crawling onto the land.

Next were born the animals of the land, including the dog and rat. Then, in the stillness as the light of dawn came across the land, were born La'ila'i, a woman, and Ki'i, a man, and Kane, a god, and Kanaloa, the octopus. From the union of La'ila'i with Ki'i and Kane came humanity, waves of people who came from afar. Born was Hahapo'el, a girl, and Ha-popo, another girl, in the upland valleys whence chiefs arose. Born were humans, spreading across the earth, and now it was day.

Martha Warren Beckwith (translator and editor), 1951, *The Kumulipo: Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 257 p. (BL2620.H3 K9)*

This story comes from the Wakaranga people of what is today Zimbabwe.

Life from Moon and the Stars

Before there was any life on earth, God made a man and named him Moon. He sent Moon to live on the bottom of the sea, but Moon wanted to live on the land. Despite God's warnings of how hard life would be, Moon went to live on land.

Eventually the lifelessness of the land made Moon so unhappy that he wept. God took pity on Moon and sent him a wife named Morningstar to keep him company for two years. When Morningstar came from heaven to live with Moon, she brought fire with her, for it had not existed on earth before. She built a fire in the middle of Moon's hut and slept on the side opposite him. In the night, however, he crossed over and made love to her. By the next morning, she was swollen, and she gave birth to the grasses and trees and other plants, and soon the world was green with life. The trees grew until they touched the sky, and then the first rain fell from the clouds that they touched. Thus life on the land flourished, and Moon and Morningstar led a bountiful life in their new paradise.

At the end of her two years, Morningstar returned to the heavens to live there forever. Again Moon wept in his loneliness. God offered him another wife, but he warned Moon that this time the husband would die after two years. Thus Eveningstar came to live with moon. When they first made love, she gave birth to goats and sheep and cows on the next day. On the day after that, she gave birth to the antelopes and birds. On the third day, boys and girls were born.

Moon wanted to sleep again with Eveningstar, but God warned him that he should not. He did so, however, and on the next day Eveningstar gave birth to the lions, the leopards, the snakes, and the scorpions that plague humankind because Moon ignored the warning.

As Moon's daughters grew up, they became beautiful, and he wanted to sleep with them too. He did so, and they had many children. Thus Moon came to rule over a far-flung kingdom of his descendents. Eveningstar was jealous, however, and she sent a snake to bite her unfaithful husband. He soon fell ill, and the rainfall that his people had enjoyed stopped. As the rivers dried up and famine began, his people concluded that it was his fault. Eventually they rose up and strangled him, and they set another man in his place as king.

The people threw Moon's body in the ocean, but he rose from the sea to the skies to seek his first wife Morningstar, in hope of reliving their life in the paradise they had made.

Ulli Beier, 1966, *The Origin of Life and Death? African Creation Myths*: London, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 65 p. (GR355.B4)

This story comes from the Seneca people, who lived in the Iroquois Nation in what is now central and western New York and Pennsylvania. This story is a synthesis of two stories recorded on the Cattaraugus Reservation in New York by Jeremiah Curtin in the 1880's and J.N.B. Hewitt in the 1890's. Curtin and Hewitt collected their stories from several elderly Seneca, including Abraham Johnny-John, Solomon O'Bail, George Titus, George Armstrong, Zachariah Jameson, Andrew Fox, Henry Jacob, Henry Silverheels, Peter White, Black Chief, Phoebe Logan, Truman Halftown, and Chief Priest Henry Stevens.

Two Brothers and their Grandmother

Long ago, before this earth existed, humans lived in the sky, and they were ruled by a great chief. This chief's lodge was near a tall tree that had white blossoms and that every year produced corn for the people to eat. When this tree bloomed, there was light, but once its blossoms fell, darkness descended until its next flowering.

Once this chief's daughter became ill with a disease no one had seen before. Despite her people's best efforts to cure her, she did not get well, and all the people were worried. Someone in the tribe dreamed that she would be cured if the tree was pulled up by its roots. No one in the tribe wanted to do that, so they ignored the dream as an aberration. This person had another dream that the people must dig a trench around the tree and uproot it to save the chief's daughter, but again the dream went ignored. Only after a third such dream did the people begin digging. They dug a trench around the tree, severing the roots as they went. When the last root was cut, the tree disappeared into the ground, into what seemed to be a bottomless hole.

Many of the people were distraught, and one young man in particular complained about the destruction of the tree. The chief's daughter had been brought to the tree in hopes that she would be cured, and the young man was so angry that he kicked her into the hole. Soon she disappeared from the view of her people as she fell into the apparent abyss.

The young woman fell through darkness, but eventually it became light and she saw that she was falling into water, and in fact there was no land at all in sight. The animals saw her, however, and they resolved to save her. At the loon's direction, the fishhawk flew up to catch her, and the fishhawk deposited her on the turtle's back. Even Turtle grew tired of holding her, however, and the animals decided they needed land on which to place her. Several dove down to find mud in the water, but they failed until Toad tried and came back with some wet dirt. Soon the other diving animals did likewise, and Beaver patted the mud down on Turtle's back to make an island. Before long the island was quite large, and bushes began to grow at its banks.

The young woman recovered from her disease, and in fact she soon gave birth to a daughter. She raised her daughter on the island, and they ate potatoes that they grew

there. When they went out to dig potatoes, she warned her daughter that she must always face the west. This was so that the west wind could not enter her and make her pregnant. The daughter nonetheless disobeyed, and soon she was heavy with child. She could hear twins inside her debating how to exit her body. One was born naturally, but the other was born through his mother's armpit, and she died from the wound.

The two brothers grew up together, but the younger was disagreeable and angry. They decided that the island needed more life, so they made the forests and lakes. One day they divided the island in half, with each to make his own animals. The older brother made human beings, and he breathed life into them. He also made many animals that were fat and slow moving, he made the sycamore tree bear fruit, and he made the rivers flow both ways, with one half going upstream and one half going downstream. The younger brother also made many animals, including a huge mosquito that knocked down trees when it flew, and he made his half of the island rocky and full of ledges and precipices. The younger brother tried to make humans, but he could only make ugly animals, and in his anger he vowed that he would make animals that would eat humans.

The two brothers returned home to their grandmother's lodge, and decided that the next day they would go out to see what each other had done. First they went to the younger brother's half, where the older brother was distressed at the huge mosquito that could kill his people. He grabbed the mosquito and rubbed it between his hands until it was tiny, and it flew away when he blew on it. Then they went to see the older brother's half of the island, where the younger brother was disgusted because life would be too easy for the humans. He took many of his brother's animals and made them smaller and faster so they couldn't be caught, and he made the fruit of the sycamore tiny and unpalatable, and he made all the rivers flow downstream so that humans would have to work to travel.

Soon the two brothers got into a terrible fight about how each had changed the other's half of the island, and in their battle the older brother was killed. The older brother went to his home in the sky, where those who live good lives go to join him, and the younger brother went on to spread evil, and when evil people die they are tormented by him because he could not make a human.

Jeremiah Curtin and J.N.B. Hewitt, 1918, *Seneca Fiction, Legends, and Myths: Thirty-Second Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology for 1910-1911*, p. 37- 819. (J84.SI2.1 1910-1911)

This story comes from the Wichita people of southern Oklahoma and eastern Texas. The story was told by the Wichita chief, Towakoni Jim, to George Dorsey, who compiled Wichita stories. The Wichita religion centered on worship of the heavenly bodies, as the conclusion of this story suggests.

The Moon and the Morning Star

In the beginning there were neither sun, nor stars, nor anything else that we know today. For a long time, the only man was Man-never-known-on-Earth. He created everything. When he created the world, he created land and water, but they were not separate, and still everything was dark. Then Man-never-known-on-Earth created a man who was known as Man-with-the-Power-to-Carry-Light and a woman named Bright-Shining-Woman. Everything that they needed, they dreamed of, and it was there when they awoke. Bright-Shining-Woman received an ear of corn and knew that it would be the food of generations to come.

Still there was nothing but darkness. Without knowing why, Man-with-the-Power-to-Carry-Light began a journey to the east, moving slowly through the darkness. He came to a stranger who told him that there would be many villages and many people in the future, and that it would be up to Man-with-the-Power-to-Carry-Light to teach them. As they talked, a voice from the east called to this stranger to shoot a black-and-white deer that would follow a white deer and a black deer out of a stream nearby. Four times the stranger had to tell the impatient voice that he was preparing a bow and arrow to shoot the deer. Finally he emerged from his lodge as the deer jumped out of the water, and he shot the black-and-white deer. This meant that the earth would turn, that the stars would move, and that there would be day and night. The stranger, whose name was Star-that-is-always-moving, went to follow the deer that he had wounded, but Man-with-the-Power-to-Carry-Light stayed by the shore. From where the voice had spoken, he now saw the sun rise for the first time. He returned to his home, but he traveled much faster now that it was light. That night he saw three stars in the sky, with another star nearby, and he concluded that they were the three deer and the man who followed them.

After there was light, villages and people multiplied, as the stranger had predicted. Man-with-the-Power-to-Carry-Light and Bright-Shining-Woman went from village to village, teaching the people. Man-with-the-Power-to-Carry-Light taught the men about bows and arrows, and he taught them to play the ball game and the shinny game.

Bright-Shining-Woman taught the women about corn, how to grow corn, how to feed the people with corn, how to offer some corn at each meal to Man-never-known-on-Earth, how take four kernels and rub them on their child as a prayer. She also taught them the double-ball game. She told them that, after she was gone, they could look at her face to tell when their monthly bleeding should occur, and by counting her appearances they could keep track of when their children would be born. Then she left them, and that night

the first moon came up, because she was the Moon.

Man-with-the-Power-to-Carry-Light taught the men that they must offer some of the game that they caught to the moon and to the stars and to the other supernatural beings. He told them that he would leave them, but that they would see him sometimes in early morning. When they saw him, they were to take their children to drink and bathe in the river, which would give them long life. Then he left them and became the Morning Star.

George A. Dorsey, 1904, *The Mythology of the Wichita*: Washington, Carnegie Institution, 351 p. (E99.W6 D718).

Afterword

The following is not a creation story. Instead, it is nearly the opposite, a prophecy of the end of one of the earth's peoples. It is the response of Chief Sealth, or Chief Seattle, to the U.S. government's demand for two million acres of land in the northwestern U.S. in 1854. Seattle was Chief of the Dwamish Indians, and he was responding to representatives of U.S. President Franklin Pierce. Chief Seattle spoke in his native Dwamish, and his speech wasn't published in English until 1887. Many versions of the speech have appeared subsequently, and some of them emphasize themes noticeably different than those of the original. The following is an abridgment of the first version, which was published by Henry A. Smith in the *Seattle Sunday Star* on October 29, 1887.

Chief Seattle's Speech

The son of the white chief says his father sends us greetings of friendship and good will. This is kind, for we know he has little need of our friendship in return, because his people are many. They are like the grass that covers the vast prairies, while my people are few, and resemble the scattering trees of a storm-swept plain. There was a time when our people covered the whole land, as the waves of a wind-ruffled sea cover its shell-paved floor. But that time has long since passed away with the greatness of tribes now almost forgotten.

Our great father in Washington sends us word that he will protect us. His brave armies will be to us a bristling wall of strength, and his great ships of war will fill our harbors so that our ancient enemies far to the northward, the Simsiams and Hydass, will no longer frighten our women and old men. Then he will be our father and we will be his children.

But can this ever be? Your god loves your people and hates mine; he folds his strong arms lovingly around the white man and leads him as a father leads his infant son, but he has forsaken his red children. He makes your people wax strong every day, and soon they will fill the land; while my people are ebbing away like a fast-receding tide, that will never flow again. The white man's god cannot love his red children or he would protect them. They seem to be orphans and can look nowhere for help. How then can we become brothers? How can your father become our father and bring us prosperity and awaken in us dreams of returning greatness?

Your god seems to us to be partial. He came to the white man. We never saw him; never even heard his voice; he gave the white man laws, but he had no word for his red children whose teeming millions filled this vast continent as the stars fill the firmament. No, we are two distinct races and must ever remain so. There is little in common between us. The ashes of our ancestors are sacred and their final resting place is hallowed ground,

while you wander away from the tombs of your fathers seemingly without regret.

Your religion was written on tables of stone by the iron finger of an angry god, lest you might forget it. Our religion is the traditions of our ancestors, the dreams of our old men, given them by the great Spirit, and the visions of our sachems, and it is written in the hearts of our people.

Your dead cease to love you and the homes of their nativity as soon as they pass the portals of the tomb. They wander far off beyond the stars, are soon forgotten, and never return. Our dead never forget the beautiful world that gave them being. They still love its winding rivers, its great mountains and its sequestered vales, and they ever yearn in tenderest affection over the lonely-hearted living and often return to visit and comfort them.

We will ponder your proposition, and when we have decided we will tell you. But should we accept it, I here and now make this the first condition: That we will not be denied the privilege, without molestation, of visiting at will the graves of our ancestors and friends. Every part of this country is sacred to my people. Every hillside, every valley, every plain and grove has been hallowed by some fond memory or some sad experience of my tribe.

Even the rocks that seem to lie dumb as they swelter in the sun along the silent seashore in solemn grandeur thrill with memories of past events connected with the fate of my people, and the very dust under your feet responds more lovingly to our footsteps than to yours, because it is the ashes of our ancestors, and our bare feet are conscious of the sympathetic touch, for the soil is rich with the life of our kindred.

The sable braves, and fond mothers, and glad-hearted maidens, and the little children who lived and rejoiced here, and whose very names are now forgotten, still love these solitudes, and their deep fastnesses at eventide grow shadowy with the presence of dusky spirits. And when the last red man shall have perished from the earth and his memory among white men shall have become a myth, these shores shall swarm with the invisible dead of my tribe, and when your children's children shall think themselves alone in the field, the store, the shop, upon the highway or in the silence of the woods, they will not be alone. In all the earth there is no place dedicated to solitude. At night, when the streets of your cities and villages are silent and you think them deserted, they will throng with the returning hosts that once filled and still love this beautiful land. The white man will never be alone. Let him be just and deal kindly with my people, for the dead are not altogether powerless.

Summation

Despite the diversity of these stories, many themes recur. Perhaps the most obvious is reference to the dominant physical elements of the environment in which the tellers lived. Thus the Maori story largely explains storms and the sea, and it devotes considerable attention to fish, whereas in the Jicarilla Apache story fish are created only incidentally, and the creation itself doesn't mention oceans or lakes. Likewise, the Norse story of Ymir involves ice and cold, whereas ice isn't even mentioned in most stories. The Native Americans living around the Great Lakes, like the Potawatomi, tell stories in which the earth floats on or is suspended in water, whereas the Jicarilla Apache assume the earth surface is underlain by a vast dry cavern. The ancient Hebrews lived in a dry region, and thus their image of the paradise from which they were barred is a lush garden.

Another recurrent theme is the superiority of the storyteller's people. The Mossi tell how black-skinned people were least contaminated by the arrogance in the water of a lake in which other peoples of other colors bathed. The Potawatomi tell how white-skinned and black-skinned people were created with flaws and impurities before the more successful creation of people with red skins. The Hebrews tell how one of their ancestors negotiated a special relationship with the only true god. The Menominee tell how the name of their neighbors became synonymous with "thieves". Strikingly, but not surprisingly, no culture has an origin story that justifies the superiority of another people, or even the equality of all people.

Many of the stories either omit the role of women or condemn women. Izanami speaks first and spoils the first effort of Japanese creation. The female of the Upanishad is raped repeatedly. In the Hebrew story, Eve gets humanity expelled from Eden, and no other female is mentioned for generations thereafter. Young girls are likewise responsible for disaster in the Apache story.

Many of the stories justify the human exploitation of nature. The Hebrew myth tells how Yahweh told humans to go forth and multiply on an earth made for them, and the Maori story of the Separation of Heaven and Earth tells how the god of humanity struck back at his brother gods in revenge for their weakness in the face of the winds. Likewise the Jicarilla Apache story tells how the Hactcin told the Jicarilla that plants and hoofed animals would be their food, and that they could roam across the world as their home.

Many stories also justify exploitation of, or at least discrimination between, humans themselves. In the Babylonian creation, humans are created to manipulate and exploit nature, but only as servants of the gods (and their priests). The Chinese story explains that the ancestral upper classes were hand-made by a deity, whereas the lower-classes were mass-produced. The Japanese and Hawaiian stories are even more specific in justifying the position of individual ruling families. There is thus a clear pro-establishment nature to many of these stories.

Many of these stories begin in darkness, and the generation of light is part of the creation itself. Many metaphysical explanations could be offered, but a practical one emerges from Opler's description of story-telling among the Jicarilla Apaches. Stories were told at night, and in fact were a means of whiling away the hours of darkness. Among industrialized peoples, the telling of stories around a campfire or at bedtime persists. Given the dark environment in which these stories were told, it's hardly surprising that darkness and the light that broke through it were a common feature in stories of creation.

In many stories, humans and other beings are made from clay. That's hardly surprising in light of many cultures' use of clay as medium to make both vessels and figurines. Creation from clay has often been cited as evidence of a primitive culture, at least by people from cultures with stories of creation *ex nihilo* (from nothing). Two stories from seemingly primitive cultures nonetheless have elements that accord well with modern science. The Jicarilla Apache story in which a human is made from a variety of mineral and organic materials is consonant with our modern view that the human body physically consists of many chemical substances, and that our intake of "minerals" is critical to our health. The Menominee story of change of animals into humans provides a striking parallel to the modern understanding of human evolution. One can only wonder what story might have been told if Menominee culture had developed in a region where other primates, as well as humans, lived.

The tremendous diversity of these stories in their materials, characters, and themes suggests they developed independently, rather than being derived from one primeval story told by the first human storytellers. The stories' promotion of their tellers' cultures and races, at the expense of others, likewise suggests independent development rather than common origin. By including what we would consider racism, sexism, violence, and exploitation of nature in their accounts of the origin of the world, storytellers may have inadvertently said much about human nature too.

Despite their diversity, the great commonality of all these stories is a desire to explain the world and its history. Humans today have the same desire, and they satisfy it with microscopes and telescopes, with satellites and seismographs, and with analysis of DNA. Explanations developed millennia ago could not draw on such sophisticated technologies and so seem quaint today, and they were overprinted by the social and political agendas of their tellers, but they reflect the same human desire to understand the world around us.