

APPENDIX A: MYTHS AND LEGENDS

What the Eddas Say

In the beginning there was the void. And the void was called Ginnungagap. What does Ginnungagap mean? Yawning gap, beginning gap, gap with magical potential, mighty gap; these are a few of the educated guesses. Along with the void existed Niflheim the land of fog and ice in the north and Muspelheim the land of fire in the south. There seems to be a bit of confusion as to whether or not these existed after Ginnungagap or along side of it from the beginning.

In Niflheim was a spring called Hvergelmir from which the Elivagar (eleven rivers - Svol, Gunnthra, Fiorm, Fimbulthul, Slidr, Hrid, Sylg, Ylg, Vid, Leiptr, and Gioll) flowed. The Elivargar froze layer upon layer until it filled in the northerly portion of the gap. Concurrently the southern portion was being filled by sparks and molten material from Muspelheim.

The mix of fire and ice caused part of the Elivagar to melt forming the figures Ymir the primeval giant and the cow Audhumla. The cow's milk was Ymir's food. While Ymir slept his under arm sweat begat two frost giants, one male one female, while his two legs begat another male.

While Ymir was busy procreating Audhumla was busy eating. Her nourishment came from licking the salty ice. Her incessant licking formed the god Buri. He had a son named Bor who was the father of Odin, Vili, and Ve.

For some reason the sons of Bor decided to kill poor Ymir. His blood caused a flood which killed all of the frost giants except for two, Bergelmir and his wife, who escaped the deluge in their boat.

Odin, Vili, and Ve put Ymir's corpse into the middle of ginnungagap and created the earth and sky from it. They also created the stars, sun, and moon from sparks coming out of Muspelheim.

Finally, the brothers happened upon two logs lying on the beach and created the first two humans Ask [Ash] and Embla [vine?] from them.

CREATION MYTH - MEXICO

When the earth had arisen from the primeval waters, one day the deer-god,

who bore the surname Puma-Snake, and the beautiful deer-goddess, or Jaguar-Snake, appeared. They had human form, and with their great knowledge (that is, with their magic) they raised a high cliff over the water, and built on it fine palaces for their dwelling. On the summit of this cliff they laid a copper axe with the edge upward, and on this edge the heavens rested. The palaces stood in Upper Mixteca, close to Apoala, and the cliff was called Place where the Heavens Stood. The gods lived happily together for many centuries, when it chanced that two little boys were born to them, beautiful of form and skilled and experienced in the arts. From the days of their birth they were named Wind-Nine-Snake (Viento de Neuve Culebras) and Wind-Nine-Cave (Viento de Neuve Cavernas). Much care was given to their education, and they possessed the knowledge of how to change themselves into an eagle or a snake, to make themselves invisible, and even to pass through solid bodies.

After a time these youthful gods decided to make an offering and a sacrifice to their ancestors. Taking incense vessels made of clay, they filled them with tobacco, to which they set fire, allowing it to smoulder. The smoke rose heavenward, and that was the first offering (to the gods). Then they made a garden with shrubs and flowers, trees and fruit-bearing plants, and sweet-scented herbs. Adjoining this they made a grass-grown level place (*un prado*), and equipped it with everything necessary for sacrifice. The pious brothers lived contentedly on this piece of ground, tilled it, burned tobacco, and with prayers, vows, and promises they supplicated their ancestors to let the light appear, to let the water collect in certain places and the earth be freed from its covering (water), for they had no more than that little garden for their subsistence. In order to strengthen their prayer they pierced their ears and their tongues with pointed knives of flint, and sprinkled the blood on the trees and plants with a brush of willow twigs.

The deer-gods had more sons and daughters, but there came a flood in which many of these perished. After the catastrophe was over the god who is called the Creator of All Things formed the heavens and the earth, and restored the human race.

Ethiopia: Wak was the creator god who lived in the clouds. He kept the vault of the heavens at a distance from the earth and covered it with stars. He was a benefactor and did not punish. When the earth was flat Wak asked man to make his own coffin, and when man did this Wak shut him up in it and pushed it into the ground. For seven years he made fire rain down and the mountains

were formed. Then Wak unearthed the coffin and man sprang forth, alive. Man tired of living alone, so Wak took some of his blood, and after four days, the blood became a woman whom the man married. They had 30 children, but the man was ashamed of having so many so he hid 15 of them. Wak then made those hidden children into animals and demons.

Zimbabwe: Modimo was the creator. He distributed good things, appeared in the east and belonged to the element water. At the same time he was a destroyer, a terrifying creature responsible for drought, hail, cyclones and earthquakes. When these things happened he appeared in the west and was part of the element fire. Modimo was also sky and light, earth and root. He was unique and singular. He had no ancestors, no past or future. He pervaded the whole of creation. His name was taboo and could be spoken only by priests and seers. **Zulu:** The Ancient One, known as Unkulunkulu, is the Zulu creator. He came from the reeds (uthlanga, means source) and from them he brought forth the people and the cattle. He created everything that is: mountains, streams, snakes, etc. He taught the Zulu how to hunt, how to make fire, and how to grow food. He is considered to be the First Man and is in everything that he created.

Chinese Creation Myths In the beginning was a huge egg containing chaos and a mixture of yin-yang (female-male, cold-heat, dark-light, wet-dry, etc). Also within this yin-yang was Phan Ku who broke forth from the egg as a giant who separated the yin-yang into many opposites, including earth and sky. With a great chisel and a huge hammer, Phan Ku carved out the mountains, rivers, valleys, and oceans. He also made the sun, moon, and stars. When he died, after 18,000 years, it is said that the fleas in his hair became human beings. In summation, the Chinese say that everything that is is Phan Ku and everything that Phan Ku is is yin-yang.

Pangu Separates the Sky from the Earth: The sky and the earth were at first one blurred entity like an egg. Pangu was born into it. The separation of the sky and the earth took eighteen thousand years-the yang which was light and pure rose to become the sky, and the yin which was heavy and murky sank to form the earth. Between them was Pangu, who went through nine changes every day, his wisdom greater than that of the sky and his ability greater than that of the earth. Every day the sky rose ten feet higher, the earth became ten feet thicker, and Pangu grew ten feet taller. Another eighteen thousand years passed, and there was an extremely high sky, an extremely thick earth, and an

extremely tall Pangu.

Nüü Wa Makes Men: It is said that there were no men when the sky and the earth were separated. It was Nüü Wa (Emperor Yandi's youngest daughter) who made men by moulding yellow clay. The work was so taxing that her strength was not equal to it. So she dipped a rope into the mud and then lifted it. The mud that dripped from the rope also became men. Those made by moulding yellow clay were rich and noble, while those made by lifting the rope were poor and low. **Note:** From Tai ping yu lan (Taiping Anthologies for the Emperor)

India Creation Myths*The Dhammai Creation* (The Dhammai are from northern India. They are a non-Hindu people.) Before there was anything, there existed Shuzanghu and his wife, Zumaing-Nui. In time she gave birth to a girl (earth) and a boy (sky). Sky and earth mated and gave birth to the mountains. Then they produced two frogs who married and made the first humans. These humans were covered with thick hair, but when they mated they produced people as they are now.

How The World Was Created and Re-Created Again The earth was shaped like a wheel. In the center of the world was the heaven. It was called Mount Meru; a mountain that was over 250,000 miles high(!) at its peak. The heaven was circled by the River Ganges. The cities of Indra and the other gods were along its banks. The foothills below Mount Meru were home to the Gandharvas (the good or benevolent spirits). The demons lived in the valleys. The hood of the great serpent Shesha supported the whole world. When each great flood covered the universe, Shesha coiled up on the back of a tortoise. The world had many floods. At the end of each deluge, the world was born again. Once, a golden cosmic egg floated on the waters that buried the world. For a thousand years the lord of the universe brooded over the egg. Finally a lotus flower, as bright as a thousand suns, grew from his navel. The lotus spread and flourished until it contained the whole world. Brahma sprang from the lotus with the powers of the lord of the universe. He created the world from the parts of his body. But, Brahma made some mistakes, and he had to learn from them. At first he created ignorance, and then discarded it. But ignorance survived and became Night. From Night, the "Beings of Darkness" were born, and they set out to devour their creator. "How can you eat your own father?" asked Brahma. Some of the Beings of Darkness relented, but others did not soften in their desire to destroy Brahma. They became the Rakshasas (the

enemies of men). Brahma learned from the experience, and he resolved to create immortal and heavenly beings. He brought to life four sages to finish his work. But the sages lost interest in the creation, and Brahma became angry. From his anger, Rudra sprang forth to complete the work. When another flood covered the world, the world spirit threw a seed called Nara into the waters. The seed grew inside the egg as Brahma. After one year, Brahma made his body into two parts. One half was male, and the other half was female. Viraj, a male, grew inside the female half, and Viraj created Manu. Manu was a sage (a Rishi). Manu lived ten thousand years in the worship of Brahma. One day Manu was meditating beside a stream. A fish spoke to him from the water. "Please, protect me from this fish that is chasing me," the fish begged Manu. Manu put the fish into a pond. After some time, the fish grew too big for the pond. "Please, place me into the River Ganges," requested the fish. Manu did as the fish asked. But time passed, and the fish grew too large for the river. "Please, take me to the ocean," implored the fish. At last the fish was content. Manu learned that he had rescued none other than Brahma himself. Brahma warned Manu of the coming destruction of the world by a great flood. "Build an ark and place in it the seven Rishis and the seeds of everything," Brahma instructed. No sooner did Manu do as Brahma asked, when the deluge began. Everything in the world was blanketed by water once more. The ark tossed about upon the surface. Finally, Manu's ark rested upon the highest peak of the Himalayas, where Manu moored it to a tree. The waters receded after many years, and Manu and the ark descended into the valleys. To prepare for the creation of the next age, Manu performed many sacrifices. Manu offered up milk, clarified butter, curds, and whey to Brahma. He repeated the gesture every day. A year passed, and Manu's offering grew into a beautiful woman. "I am your daughter," said the beautiful woman to Manu. "Together, we will perform other sacrifices to Brahma. As a result you will become rich in children and cattle. You will obtain any blessing you desire." Manu did as his daughter said. They were true in their devotion to Brahma. In return, Manu fathered the human race, and he received many blessings.

Assyria Creation MythThe Annunaki [sky gods: Anu (sky), Enlil (earth), Shamash (sun), and Ea (water)], created the earth and the heavens. When they were finished, they looked carefully at their creation and concluded that something was missing. They decided that mankind was needed to till the

fields and celebrate religious festivals. So it was that the first humans [Ulligarra (abundance) and Zalgarra (plenty)] were created. Aruru, the "lady of the gods", was given sway over their destinies.

***Romania Creation Myth:* God made Heaven, and then, after measuring the space underneath with a ball of thread, he began to form the earth. A mole asked to help, and God gave him the thread to hold while he wove the patterns of the earth. Sometimes the mole would let out too much thread, and finally the earth grew too large for the space under heaven. The mole was so upset that he hid under the earth. God sent the bee to look for him; he wanted the mole's advice on what to do about the mistake. The bee found the mole and the mole just laughed at the idea of advising God. The bee, however, hid in a flower and overheard the mole mumbling to himself about what he would do if he were God. 'I would squeeze the earth,' he said. 'That would make mountains and valleys it is true, but it would make the earth smaller at the same time.' When the bee heard this, he went directly to God and told him. God did what the mole had said, and everything fit fine.**