

Theodora Oniceanu



WORLD LEGENDS
AND
STORIES

**The Sun
and the Moon**

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- The Sun and the Moon Story by Theodora Oniceanu

I. Folk Legends and Myths

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The Sun and the Moon

Located at the center of our Solar System, with Earth orbiting it 93 million miles away from it, the Sun is the largest object within this system, comprising 99.8% of the system's mass.

Throughout history, human mind invented many stories about the creation of the world, the Sun and the Moon playing a very important part. Such a great part that there are thousands of stories and legends related to the creation and existence of the Sun and the Moon as extremely important figures that influenced and inspired for centuries.

This book is meant to gather as many of the stories produced by humanity, in folklore as well as stories of inspired authors telling their own versions on how the Moon and the Sun were created and lived, and why are they shining up into the sky.

The Moon is our close satellite of which's origins scientists have struggled to learn and tell. It appears now that the moon is actually a twin of the Earth, its mantle in particular, in major elements and isotopic ratios. Through the Apollo missions humanity tested its limits reaching the lunar soil and taking samples to test it and discover the origin of this celestial body that was the inspiration for many myths and legends. But as fascinating and attractive science is, there's still a number of folklore and stories, legends and myths, that create and recreate a world with such a rich significance and of such intense value that we cannot deny its extraordinary contribution to societies and the world of literature and arts.

Sun worship and solar deities can be found throughout history (arts and literature) in multiple forms. Be it named Sol by its Latin name or Helios by its Greek name, Nanahuatzin by its Aztec origin, or Shiho by its Chinese call, Amaterasu, Ra or Malina (Inuit_Greenland) the sun-related legends played an important role in the development of societies and their religions.

“The monthly cycle of the Moon, in contrast to the annual cycle of the Sun's path, has been implicitly linked to women's menstrual cycles by many cultures, as evident in the links between the words for menstruation and for Moon in many resultant languages, though this identification was not universal as demonstrated by the fact that not all moon deities are female. Many well-known mythologies feature female lunar deities, such as the Greek goddess Selene, the Roman goddess Luna, and the Chinese goddess Chang'e.” (source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_lunar_deities).

To reference to the light of day there is text that refers to God as the Great Creator, Him being the only one who can bring to life Heavens and Earth. “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. ...” We may see God here as the Great Force of Creation, in mysterious ways working with the power of the word. We can see the Light as the sun. Then again, the Universe is vast and nowadays we know that there are many suns that light celestial bodies all over it. How many suns out there we don't know but we keep searching and studying the fascinating world we all live in.

I. Folk Legends and Myths

European

The Celts

“For the Celts, who lived in central Europe, Lugh was a Sun god”, portrayed as a warrior, a king, a master craftsman and a savior. “He is associated with skill and mastery in multiple disciplines, including the arts, with oaths, truth and the law.” Balor, the underworld god and leader of the Fomorii (the evil people that lived in the underworld), was his grandfather.

“According to a prophecy, Balor was to be killed by a grandson.” To prevent the prophecy from happening, Balor tried to kill his grandson, but Lugh miraculously survived.”

Secretly raised by the god of the sea, Manannan, Lugh became an expert warrior. “When he reached manhood, he joined the peoples of the goddess Dana, named the Tuatha De Danaan, to help them in their struggle against the Fomorii and Balor.” But Balor had an evil eye capable of killing whomever looked at it so Lugh threw a magic stone ball into Balor’s eye, and killed Balor.

“Lugh corresponds to the Welsh god Lleu and the Gallic Lugos. From Lugh’s name derives the names of modern cities such as Lyon, Laon and Leyden. Today, people remember the figure of Lugh with a festival which commemorates the beginning of the harvest in August.” (<https://www.windows2universe.org/mythology/lugh.html>)

As for the Moon and its Goddess, “Cerridwen is, in Celtic mythology, the keeper of the cauldron of knowledge. Giver of wisdom and inspiration, and as such is often associated with the moon and the intuitive process, Cerridwen is a goddess of the Underworld, often symbolized by a white sow,” which represents both her fecundity and fertility and her strength as a mother. She is both Mother and Crone; many modern Pagans honor Cerridwen for her close association to the full moon.” (source: <https://www.learnreligions.com/lunar-deities-2562404>)

Belenus

“Belenus (also Belenos, Belinus, Bel, Beli Mawr) was a sun god from Celtic mythology and, in the 3rd century, the patron deity of the Italian city of Aquileia.” He was one of the most ancient and most-widely worshiped Celtic deities, also called the “Fair Shining One” (or “The Shining God”), and is associated with the ancient fire festival and modern Sabbat Beltane. “He was associated with the horse (as shown by the clay horse figurine offerings at Belenos’s Sainte-Sabine shrine in Burgundy) and also the wheel. Perhaps like Apollo, with whom he became identified in the Augustan History, Belenos was thought to ride the Sun across the sky in a horse-drawn chariot.” (source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belenus>)

Rhiannon

As a lunar a lunar Welsh goddess of inspiration Rhiannon is very known. “Her name means “Great Queen,” and serves as a muse for poets, artists, and royalty. She is also a goddess of transformation, easing the dead into the afterlife

and carries their souls upon her white horse. She is a shapeshifter, and will often appear as a bird, animal, or through a song.” (source: <https://ro.pinterest.com/pin/555561304006762674/>)

folk-tale Why The Sun Chases the Moon

“Tell me the story about how the Sun loved the Moon so much he died every night just to let her breathe.”

“There once was a moon, as beautiful as can be, only the stars could fathom, but the sun could not see. The sun so radiant, he burns so bright. The moon so luminous, but only showed her face during the night. She was untouchable, surrounding herself with a blanket of darkness. The sun would give anything to catch a glimpse of the Moon illuminating the beautiful night sky.

Until one day when the Sun was sliding out of the heavens, he caught a glimpse of her. She was peeking up, a rare side of her being exposed to the light. And while the Sun could shine, he knew the Moon could glow.

Just as the Stars were wandering into the night, the Sun fell in love like a snowball hurtling down a mountain. How he wished to see her move than the fleeting moments he shared with her at both dawn and dusk. But they were a world apart.

“Go,” she whispered to him one of those nights, her voice as sweet and sorrowful as the last light of morning. “Go and let me breathe, for you and I have decided fates. You illuminate the day, and I cast a glow on the night. We will never be. Our connection would go against what all the people believe, all they know” During the summer he would stay a little longer just in case she would change his mind. It was no use.

“Don’t you dare abandon your blessing of light for my darkness.” And those were the last words the Moon was strong enough to speak to the Sun.

The Sun could feel her peaceful soul and it soon became clear. He would die each and every night to let his true love breathe, for it would put an end to all her misery.” (source: <https://michellemontague.com/2017/05/the-story-of-the-sun-and-moon-an-inspiration/>)

Scandinavia

Freyr

Among the most venerated divinities amongst the heathen Norse and Germanic people, Freyr is a god who belongs to the Vanir tribe of deities, also an honorary member of the other Norse tribe, Aesir. Legend has it that he arrived at Aesir fortress, Asgard, as a hostage towards the end of the Asir-Vanir war. There is one Old Norse poem calling him “the foremost of the gods” and “hated by none.” On his benevolence the prosperity of the people depended. Unsurprisingly, “Freyr was a frequent recipient of sacrifices at various occasions, such as the blessing of a wedding or the celebration of a harvest. During harvest festivals, the sacrifice traditionally took the form of his favored animal, the boar.” (source: <https://norse-mythology.org/>)

Born of Father Njord and mother Nerthus (presumably), sister of Njord, Freyr has been the lover of many goddesses and giantesses, including his own sister Freya.

Although among historical Germanic people incest was unacceptable, the Vanir tribe allowed such practice. Alfheim, the homeland of the elves, is Freyr's residence. "On land, Freyr travels in a chariot drawn by boars." (source: Snorri Sturluson. The Prose Edda. Gylfaginning 48.)

Daniel McCoy is featuring a few details about this myth: "Another one of Freyr's signature possessions is his ship, Skíðblaðnir, which always has a favorable wind and can be folded up and carried in a small bag." (source: Snorri Sturluson. The Prose Edda. Gylfaginning 43). This mythological feature was reflected in historical rituals: "priestesses and/or priests of Freyr traveled throughout the country on a chariot which contained a statue of the god." (Flateyjarbók). "When the chariot reached a village or town, the people laid down their arms and "every iron object" and enjoyed a period of peace and joyful festivities, reveling in the deity's kind presence." (source: Tacitus, Cornelius. 1948. Germania 40. In The Agricola and Germania. Translated by Harold Mattingly. p. 134-135.)

Freyr is not an actual name. It carries though great significance, freyr meaning Lord. It is more of a title than a proper name, expressing the great importance of the character in the Norse and Germanic people's lives. In various illustrations depicting the god, Freyr is represented with the sun in the back at a side - usually to his left back or in the very center.

A little love-story is provided to us, regarding Freyr's adventure in getting Gerd, the giantess to marry him. And the story goes like this: "On a journey to the underworld, Freyr saw and fell in love with the giantess Gerd. He sent his servant, Skirnir, on a journey to convince Gerd to marry him. Freyr also gave Skirnir a magic sword to use. Skirnir, however, could not convince Gerd to marry his master. It wasn't until he threatened her with the magic sword that Gerd agreed to meet Freyr in a grove of trees to become his bride." (source: https://www.windows2universe.org/?page=/mythology/freyr_sun.html)

Romania

Zamolxex

An old legend of the Realm of Luana (the Carpathian Curvature) describes life on a land of light, the Realm of the Sun, the great indo-european divinity inherited from the Great Gods, the Great future god of the geto-dacians, Zamolxes (also Zamolxe or Zamolxis), the one who offered safety to his lands by guarding it constantly. Hovering above a haughty citadel sustained by walls that would touch the sky, Zalmoxes was the Guardian of the City of Sun, a healer and the owner of springs.

A very known ballad is the one describing the love between the Sun and his sister, the Moon, an incestuous as well story that has been rewritten by Vasile Alecsandri and creatively altered.

Legend has it that the sun fell in love with his sister, the moon and he asked her to marry him. As this was presumably wrong in Moon's views, she refused the Sun's proposal but he didn't give up, insisting on proposing to her. She then asked him to build a bridge of Iron over the Black Sea with a monastery at one end and a stairway at the other. In one slap of hand the Sun creates the bridge as told then asks again the Moon to marry him. But this time the Moon asks him to build a bridge of brass.

He executes this second one as well, with the same ease. In other versions the bridges are actually crops she asks to surround and fill the country with. The Sun proposes again, still, the Moon does not accept his proposal. Seeing that there is no way to convince the Moon to take him as husband, the Sun climbs into the skies to ask advice from Adam and Eve. They open the consoling pictures of Heavens and the terrible one of Hell, demonstrating that the end would be a dark and damnable one, as marrying a co-sanguin would attract only bad times for the two. Despite this demonstration the Sun insists on his idea.

As she walked towards the monastery at the end of the Iron Bridge, The Sister of the Sun (the Moon) throws herself into the water (other versions tell that she was thrown into the water by divine wrath) and she is turned into a barbell (by the Lord). The sun calls for trawlers to catch her and they do but the saints descend, take off her scales and throw her into the skies. It is then when she is named by Adam and Iova (Eve) with the term Moon. In popular folklore, this character is also known as Ileana Sîmzeana or Cosânzeana, being also attributed the name of Iana (the feminine version of Ianus, solar divinity) or simply Sister of the Sun.

"In mythical Romanian folklore, every form of incest is prohibited. Incest was severely punished, the incestuous couples being excluded from their villages for damaging the customs. The fight against incest is manifested in the legend "The Sun and the Moon" in every cosmic level: the human life level, the astral-human level, the saint-ancestors level. Incest is seen as a mean of disturbance of the cosmic order between celestial-humans, daemons and humans, not only between humans." (source: Romulus Vulcănescu, Mitologia..., 1987, p. 394-395).

Romanian folklore has a great number of stories telling about "the Sons of the Sun". There are many fascinating folk-stories telling about princes so bright and beautiful as the sun, Beautiful Children with golden hair and traits of a brave god who are sent to the rescue of the kingdom and/or the most beautiful princess whom they eventually marry.

There is also a number of stories related to the Moon, as well as traditions and customs of the old days, some kept today in changed forms, the common traditions varying from area to area. According to traditional Romanian folklore described by Lavinia Fratilă, Full Moon is the perfect moment to transmit your intentions to the Universe. It is time to leave the past behind and start a new love relationship. It is said that when a New Philanderer appears one would dream about The One and for this you have to show yourself to the Moon, bow three times and say: "Moon, dear Moon, Full Moon, give me dew; Moon, dear Moon, my dear, show me my pair!" Another ancient ritual related to Full Moon is to write your wishes on a piece of paper and throw the ashes to the Moon.

Old heathen beliefs describe the moon as the main deity. She is part of every day magic rituals, pagans bathing in the Moon's waters to wash all bad.

Greece

In the ancient world, the Sun was the most powerful astrological body and was worshipped as the image of God in ancient Greece.

Greek mythology tells about Hyperion who was the Titan of light, the father of the Sun, the Moon and the Dawn, and Helios was his son. "Each morning at dawn, Helios rose from the ocean in the east and rode his chariot, pulled by four horses -

Pyrois, Eos, Aethon, and Phlegon, across the sky to descend at night in the west.” (source: Solar-Folklore by Deborah Scherrer)

Helios

Usually represented as a youth with a halo, Helios appears to be standing in a chariot, occasionally with a billowing robe. (He is depicted this way in many ancient reliefs).

Apollo

It is also extremely known that in Greek mythology, Apollo (byname Phoebus, in Greco-Roman mythology) is a god of the sun, the ideal of the *kouros* - which means he has a beardless, athletic and youthful appearance - one of the Twelve Olympians, the son of Zeus and the Titan Leto and the twin brother of Artemis, goddess of the hunt. He's usually represented with a laurel wreath about his head, one that he would have worn in honor of his love for Daphne.

A god of healing, medicine, music archery, poetry and the sun, order and beauty, he is the leader of Muses being also a god of prophecy, his Oracle at Delphy carrying great importance. A known attribute for Apollo was the lyre created by Hermes. When traveling, he rode a chariot pulled by swans. “When hymns were sung to Apollo they were called *paeans*.” (source: ekgodsandgoddesses.net)

Ridden by Zeus's son, Apollo, the chariot in which the sun travelled across the sky was driven by fiery horses. Representing the sun in greek culture, he was seen to illuminate the world of music and reason, bringing logic and order to humanity.

Phaeton

Another son of the sun, important figure in Greek mythology, was Phaethon.

Phaethon (/ˈfeɪ.əθən/; Ancient Greek: Φαέθων, Phaéthōn, pronounced [pʰa.é.tʰɔːn], Greek meaning of “Shining” or “Radiant”) - the most influential extant version of the story, found in Ovid's Metamorphosis, Books I–II - was a name given to different figures in Greek mythology, but the best known was the son of the Oceanid nymph Clymene and either the god Apollo or Helios; both of those gods were associated with the sun. Some sources attribute different characters as his parents.

Challenged by Epaphus and his playmates, Phaethon sought assurance from his mother that his father was the sun god Helios (in some sources Apollo). Giving him the requested assurance, she told him to turn to his father for confirmation. He travelled to the east until he came to the palace of the Sun, and asked his father for some proof that would demonstrate his relationship with the sun. The god confirmed his divine origin and promised to grant him whatever he wanted. Phaethon then asked on being allowed to drive the sun chariot for a day. Helios tried to dissuade Phaethon, telling him that even Zeus, the greatest god of all, was not strong enough to steer these horses, but Phaethon insisted. As a promise could not be broken, Helios reluctantly kept his promise. But, as foreseen, placed in charge of the chariot, Phaethon was unable to control the horses. “In some versions, the Earth first froze when the horses climbed too high, but when the chariot then scorched the Earth by swinging too near, Zeus decided to prevent disaster by striking it down

with a thunderbolt.” (source: <https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Phaethon>) Phaethon fell to earth at the mouth of the Eridanus, a river later identified as the Po, being killed in the process.

Cycnus of Liguria, good friend or lover of Phaethon, profoundly mourned his death and was turned into a swan. Phaethon also had seven sisters, the Heliades, who also mourned his loss, “keeping vigil where Phaethon fell to Earth until the gods turned the sisters into poplar trees, and their tears into amber.” (source: <https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Phaethon> _ “Phaethon in Greek Mythology”. Greek Legends and Myths.)

Icarus

Not presenting a god but a legendary human, the story of Icarus is also related to the sun, wisely teaching on how to respect some boundaries for reasons of safety, if not others.

Icarus (/ˈɪkərəs/; Ancient Greek: Ἴκαρος [iːkaros]) was the son of the famous master craftsman Daedalus in Greek mythology. His father, Daedalus was the creator of the Labyrinth - a huge maze located under the court of King Minos of Crete, where the Minotaur, a half-man half-bull creature lived. The Minotaur was King Minos's wife child with the king's bull, to the conception of which, Daedalus was responsible as he had helped the Queen to mate with the bull.

In order for the secret of the Labyrinth to be kept, and to punish Daedalus for his act of betrayal of natural law, Minos imprisoned Daedalus and Icarus in a tower above his palace. But Daedalus was still a brilliant inventor and managed to create two sets of wings for himself and his son. The wings were made of feathers glued together with wax. He then taught Icarus how to fly, warning him not to fly too high, since that would cause the wax to melt, nor too low, as that would cause the feathers to get wet with sea water. “Together, they flew out of the tower towards freedom.” However, Icarus soon, overwhelmed with the ecstasy of flight, forgot his father's warnings, as he felt like a god, “and started flying higher and higher, until the wax started melting under the scorching sun. His wings dissolved and he fell into the sea and drowned. The area of the sea where he fell took the name Icarian Sea after him, while a nearby island was named Icaria.” (source: <https://www.greekmythology.com/Myths/Mortals/Icarus/icarus.html>)

Selene

Goddess of the Moon, Selene is the representation of the Moon itself to the Greeks. She is often associated with archer goddess Artemis who is also a moon goddess and Hecate.

Selene is a Titan goddess, a divine deity that preceded the Olympian Gods.

Hecate was “considered to be the goddess of magic and witchcraft, often depicted holding two torches or a key. She was the daughter of the Titans Perses and Asteria, and she was honoured in the households as a protective goddess who brought prosperity.” (source: https://www.greekmythology.com/Other_Gods/Hecate/hecate.html)

Daughter of the Titans Hyperion and Theia, Selene had two siblings, Helios and Eos. As the goddess of the moon she drove every night across the skies in a silver

moon chariot which was carried by two snow-white horses.

She had an affair with a mortal named Endymion, whom Zeus had granted the choice of when he would die Endymion chose to fall into an eternal sleep to remain ageless and deathless.

“According to some sources, Selene was one of Zeus’ lovers and they had a number of children; Pandia, she who is all-bright; Ersa, the dew; Nemea, the nymph of the eponymous place; and Dionysus, although this may be a confusion due to the name similarity between Selene and Semele.” (source: <https://www.greekmythology.com/Titans/Selene/selene.html>)

Roman Empire

Sol

In Roman religion, Sol is the name of two distinct gods at Rome. The original Sol (Sol Indigenes), together with Luna, the moon goddess, had a shrine on the Quirinal, in the Circus Maximus, an annual sacrifice being brought on August 9.

“Sol Invictus (“Unconquered Sun”) was though the official sun god of the later Roman Empire and a patron of soldiers. On 25 December AD 274, the Roman emperor Aurelian made it an official religion alongside the traditional Roman cults.” (source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sol_Invictus)

Luna

In ancient Roman religion and mythology, Luna is the divine embodiment of the Moon (Latin luna; cf. English “lunar”), often being presented as the female complement of the Sun, Sol.

Roman art depicts Luna with attributes of the crescent moon and the two-yoke chariot (biga). “In the Carmen Saeculare, performed in 17 BC, Horace invokes her as the “two-horned queen of the stars” (siderum regina bicornis), bidding her to listen to the girls singing as Apollo listens to the boys.” (source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luna_\(goddess\)_](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luna_(goddess)_))

Poland and the Slavic world

A preserved myth coming from Poland, the Sieradz Land, was written down in 1898. The story goes like this:

“In the beginning, there was nothing but the sky, the sea, the God who sailed by boat and the devil emerging from the sea foam, who sat down to God.

In the beginning, there was nothing but the sky, the sea, the God who sailed by boat and the devil emerging from the sea foam, who sat down to God. The idea of creating the Earth was suggested to God by the devil, who could not do it by himself alone. The devil immersed himself and brought out a handful of sand from the bottom. God threw it on the water and created the beginning of the Earth so thin that they both barely fit on it. God and the devil inhabited the Earth, the devil thought to push the sleeping God into the water, but he contributed to the expansion of the land from the side of God, from the east and from his own side, from the west. Both creators started a dispute that ended up with God going to heaven and knocking down the devil, who also went there, by lightning into the abyss.

There are versions of this myth in the Ukrainian and the Russian mythologies, differing, slightly. Then there is the myth of the Cosmic Egg and a carol written by Alexander Afanasyev.

“It used to be at the beginning of the world –

Then there was no sky or earth,

No sky nor earth but the blue sea,

And in the middle of the sea on oak

Two pigeons were sitting.

Two pigeons on an oak tree

They held such a council,

Happy debated and cooed:

How can we create the world?

We will fall to the bottom of the sea,

We’ll bring out the fine sand

Fine sand, blue stone.

We will sow fine sand,

We will pick up the blue pebble.

From fine sand - black earth,

- icy water, green grass.

From the blue stone - the blue sky,

Blue sky, bright sun,

Bright sun, bright moon,

bright moon and all the stars.”

Africa

Egypt

Re

Re or Ra, also spelled Pra, is in ancient Egyptian mythology the god of the sun and creation, of course, the most important of all the gods, being seen as the ruler of the sky, the Earth, and the underworld. Carrying many names such as Amun-Ra, and Ra-Horakht, he was the god of the sun, order, kings, and the sky. “In the Egyptian culture it was said that he was born each morning in the East, and died each night in the West. Also, during the night he traveled through the underworld, and this is why the west side of the Nile was known as the land of the dead. He was the king of the gods.” (source: <https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ra>)

Re’s appearance may diverse; he is usually depicted as “a man with a falcon head, which is due to his combination with Horus, another sky god”, or a Hawk with the sun disk above him, but he may also be depicted as a scarab beetle or a man, also pictured as a full-bodied ram, phoenix, heron, serpent, bull, cat, or lion. “Originally most solar gods had falcon form and were assimilated to Horus.” (source: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Re>)

Since the sun is “the giver of life”, controlling the ripening of crops which were worked by man, Re was worshipped by the Egyptians. But Re also had enemies, Seth, a god of the desert (including desert storms), thunder, evil, pain and suffering, being sometimes an opponent of Re’s. Isis was another enemy of Re’s as she had

tricked him into giving her his hidden name so her husband Osiris could take over and be king of the gods.

Khonsu

“Khonsu - also had the titles “Embracer”, “Pathfinder”, and “Defender”, as he was thought to watch over those who travel at night. - (Ancient Egyptian: ḫnsw; also transliterated Chonsu, Khensu, Khons, Chons or Khonshu) is the ancient Egyptian god of the Moon. His name means “traveller”, and this may relate to the perceived nightly travel of the Moon across the sky. Along with Thoth he marked the passage of time. Khonsu was instrumental in the creation of new life in all living creatures.”

Invoked to protect against wild animals and aid with healing, Khonsu was said to have caused the crescent moon to shine, women conceive, cattle become fertile, and all nostrils and every throat to be filled with fresh air.

San People of Namibia

There are some stories that say that the sun was once a man. From his armpits shone rays of light. “He dwelt alone in a hut and his light shone only for himself.”

Legend has it that some children who belonged to the first Bushmen, were sent to throw the sleeping man high up into the sky. They did so and he now shines upon all. “In the evening, he draws his blanket of darkness over himself to keep warm, but the blanket is old and has many little holes in it and at night the sun still sparkles through them to make stars.” (source: <http://www.gateway-africa.com/stories>)

There is another story that tells of a lonely young girl awaiting the return of her hunter companions. To light their way in the dark of the night she throws up a handful of white wood-ash and this becomes the Milky Way stars. It is said and known that even when there is no moon, its shining light guides the hunters home.

Say the Bushmen in another tale, the moon, is really an old shoe belonging to Mantis, who lost it while running errands for the gods. As it rises early summer evenings, it is red with the red dust of the Kalahari, and cold like old leather.

“They also say that the sun is jealous of the moon when it is full, as it is a challenge to the sun’s brightness. With its sharp rays the sun cuts bits off the moon, until there is just a little left and the old moon cries, ‘Oh! Oh! leave a little backbone for the children!’ Then the sun goes away, and soon the moon starts growing back, little by little, to its normal size and the process starts all over again.” (source: <http://www.gateway-africa.com/stories>).

There is also a little story that says that when the moon was hollow and young, she was weighed down with the spirits of the dead which she carries. “Clouds that pass are actually the hair of the dead and the wind blows to sweep the footprints of the dead from the sand.”

The Bushmen believe that the world was made by the spirits which are all around them. Chrigi of the San Clan says, ‘There is always a dream, dreaming us!’

Nigeria

“Many years ago, the sun and water were great friends, and they both lived on the earth together. The sun often used to visit the water, but the water never returned

the visits.

At last, the sun asked the water why he never visited. The water replied that the sun’s house was not big enough, and that if he came with all his people, he would drive the sun out of his home.

The water then said, ‘If you want me to visit you, you will have to build a bigger house. But I warn you that it will have to be very large, as I have many relatives and friends and we take up a lot of room.’

The sun promised to build a huge house, and soon afterwards he returned home to his wife, the moon, who greeted him with a broad smile.

The sun told the moon what he had promised the water, and the next day they began building a large house to entertain the water and all his family and friends. When it was finished, the sun asked the water to come and visit him.

When the water arrived, he called out to the sun and asked him whether it would be safe for all his family and friends to enter, and the sun answered, ‘Yes, you may all come in.’

The water began to flow in, followed by the fish and all the other water animals.

Very soon, the water was knee-deep in the house, so the water asked the sun if it was still safe, and the sun again said, ‘Yes, please come into my house.’ So the water and all his family continued to come in.

When the water was at the level of a man’s head, the water said to the sun, ‘Do you still want more of my people to come?’

Not knowing any better, the sun and the moon both said, ‘Yes, the more the merrier.’

So more and more of the water’s people came in, until the sun and the moon had to sit on top of the roof. When the water flowed over the top of the roof, the sun and the moon were forced to go up into the sky ...

... and they have been there ever since.”

(source: http://www.gateway-africa.com/stories/Sun_Moon_and_Stars_San.html)

Liza, the Sun God _ West Africa

The Sun god to the Fon people of West Africa was Liza. His sister was Mawu, the Moon goddess. Liza was also the god of heat, work, and strength and Mawu was the goddess of night and motherhood. The two were twins, but also lovers, together, creating the universe with the help of Da, the cosmic serpent. Fourteen children (seven sons and seven daughters) were born from the union of the two, and they divided the responsibilities of the world among them. Mawu, being the Goddess of motherhood - since it was she that created the first humans out of clay - gives humans their souls.

Australia

“In most Aboriginal cultures, the Sun is seen as a woman and the Moon is depicted as a man. Some Aboriginal communities describe the Sun woman pursuing the Moon man across the sky from day to day, occasionally meeting during an eclipse.

The Yolngu people call the Moon Ngalindi and he too travels across the sky. Originally, he was a fat lazy man (corresponding to the full Moon) for which he was

punished by his wives, who chopped bits off him with their axes, producing the waning Moon. He managed to escape by climbing a tall tree to follow the Sun, but was mortally wounded, and died (the new Moon). After remaining dead for 3 days, he rose again, growing round and fat (the waxing Moon), until, after two weeks his wives attacked him again. The cycle continues to repeat every month. Until Ngalindi first died, everyone on Earth was immortal, but he cursed humans and animals so that only he could return to life. For everyone else, death would thereafter be final.” (source: <http://www.aboriginalastronomy.com.au/content/topics/moon/>)

“There was a time when everything was still. All the spirits of the Earth were asleep - or almost all. The great Father of All Spirits was the only one awake. Gently he awoke the Sun Mother. As she opened her eyes a warm ray of light spread out towards the sleeping earth.

The Father of All Spirits said to the Sun Mother, “Mother, I have work for you. Go down to the Earth and awake the sleeping spirits. Give them forms.”

The Sun Mother glided down to Earth, which was bare at the time and began to walk in all directions. Everywhere she walked plants grew. After returning to the field where she had begun her work the Mother rested, well pleased with herself. The Father of All Spirits came and saw her work, but instructed her to go into the caves and wake the spirits.

This time she ventured into the dark caves on the mountainsides. The bright light that radiated from her awoke the spirits and, after she left, insects of all kinds flew out of the caves. The Sun Mother sat down and watched the glorious sight of her insects mingling with her flowers. However once again the Father urged her on. Next, the Mother ventured into a very deep cave, spreading her light around her. Her heat melted the ice and the rivers and streams of the world were created. Then she created fish and small snakes, lizards and frogs. Next she awoke the spirits of the birds and animals and they burst into the sunshine in a glorious array of colors. Seeing this the Father of All Spirits was pleased with the Sun Mother’s work.

She called all her creatures to her and instructed them to enjoy the wealth of the Earth and to live peacefully with one another. Then she rose into the sky and became the Sun. The living creatures watched the Sun in awe as she crept across the sky, towards the west.

However when she finally sunk beneath the horizon they were panic-stricken, thinking she had deserted them. All night they stood frozen in their places, thinking that the end of time had come. After what seemed to them like a lifetime the Sun Mother peeked her head above the horizon in the East. The Earth’s children learned to expect her coming and going and were no longer afraid.” (source: Australian Aborigine Creation Myth _ http://dept.cs.williams.edu/~lindsey/myths/myths_13.html)

Pacific Ocean

Polynesia

Maui

Maui was less of a god and more of a hero in Polynesian mythology. For Maui and his mother (in some sources his brothers as well) the days had too little sunlight, so, “there was never enough time to accomplish anything in only one day”. Maui want-

ed to allow his mother to have more daylight to make bark cloth and his brothers to have the time for all their village duties and for hunting and fishing.

Thinking about what to do he came with an idea: what if the Sun were moving slower across the sky? *There would be more hours of light in one day, right?* “So, it is said that Maui cut off the sacred tresses of his wife, Hina, “to make a rope that would not burn in the Sun.” This rope he used to catch “the Sun as it was rising and beat it with the magic jawbone of his grandmother (in some versions it was his special axe).” (source: https://www.windows2universe.org/mythology/maui_sun.html) “The Sun, who was raging at being held captive, struggled and roared. Then Maui knew he had to do something more than just hold the Sun in the net so he yelled to one of his brothers to take his end of the rope.”

“The Sun roared even louder. ‘What are you doing? Are you trying to kill me?’ he screamed. ‘No. I am not trying to kill you,’ answered Maui, ‘but you don’t understand. You go too fast across the sky, and we are all unable to do our daily work. We need more hours of light in our days for hunting and fishing, for building and repairing our village houses.’

“‘Well,’ said the Sun, ‘you have given me such a battering that I don’t think I could speed across the sky now, even if I wanted to.’ ‘If we release you,’ said Maui, ‘will you promise to slow your journey down?’ ‘You have so weakened me that now I can only go slowly,’ answered the Sun.

“Maui made him solemnly promise to do what he had asked and then he released the ropes. Maui’s brothers and the men of the tribe watched as the Sun, slowly and stiffly, began to lift into the sky. They all smiled at Maui - they were proud of him.

“To this day, the Sun travels on his long lonely path across the sky at a very slow pace, giving us many more hours of sunlight than he used to do.” (source: [Solar-Folklore.pdf](#) by Deborah Scherrer).

In one other tale, Maui desired the art of making fire, so, stole a hen from heaven because fire was guarded by the celestial chicken.

According to one myth, Maui was making an earth oven when his poker got stuck in the sky, as he was always trying to impress women. At that time, the sky was much lower than it is now, so, to get more room, Maui simply pushed the sky up.

Hina

Hina (variations of the name Hina include Sina, Hanaiakamalama, and Ina) is a name assigned to a number of Polynesian deities, the name Hina usually relating to a powerful female force (typically a goddess or queen) who has dominion over a specific entity. “Even within a single culture, Hina could refer to multiple goddesses and the distinction between the different identities are not always clear.” For example, “in Hawaiian mythology, the name is usually paired with words which explain or identify the goddess and her power such as Hina-puku-i’a (Hina-gathering-seafood) the goddess of fishermen, and Hina-‘opu-hala-ko’a who gave birth to all reef life.” (-source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hina_\(goddess\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hina_(goddess)))

Continuing to be a figure worshiped in many of the Polynesian religions Hina’s stories serve as traditions that unite Polynesia, specifically the Hawaiian Islands.

“Among the iwi of New Zealand, Hina is usually considered to be either the elder sister or the wife of Māui.”

The most common story that presents Hina as the wife of Māui tells of the father

of all eels, Te Tunaroa, who one day visited the pool where Hina bathed starting to fancy her. He kept visiting the place to meet Hina. One day, as Hina was bathing, the eel-god rubbed against her, this occurring over a number of visits until Te Tunaroa grew bold enough to rub against Hina's genitals, molesting her. Māui heard of this act and attacked Te Tunaroa cutting his body into bits. "The tail landed in the sea and became the conger eel, whereas the other end landed in the swamps as the fresh water eels. Smaller pieces became lamprey and hagfish." (source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hina_\(goddess\)_](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hina_(goddess)_))

America

Southern Canada _ The Ojibwa people

The Sun and the Moon were man and wife and had come to earth through a hole in the sky. Each morning they descended and returned through another hole by night.

The thunder god, Heng, grew angry as he watched the Moon grow thinner and fade away. He believed that the Sun was mistreating his wife so he cast a black cloud across the Sun's face. But the heat melted the cloud and drops of water started to fall from the sky resulting a magnificent rainbow.

(- from Solar-Folklore by Deborah Scherrer -)

Southeastern United States _ Cherokee_

Creation of Light

"When the Earth was dry, the animals came down. It was still dark, so they got the Sun and set it in a track to go across the island east to west every day. It was too hot this way and the Red Crawfish had his shell scorched to a bright red and it spoiled the meat. The Cherokee do not eat it. The conjurers raised the Sun again and again seven times until it was right and left it there. Every day the Sun goes along this arch and returns at night to the starting place." (source: Solar-Folklore.pdf by Deborah Scherrer)

Pacific Northwest _ Tsimshian Tribe _

One Who Walks all Over the Sky

"Back when the sky was completely dark there was a chief with two sons, a younger son, One Who Walks All Over the Sky, and an older son, Walking About Early. The younger son was sad to see the sky always so dark so he made a mask out of wood and pitch (the Sun) and lit it on fire. Each day he travels across the sky. At night he sleeps below the horizon and when he snores sparks fly from the mask and make the stars. The older brother became jealous. To impress their father he smeared fat and charcoal on his face (the Moon) and makes his own path across the sky." (source: Solar-Folklore.pdf by Deborah Scherrer)

Tennessee, North Carolina

Sun and Her Daughter

As the Sun traveled across the sky she would stop in the middle each day to have dinner at her daughter's house.

Now the Sun hated people because they would always squint when they looked at her. "They screw up their faces at me!" she told her brother the Moon. "I like them," said the Moon, "they always smile at me." The Sun was jealous and decided she would kill the people by sending a fever. Many people were dying and those remaining decided they would have to kill the Sun. With some magic, one of the people was turned into a rattlesnake and sent to wait by the daughter's door, to bite the Sun when she stopped for dinner. But when the daughter opened the door to look for her mother, the snake bit her instead. The snake returned to Earth with the Sun still alive and the daughter dead. When the Sun discovered what had happened she shut herself up in the house and grieved. The people no longer had the fever but now it was cold and dark. So, seven people were chosen to visit the land where ghosts dance to see if they could retrieve the daughter. As she danced past them they struck her with rods so she fell down, then they trapped her in a box. On the trip home she complained of not being able to breathe so they opened the lid just a crack. She became a redbird and escaped, flying back to the land of ghosts. Seeing the seven people return empty handed, the Sun began to cry. This caused a great flood. To amuse the Sun and stop the flood, the people danced. This is why the people do the Sun dance to this very day."

Alberta _ Canada _

The Theft from the Sun

"Once Old Man was traveling around, when he came to the Sun's lodge, and the Sun asked him to stay awhile. Old Man was very glad to do so. One day the meat was all done, and the Sun said, "Kyi! Old Man, what say you we go and kill some deer?" "You speak well," replied Old Man. "I like deer meat."

The Sun took down a bag and pulled out a beautiful pair of leggings. They were embroidered with porcupine quills and bright feathers. "These," said the Sun, "are my hunting leggings. They are great medicine. All I have to do is put them on and walk around a patch of brush, when the leggings set it on fire and drive the deer out so I can shoot them." "Hai-yah!" exclaimed Old Man. "How wonderful!" He made up his mind he would have those leggings, even if he had to steal them.

They went out to hunt, and the first patch of brush they came to, the Sun set on fire with his hunting leggings. A lot of white-tail deer ran out, and they each shot one. That night, when they went to bed, the Sun pulled off his leggings and placed them to one side.

Old Man saw where he put them, and in the middle of the night, when everyone else was asleep, he stole them and went off. He traveled a long time, until he had gone far and was very tired and then, making a pillow of the leggings, lay down and slept.

In the morning, he heard someone talking. The Sun was saying, "Old Man, why are my leggings under your head? He looked around, and saw he was in the Sun's lodge, and thought he must have wandered around and got lost, and returned there.

Again the Sun spoke, and said, "What are you doing with my leggings?" "Oh," replied Old Man, "I couldn't find anything for a pillow, so I just put these under my head."

Night came again, and again Old Man stole the leggings and ran off. This time he did not walk at all, he just kept running until pretty near morning, and then lay down and slept.

You see what a fool he was. He did not know that the whole world is the Sun's lodge. He did not know that, no matter how far he ran, he could not get out of Sun's sight.

When morning came, he found himself still in the Sun's lodge. But this time the Sun said: "Old Man, since you like my leggings so much, I will give them to you. Keep them."

Then Old Man was very glad and went away.

One day his food was all gone, so he put on the medicine leggings and set fire to a piece of brush. He was just going to kill one deer that was running out when he saw that the fire was getting close to him. He ran away as fast as he could but the fire gained on him and began to burn his legs. His leggings were all on fire. He came to a river and jumped in, and pulled off the leggings as soon as he could. They were burned to pieces.

Perhaps the Sun did this to him because he tried to steal his leggings."

Northwest _ Tsimshian Tribe _

Raven and the Sun

"Once the sky had no day. When the sky was clear there was some light from the stars but when it was cloudy it was very dark. Raven had put fish in the rivers and fruit trees in the land but he was saddened by the darkness. The Sun at that time was kept in a box by a chief in the sky. The Raven came to a hole in the sky and went through. He came to a spring where the chief's daughter would fetch water.

He changed himself into a cedar seed and floated on the water. When the girl drank from spring she swallowed the seed without noticing and became pregnant. A boy child was born which was really Raven. As a toddler he begged to play with the yellow ball that grandfather kept in a box. He was allowed to play with the Sun and when the chief looked away he turned back into Raven and flew back through the hole in the sky, bringing the Sun to our world." (source: Solar-Folklore.pdf_ by Deborah Scherrer - Source: Legend courtesy of Starlore of Native America, assembled by Brad Snowden)

Michigan _ Winnebago (Hotcak) _

Little Brother Snares the Sun

"In the old days people were not the chiefs and did not hunt animals. Animals were the chiefs and hunted people. They killed all the people except one girl and her little brother. They hid in a cave. The boy learned to kill snowbirds with a bow and arrow and made a robe from the feathers. They made soup from the bodies of the birds and that was the first time people ate meat. The bright Sun ruined the robe one day

and the little brother swore revenge. His sister helped him fashion a snare. He traveled to the hole in the ground where the Sun rises every morning. As the Sun rose he snared it and tied it up so that there was no light or warmth that day. The animals were afraid and amazed by the boy.

They sent the biggest and most fearsome animal to try to free the Sun. This was Door Mouse, who in those days was as big as a mountain. The mouse chewed through the snare freeing the Sun but meanwhile the intense heat shrunk him down to his present size.

Since that time the people have been the chiefs and the hunters."

Central America

"Huitzilopochtli, whose name means "Blue Hummingbird on the Left," was the Aztec god of the Sun, war, and human sacrifice. The people had to make sacrifices to him to protect the Aztec from infinite night.

There are several mythologies describing Huitzilopochtli's beginnings. One story tells of the cosmic creation and Huitzilopochtli's role. According to this legend, he was the smallest son of four—his parents being the creator couple Tonacatecutli and Tonacacihuatl while his brothers were Quetzalcoatl and the 2 Tezcatlipocas. His mother and father instructed both him and Quetzalcoatl to bring order to the world. And so, together they created the Sun, the Earth, fire, and the first male and female humans.

Another story relates that his mother Coatlicue became pregnant with Huitzilopochtli when a ball of feathers fell from the heaven and touched her. Huitzilopochtli's 400 siblings thought that their mother Coatlicue had dishonored them with her mysterious pregnancy. One sister of Huitzilopochtli, Coyolxauhq, encouraged her sisters and brothers to kill their mother Coatlicue. However, Huitzilopochtli burst forth from his mother's womb in full armor and fully grown. He attacked his older brothers and sister, defending his mother by beheading the sister and casting her head into the sky to become the Moon. He then chased after his brothers, who fled from him and became scattered all over the sky. Hence Huitzilopochtli is seen as the Sun in mythology, while his many male siblings are perceived as the stars and his sister as the moon. In the Aztec worldview, this is the why the Sun is constantly chasing the Moon and stars. It is also why it was so important to provide tribute and thus sustenance for the Sun. If Huitzilopochtli did not have enough strength to battle his siblings, they would destroy their mother and thus the world.

Anthony Aveni explains it this way: "The Aztecs were a people with a mission – they needed to keep the universe going. Believing themselves to be allied with the sun god, they waged a continuous battle against the forces of darkness, seeking to provide him with the precious liquid derived from the bodies of sacrificial victims that would propel him on his way. To avert cosmic disaster, the Aztecs waged constant warfare against the communities surrounding their capital city of Tenochtitlan. There they attained their supply of human hearts to fuel their light-bearing deity. It all goes back to the creation of the world by the gods of Teotihuacan who threw themselves into the cosmic fire to beckon the sun to rise, and to the man-god Quetzalcoatl. He was the one who fashioned the first humans from the ground-up bones of those who had lived in previous creations, cementing them together with blood shed from his member." This is the nature of Aztec militaristic cosmology."

New Mexico, Arizona _ Zuni Tribe _

Coyote and Eagle Steal the Sun and Moon

“Back when it was always dark, it was also always summer. Coyote and Eagle went hunting. Coyote was a poor hunter because of the dark. They came to the Kachinas, a powerful people. The Kachinas had the Sun and the Moon in a box. After the people had gone to sleep the two animals stole the box. At first Eagle carried the box but Coyote convinced his friend to let him carry it. The curious Coyote opened the box and the Sun and Moon escaped and flew up to the sky. This gave light to the land but it also took away much of the heat, thus we now have winter.”

Boy and the Sun

Northern Arizona _ Hopi Tribe _

“A boy once lived with his mother’s mother for he didn’t know who his father was. His grandmother said to ask the Sun about his father, surely the Sun would know. One morning the boy made a flour of crushed tortoise shell, cornmeal, coral, and seashells. He threw the flour upwards and it made a path into the sky (Milky Way). He climbed the path and when he found the Sun he asked “Who is my father?” and the Sun replied, “You have much to learn.” The boy fell to Earth. He then made a wooden box from a Cottonwood tree and sealed himself in it as it floated west down a river to find the Sun again. The box washed ashore where two rivers join. He was freed from the box by a young female rattlesnake. Together they traveled west to find the Sun. They saw a meteor fall into the sea on its way to the Sun’s house. They asked it for a ride. In this way they made it to the Sun’s house. There they met the Sun’s mother (the Moon) who was working on a piece of turquoise. That evening when the Sun came home from his days work, the boy asked again, “Who is my father?” And then the Sun replied “I think I am.” (source: Solar-Folklore.pdf by Deborah Scherrer)

Tennessee, North _ Cherokee Tribe _

Spider and the Sun

“In the beginning there was only darkness and people kept bumping into each other. Fox said that people on the other side of the world had plenty of light but were too greedy to share it. Possum went over there to steal a little piece of the light. He found the Sun hanging in a tree, lighting everything up. He took a tiny piece of the Sun and hid it in the fur of his tail. The heat burned the fur off his tail. That is why possums have bald tails. Buzzard tried next. He tried to hide a piece of Sun in the feathers of his head. That is why buzzards have bald heads. Grandmother Spider tried next. She made a clay bowl. Then she spun a web (Milky Way) across the sky reaching to the other side of the world. She snatched up the whole Sun in the clay bowl and took it back home to our side of the world.” (source: Solar-Folklore.pdf by Deborah Scherrer)

Southwest America _ Navajo Tribe _

Tsohanoai, the Navaho Sun God

“For the Navajo Indians of North America, Tsohanoai is the Sun god. Every day, he crosses the sky, carrying the Sun on his back. At night, Tsohanoai lets the Sun rest by hanging it on a peg in his house. Tsohanoai’s two children Nayenezgani (Killer of Enemies) and Tobadzistsini (Child of Water) were separated from their father and lived with their mother in the far West. Once they were older, they tried to find their father, hoping he could help them fight the evil spirits tormenting mankind. They met Spider Woman, who gave them two feathers to keep them safe on their journey. Finally, they found Tsohanoai’s house, and he gave them magic arrows to fight off the evil monsters, Anaye.” (source: Solar-Folklore.pdf by Deborah Scherrer)

Brazil

Kuat

The sun god for the Mamaiurans is Kuat. The Mamaiurans is an Amazon Indian tribe that lives in Brazil. Legend has it that in the beginning of time there were so many birds in the sky that their wings prevented the daylight from being seen, thus being always night and people being forced to live in fear of attack from wild animals. Tired of all this darkness, “two Mamaiuran heroes, Iae and his brother Kuat, decided to force the king of the birds, Urubutsin, to give back some of the daylight. The two brothers hid themselves inside a dead animal And waited until the birds approached. As soon as Urubutsin landed, Kuat grabbed Urubutsin’s leg. Unable to get away, Urubutsin was forced to make an agreement with the two brothers.” (source: <https://www.windows2universe.org/mythology/kuat.html>) It is so that he birds would share daylight with the Mamaiurans, and day would alternate with night.

In this culture, Kuat represented the Sun and Iae represented the Moon.

Peru

The largest empire in pre-Columbian America was The Inca Empire. Being an advanced and mostly peaceful group of people, the Inca were living in the area of what is now Peru. They venerated their dead, considering the royal family to be semi-divine, descended from the Sun. The Sun god and the ancestor of the Incas was considered to be Inti.

Inti

“Inti and his wife Pachamama, the Earth goddess, were regarded as benevolent deities (source: Solar-Folklore - Deborah Scherrer)”, the Inti’s wife being the Moon. An ancient Inca myth tells that Inti was the one who taught his son Manco Capac and his daughter Mama Ocollo the arts of civilization, sending them to the Earth to instruct mankind about what they had learned. “He had ordered his children to build the Inca capital where a divine golden wedge they carried with them would fall to the ground.” It was Incas belief that this happened in the area of Cuzco, the ancient capital of the Incan world. Celebrated even today in Peru during the Festival of Inti Raimi in Cuzco, Inti remains an important deity to the Peruvian people. Inti Raymi is Latin America’s second largest festival, meaning “Resurrection of the Sun”. (*It is*

celebrated every year on June 24th).

Cavicalla

In Peruvian mythology, “Coniraya, the moon god, is said to have shaped his sperm into the likeness of a fruit which Cavillaca, a virgin goddess, unwittingly ate, thereby becoming pregnant - she bore a son.” Called all the gods together she demanded to know who was the boy’s father but when no one owned up “she placed the boy on the ground whereupon he crawled toward Coniraya.” Ashamed because the moon god was the poorest and seediest of all the gods, Cavicalla grabbed her son and ran away. As she reached the coast of Peru “she changed her son and herself to rocks.” (source: <http://www.lowchensaustralia.com/names/peruvian-goddesses.htm>)

Greenland _ Inuit people _

Igaluk & Malina

The solar deity in Inuit religion is Malina. The legends of Greenland that link her closely with the lunar deity Anningan (also called Igaluk), her brother are those in which she is most commonly found. As a result of a strife, Malina is constantly fleeing from Anningan (legends vary as to the cause). “Their constant chase is the traditional explanation for the movement of the Sun and Moon through the sky.” ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malina_\(mythology\)_](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malina_(mythology)_))

Igaluk and his sister Malina lived together in a village. When young, they were very close when, but came to live apart as they grew older, in the lodges for women and for men. “One day, as Igaluk looked at the women, he found that his older sister was the most beautiful, and so that night, when the lamp went out in the women’s dwelling, he crept in and found her by recognising the feel and texture of her clothes. Since that night, Igaluk mated with his older sister many times. As it was dark, Malina was never able to tell who the man was, but one night she covered her hands with the soot from the oil lamps and smeared his face with it. Afterwards, she took a lamp and looked through the skylight of the men’s lodge to identify the man who took her. Upon learning the fact that it was her own younger brother, Igaluk, who had been enjoying her, Malina became red and hot with shame. After confronting him about it, she ran away out the door, grabbing a torch as she went. Igaluk chased after her, likewise taking a torch, and followed her path. However, he tripped and dropped his torch, and the flame was put out, except for a faint glow. Eventually however, Igaluk caught up to his sister, and the two ran so fast that they took off into the sky and became the moon and the sun. Once every while Igaluk managed to catch up with his older sister, Malina, and enjoy a brief union with her, causing a solar eclipse.” (source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malina_\(mythology\)_](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malina_(mythology)_))

Asia

The Middle East

Sumeria

“The Sumerians (c 3000 BC to 1400 BC) were some of the very first Sun worship-

ers in recorded history (they were living in the region of Mesopotamia that corresponds to the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers).” (source: Solar-Folklore by Deborah Scherrer).

Part of an astral triad of divinities, Shamash, (Akkadian), Sumerian Utu, in Mesopotamian religion, was the god of the sun, who, with the moon god, Sin (Sumerian: Nanna), and Ishtar (Sumerian: Inanna), the goddess of Venus. “Shamash was the son of Sin.” (source: www.britannica.com/topic/Shamash).

Every divinity in Sumerian culture is imagined as a celestial being. “Within the culture there existed two triads of gods, the first were considered great gods while the second triad, the triad of Planetary gods, included the Sun god named Utu. Utu was not considered to be a great god. The other two gods of the Planetary triad were named Nanna - Suen (the Moon) and Inanna (Venus).” (source: Solar-Folklore by Deborah Scherrer).

Shamash

As the solar deity, Shamash exercised the power of light over darkness and evil. “He became known as the god of justice and equity and was the judge of both gods and men. (*According to legend, the Babylonian king Hammurabi received his code of laws from Shamash.*)”. At night, Shamash became judge of the underworld as well.

Often pictured with a disk that symbolized the Sun, “Shamash was not only the god of justice but also governor of the whole universe; in this aspect he having been pictured seated on a throne, holding in his hand the symbols of justice and righteousness, a staff and a ring. Also associated with Shamash is the notched dagger.”

“As the god of the sun, Shamash was the heroic conqueror of night and death who swept across the heavens on horseback or, in some representations, in a boat or chariot. He bestowed light and life. Because he was of a heroic and wholly ethical character, he only rarely figured in mythology, where the gods behaved all too often like mortals. The chief centres of his cult were at Larsa in Sumer and at Sippar in Akkad. Shamash’s consort was Aya, who was later absorbed by Ishtar.” _ (source: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Shamash>).

Sin

The Sumerian Moon god was Sin. Worshipped in the city of Ur, Sin was the descendant of the sky god An. “His parents were the air god Enlil and the grain goddess Ninlil. The high priest of his temple, chosen from the royal family, was viewed as Sin’s spouse. Sin was depicted as a “fierce young bull, thick of horns, perfect of limbs, with a beautiful bird of blue”.

The Moon god had several different names that referred to different phases of the Moon. The name Sin indicated the crescent Moon, Nanna the full Moon, and Asimbabar the beginning of each lunar cycle.”

As Enil got banished by the assembly of the gods to live in the underworld when Ninlil realized she was pregnant, she decided to follow him to the world of the dead to let him witness the birth of his child. “They gave their next three children to the gods so that Sin could ascend to the heavens to light the night sky.” (source: https://www.windows2universe.org/mythology/sin_moon.html)

Islam

Islam shares the creation myth of Judaism and Christianity, the Qur'an stating that God created the world and the cosmos. He made all the creatures that walk, crawl, swim and fly on the face of the Earth from water. He also made the angels, and the Sun, the Moon and the stars to dwell in the universe, and he poured down the rain in torrents, and broke up the soil to bring forth corn, grapes, and other vegetation (the olive and the palm, the fruit trees and the grass).

China

According to Chinese mythology, Hou Yi is considered to be the greatest archer of all time. Best known for marrying the moon goddess, Chang'e, and for shooting down nine of the ten suns, he was once an immortal who lived in the Jade Emperor's palace where he made the decision of becoming human in order to help humanity in times of need.

Hou Yi and the Ten Suns

"In a time when the earth was still very young and the mythical Emperor Yao ruled China, there were ten suns that took turns illuminating the planet. The Jade Emperor told them that only one of them could play in the sky at a time, lest they destroy the earth. Being young children, however, they decided that going out together would be much more fun than going out alone.

"When all ten suns appeared in the sky, the temperature on earth became unbearably hot. Mass chaos ensued. Crops shriveled up and people fainted in the streets as the earth began to burn. Seeing an opportunity, wild monsters emerged from the shadows and began to prey on humanity.

"A skilled archer named Hou Yi saw the destruction the suns were causing and immediately went to the Jade Emperor. He told the Emperor that if the suns would not behave themselves, he would have to shoot them down in order to save the planet.

"Fearing for the lives of his grandchildren, the Jade Emperor scolded them and begged them to return home. The suns were having so much fun, however, that they could not hear the Emperor over the sound of their own laughter. Though the Jade Emperor loved his grandchildren, he could see that there was no reasoning with them. At long last, he gave Hou Yi permission to do what must be done.

"Armed with a massive bow made of tiger bones and arrows made of dragon tendons, Hou Yi set about slaying the monsters terrorizing the countryside. When he was finished, he climbed to the top of a tall mountain to confront the suns directly.

"Before he began to shoot, Hou Yi gave the children a final warning and pleaded for them to return to the Emperor's palace. Upon hearing this warning, the suns simply stuck their tongues out at Hou Yi and told him to mind his own business. Steeling himself, Hou Yi drew back his bow and loosed nine arrows upon the suns. Almost instantly, nine of them fell from the sky. The tenth sun was so scared that he ran away and hid in a cave.

"The earth was now plunged into unbearable darkness and cold. Every living thing on the planet begged the last sun to come out, but he was so scared of Hou Yi that he covered his ears and ignored them. After everyone else had tried to coax the sun

out, the rooster climbed to the top of his roost and shouted, "Gēgē! Gēgē!" or "Brother!" The rooster's loud, shrill voice was able to reach the sun, and he finally decided to emerge from his cave. Now, whenever roosters crow "brother" in the morning, the sun rises to greet them."

"Chang'e Drinks the Elixir of Immortality

"To reward him for his valiant deeds, Xiwangmu gave Hou Yi a bottle of her elixir of immortality so that he might return to the Jade Emperor's palace as a god. The gift left Hou Yi feeling conflicted. While he wanted to be immortal, he did not want to leave his wife Chang'e to die alone. He hid the elixir away while he pondered his decision.

"Before Hou Yi was able to decide, however, Chang'e stole the vial from him while he was sleeping. She drank the contents of the bottle and fled to the moon to escape her husband's wrath. Hou Yi was so upset with his wife that he aimed an arrow at her, intending to shoot her down; in the end, he could not bring himself to do it. After some time his anger had passed and Hou Yi started to leave out Chang'e's favorite desserts and fruit each night to show that he had forgiven her. Hou Yi's actions started a tradition that has continued into the modern era. Even today, people leave offerings to Chang'e during the annual Mid-Autumn Festival." (source: <https://mythopedia.com/chinese-mythology/gods/hou-yi/>)

Folk Tale: How the Moon Became Beautiful

[published in Chinese Fables and Folk Stories (1908), translated by Mary Hayes Davis and Chow-Leung]

"The Moon is very beautiful with his round, bright face which shines with soft and gentle light on all the world of man. But once there was a time when he was not so beautiful as he is now. Six thousand years ago the face of the Moon became changed in a single night. Before that time his face had been so dark and gloomy that no one liked to look at him, and for this reason he was always very sad.

One day he complained to the flowers and to the stars—for they were the only things that would ever look in his face.

He said, "I do not like to be the Moon. I wish I were a star or a flower. If I were a star, even the smallest one, some great general would care for me; but alas! I am only the Moon and no one likes me. If I could only be a flower and grow in a garden where the beautiful earth women come, they would place me in their hair and praise my fragrance and beauty. Or, if I could even grow in the wilderness where no one could see, the birds would surely come and sing sweet songs for me. But I am only the Moon and no one honors me."

The stars answered and said, "We can not help you. We were born here and we can not leave our places. We never had any one to help us. We do our duty, we work all the day and twinkle in the dark night to make the skies more beautiful.—But that is all we can do," they added, as they smiled coldly at the sorrowful Moon.

Then the flowers smiled sweetly and said, "We do not know how we can help you. We live always in one place—in a garden near the most beautiful maiden in all the world. As she is kind to every one in trouble we will tell her about you. We love her

very much and she loves us. Her name is Tseh-N'io." Still the Moon was sad. So one evening he went to see the beautiful maiden Tseh-N'io. And when he saw her he loved her at once. He said, "Your face is very beautiful. I wish that you would come to me, and that my face would be as your face. Your motions are gentle and full of grace. Come with me and we will be as one—and perfect. I know that even the worst people in all the world would have only to look at you and they would love you. Tell me, how did you come to be so beautiful?"

"I have always lived with those who were gentle and happy, and I believe that is the cause of beauty and goodness," answered Tseh-N'io.

How the Moon Became Beautiful And so the Moon went every night to see the maiden. He knocked on her window, and she came. And when he saw how gentle and beautiful she was, his love grew stronger, and he wished more and more to be with her always.

One day Tseh-N'io said to her mother, "I should like to go to the Moon and live always with him. Will you allow me to go?"

Her mother thought so little of the question that she made no reply, and Tseh-N'io told her friends that she was going to be the Moon's bride.

In a few days she was gone. Her mother searched everywhere but could not find her. And one of Tseh-N'io's friends said,—"She has gone with the Moon, for he asked her many times."

A year and a year passed by and Tseh-N'io, the gentle and beautiful earth maiden, did not return. Then the people said, "She has gone forever. She is with the Moon."

The face of the Moon is very beautiful now. It is happy and bright and gives a soft, gentle light to all the world. And there are those who say that the Moon is now like Tseh-N'io, who was once the most beautiful of all earth maidens."

(source: <https://americanliterature.com/author/anonymous/short-story/how-the-moon-became-beautiful>)

Japan

Amaterasu was the Sun goddess of the oldest Japanese religion, Shinto, the one born from Izanagi's tears falling from his left eye, playing an important role in Japanese culture.

It is said that she had married her brother Tsukiyomi-no-mikoto (the Moon God - born from Izanagi's tears shed for his wife, Izanami, falling from his right eye) and lived together for a while but then, after a strife, they separated. Not long after the first fight with her brother, *Tsukiyomi no mikoto*, a second conflict was to happen, this time between *Amaterasu o mi kami* and *Susanoo no mikoto*, the terrible man, who, after being born showed discontent to the mission he was invested with, the one of reigning over the world of darkness. He very much wanted to live next to his sister in the upper world, the *High Skies' Plain (Takama ga hara)* where the goddess of the sun was so, he climbed up there pretending that he was going to bid farewell to his sister. Only afterwards was he to go down into the world of darkness where *Izanami no mikoto*, *Izanagi's* wife was. Mistrustful, *Amaterasu* prepared herself for a battle. She tied her hair like a man and put jewelry on, counting 500 jewels of *Yasaka* down her neck adding also a few bracelets but also took a bow and a bag of a thousand arrows and another one with five hundred arrows. Being thus prepared for a battle she strongly hit the ground with her foot creating a trench great enough to serve as

a defense mechanism. The gods disagreeing with the violent bloody confrontation announced so they agreed that a competition between the two was more of an appropriate action. They were about to give birth, each of them, to as many gods they could and the winner was going to be the one who gives birth to more children-gods. Their covenant happened on the two shores of the celestial river, *Ame no yasu gawara*, the one that parted the sky in two halves. Found on opposite shores, they began. *Susanoo* offered his sword to his sister who broke it in three. She washed the three parts of the sword in the fountain *Ama no mana-i*, chewed them and exhaled a breath like a luminous fog from which three female-gods appeared. At his turn, *Susanoo* took from his sister five bow-strings along with the jewels she was wearing, broke them with his teeth breathing out a luminous steam from which five masculine deities got born. But *Susanoo* was not going to win since *Amaterasu* considered herself victorious claiming the five deities as hers since they were born from her jewelry. Unsatisfied with the results of the competition, *Susanoo no mikoto* outraged the gods with his blameworthy actions. First, he destroyed the fields of rice of *Amaterasu* compromising the crops. Then he burst into the *Sacred Palace* where *Amaterasu* with other goddesses were making robes for the gods. The divine weavers panicked as he took with him a raw striped horse that was already dead that he threw in the middle of the group. One of the weavers, a sister to *Amaterasu*, hurt herself with the shuttle and died. Upset with these events *Amaterasu o mi kami* dressed her brilliant robe and ran away disappearing in the blue of the skies looking for *Ame no iwato*, a cave in which she stood hidden for quite a while, leaving the world in complete darkness. Immediately after the retreat of the goddess into the cave of the mountain a council of gods convened, tried to find the solution to this new problem. A lot of cocks were brought to the entrance of the cave. A large *sakaki* tree was also planted in front of the cave and jewels were placed on its branches; in the middle, a new mirror placed and down below two fabrics, one of them blue, the other white; also many other offerings were brought to please the goddess. In the end *Ame no Uzume no mikoto*, the goddess of dance appeared and pleased the gods with her erotic dance saying loud that another goddess, a better one was found to replace *Amaterasu*. Curious about all this *Amaterasu o mi kami* comes to the surface and is taken out by a daring strong god, *Ame no tojikarao*. Another god placed a long rope made of straw behind to prevent her from going inside again and a third one blocked the cave with a boulder. This is how the light was brought back to Earth and to the entire Universe. The gods then decided to punish *Susanoo*; they shaved his beard and cut his moustache then threw him out of the sky. All the offerings brought to the goddess were transformed in seeds that were planted by another divinity and put to the use of humans. At the same time the silk-worms appeared, also put to the use of humans. The ambitious *Amaterasu* thought to send to *Izumo*, to reign over the area, her son, *Ama no oshiho mimi* but, before he left he looked over the floating bridge and saw disorders among the people where was reigning then a son of *Susanoo no mikoto*. The god refused to go and take over the region. All the Eight hundred million gods were called then and the god that gathers thoughts, *Takami musubi*, decided that a messenger was to be sent first. This one had to discover what was going on in the "world of rice crops". The choice was the persona of the god *Ama no ho-hi*. He and other messengers disappointed the gods because they let themselves lured into taking personal advantages in *Izumo* getting married to local deities. Eventually

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