



*Journal of Advances and  
Scholarly Researches in  
Allied Education*

*Vol. IV, Issue No. VIII,  
October-2012, ISSN 2230-  
7540*

## **A STUDY ON COMPARISON OF TWO OR MORE CREATION MYTHS**

AN  
INTERNATIONALLY  
INDEXED PEER  
REVIEWED &  
REFEREED JOURNAL

# A Study on Comparison of Two or More Creation Myths

Yash Devjibhai Chaudhari<sup>1\*</sup> Dr. Chandrikasingh C. Somvanshi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, CMJ University, Shillong, Meghalaya, India

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, CMJ University, Shillong, Meghalaya, India

**Abstract** – In common usage the word “myth” refers to narratives or beliefs that are untrue or merely fanciful; the stories that make up national or ethnic mythologies describe characters and events that common sense and experience tell us are impossible. The universality of myth emerges, however, when we make comparisons between mythologies. Through comparison certain constants appear. Most mythologies which is to say, religions have deities, most have heroes who perform certain ritual deeds, many of which are found in most mythologies the quest, the descent to the Underworld. Universal patterns or common motifs in mythology have been called archetypal, that is, reflective of psychological tendencies that are common to the human species as a whole. At the archetypal level a story such as the resurrection of Jesus becomes true freed of the parochial restrictions of the merely local when compared to other resurrection stories such as those of Osiris or Persephone. Through comparison, the truth of the story is seen to lie in the concept of resurrection rather than in the individuals who are resurrected. Having said that, it is again important to remember that archetypes those of the heroes’ quest or the supreme deity or the trickster or the Flood, or creation itself only take on life and meaning when they are clothed in cultural particularity.

**Keywords:** - Comparison, Myths, Creation, narratives, national, ethnic, mythologies, universality, cultural, etc.

-----X-----

## INTRODUCTION

A comparison of the world's creation myths reveals basic creation types. Commentators on these myths have categorized them in different ways from various perspectives. Anthropologists have long recognized such dominant cultural motifs as creation from nothing, emergence creations, and earth-diver creations. Psychologists recognize myths as reflections of universal psychological realities. The Jungian scholar Marie Louise von Franz, for instance, sees creation myths as preconscious processes about the origins of human consciousness (Aston, Nihongi, 1996). (Beckwith, Koguryo, 2004). (Bierhorst, 1990). (Brereton, 1997). (Brockington, 1998). She establishes such types as creation as an awakening towards consciousness, creation as accidental action, creation as movement from below to above and the motif of twin creators, all reflecting psychological states. The eminent religion scholar Mircea Eliade understands creation myths as symbolic descriptions of a reality in which all creative acts are paradigmatic models (Erdosi, and Ortiz, 1984) reflections of an eternally repeated return to an identifying center or absolute reality. A categorization of creation myths that, in effect, absorbs anthropological, psychological, and

religious approaches is outlined by religion scholar Charles Long in his now-classic Alpha: The Myths of Creation.

All cultures celebrate such myths and attribute to them varying degrees of literal or symbolic truth. Myths are retold orally from generation to generation and/or preserved in sacred collections or scripture, often believed to have emanated from a deity or deities. Myths are not only the stories of so-called dead cultures and religions such as those of the Ancient Greeks, Romans, Norse, or Egyptians. Extraordinary and supernatural sacred narratives are central to Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and Taoists, as well as to people of animist traditions to which the terms “pagan” and “primitive” have traditionally been applied with a negative connotation. Naturally, a story that is true in some sense for one culture is purely, in the common usage, myth to another.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

A categorization of creation myths that, in effect, absorbs anthropological, psychological, and religious approaches is outlined by religion scholar Charles

Long in his now-classic *Alpha: The Myths of Creation*. Long's types provide a clear basis for approaching creation myths. They include creation from nothing (ex nihilo), creation from a preexisting, undifferentiated or chaotic state represented by primal elements or sometimes by a primal object such as a cosmic egg (Chaos), creation from the union, separation, division or sacrifice- even dismemberment of world parents (World Parents), creation by way of a hole in the earth (emergence), and creation by means of diving into the depths of the primordial waters (earth-diver). Many creation myths, regardless of basic type, contain the story of the failed creation or the fall of humanity and a subsequent Flood and re-creation (Thompson). We have already suggested that individual creation myths, like all myths, can be approached as cultural dreams. It can also be said that when we study myths of certain types, such as the various types of creation myths, we are, almost by definition, examining more universal archetypal dreams. There is, in short, a universal ex nihilo creation myth (an Ur myth) that emerges from a study of ex nihilo myths as a type, and the same applies to the other major types of creation myths. Again, it must be understood at the outset that no myth exists without cultural clothes. The Ur myths of which we speak now are hypothetical constructs based on the comparison of cultural expressions and can only be used in a kind of thought experiment that allows us to analyze the significance and meaning of creation myths as a whole or particular types of creation mythology (Creation Myths., 2005). (Barrow, John, 1994). (Sproul, Barbara, 1991). (Beckwith, Martha Warren, 1937).

**1- Indian and Japanese myth:** Among the multitude of Laurasian creation myths, a crucial one is that of the emergence of light. It is not a myth of initial creation, rather, it belongs one of the stages after the emergence of heaven and earth, and it is an integral part of the 'quasi-historical' series of creation myths that relate the emergence of the world and of humans. More specifically, it is about the emergence of the light of the sun that makes life in this world possible. The natural background of much of this is the perception of any prescientific observer (and still, most of us) that the sun "sets" in the west and miraculously reappears and "rises" in the east next morning. In many mythologies it is assumed that, at night, the sun travels underground in a tunnel or across an underground river to the east, where it reemerges from the ground or from a cave situated beyond the mythical ocean surrounding the world. In many myths, the sun emerges from underground (Meso-America) or from a cave (Eurasia). Here, we will take a look at the myth of the creation of light and its circumstances, especially in their Old Japanese and Old Indian (Vedic) versions. The Indian version, the myth of Indra's opening the Vala cave and his release of the 'first dawn' is found in the oldest Indian text, the gveda (c. 1200-1000 B.C.) A comparison of two myths attested so widely apart from each other both in time and in space has the inherent advantage that they are unlikely to have influenced each other directly. In fact; diffusion of this myth from Vedic India or from Iron Age (western) Central Asia to

Yayoi time Japan is extremely unlikely. Further, when Indian mythology (in Buddhist form) entered Japan via Korea around 500 CE, the Vala myth had virtually disappeared from Indian and, certainly, from Buddhist consciousness. Even the Indian Epic Mahabharata (assembled c.100 BCE) knows only of a "demon" Vala who figures in some brief references that have little similarity with the Vedic myth. The many congruence's and similarities between the Vedic and Japanese myths, therefore, must be explained differently.

**2- The Myth of the Hidden Sun:** The myth relates the disappearance of the sun (or the deity of the sun) in a cave or some other enclosure, and its re-appearance (often as Dawn) after the intervention of a group of gods (and others), creating (or restoring) light and prosperity to the world. It is found in various forms in Vedic Indian, Greek, Japanese, Ainu, Amerindian and South-East Asian sources, and in an aberrant version even with the Hawai'ians. A priori, the myth of the hidden sun might be regarded as a prime candidate for the concept of a supposed general human facility to generate similar myths, independent of the time and place of their creation. However, in the light of the theory of a Eurasian (Laurasian) mythology, its distribution is significant. Also, the structure of this myth is very similar in all the versions mentioned above. Its classical Indo-European form is found in the Vedic literature of oldest India, from the gvedic hymns onwards. According to these poems that are meant for praise of the gods, the early morning sun, is regarded as a beautiful young woman (Uas "Dawn") who heralds the rising of the sun.



Figure-1



Figure- 2 Uzume dancing in front of the Iwato cave.

**3- Religion and Myth in High Antiquity:** The early, pre-Hellenic, gods were manifested in animal form; their being was intimately connected with trees, plants, bodies of water, with earth and formations of

earth, with wind and clouds. They dwelt not in the heavens like the Olympian gods, but on and in the earth. In prehistoric religion the feminine essence was dominant. It was women too who held the highest divine rank. Even in the case of Poseidon, whose power must once have been so large and inclusive that comparison with Zeus was feasible, it is obvious that he did not approach the earth-goddess in dignity. As her husband he was, as the name shows, invoked in prayer. The same style of address is applied to Zeus in Homer as an antique ceremonial form. This primal world of gods is pervaded by a maternal strain, which is as characteristic of it as is the paternal and masculine strain in the Homeric world of gods.

## CONCLUSION:

Myths of creation (and also the myth of time) do unquestionably belong to the first category, in as much as they portray the making of the world, even in those cases where that primal process of events includes the feats of individual heroes in adventurous tiding. All creation myths are cosmological, but the reverse is not always the case. All cosmological myths are myths of change in the world order, and of those some are myths of primary change of world order. All creation myths are myths of primary change of world order, and vice versa. Then we have a definition for creation myths, relating to the criteria and classifications given above: creation myths are myths of primary world change. The narrowing down to creation myths can be made in this manner. In a general classification any coherent mythological system consist of four mythical layer which composition according subject and time sequence as follow: The myth of the universe image, creation mythology, human, hero and ritual myth and resurrection myth. In a reduction process in myth, the cosmos system (in macro size) at last ends to social system on earth.

## REFERENCES:

- Aston, W.G. Nihongi (1996). Chronicles of Japan from the earliest times to A.D. 697. Translated from the original Chinese and Japanese by W. G. Aston. London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner.
- Barrow, John D. (1994). The Origin of the Universe. New York: Basic Books, This book considers numerous speculative theories and myths relating to the origins of time, space, and matter.
- Beckwith, C. I. Koguryo (2004). The language of Japan's Continental Relatives. An Introduction to The Historical- Comparative Study of Japanese-Koguryoic Languages with a Preliminary Description of Archaic Northeastern Middle Chinese. Leiden: Brill.
- Beckwith, Martha Warren (1937). Mandan-Hitatsa Myths and Ceremonies. Memoirs of the American Folklore Society . New York: J.J. Augustin, for the American Folklore Society.
- Bierhorst J. (1990). The mythology of Mexico and Central America. New York: Quill.
- Brereton, J.P. (1997). The Race of Mudgala and Mudgalani, Presentation at the 207th meeting of the American Oriental Society at Miami.
- Brockington, J. (1998). The Sanskrit epics. Leiden / Boston: Brill.
- Creation Myths. (2005). "Berkshire Encyclopedia of World History. Great Barrington, MA: Berkshire Publishing Group, This short article on creation myths was authored by David Christian.
- Erdosi, R. and Ortiz (1984). A. American Indian myths and legends. New York: Pantheon.
- Sproul, Barbara (1991). Primal Myths: Creation Myths Around the World. New York: Harper Collins, An anthology of creation myths.
- Thompson, S. Motif-index of folk-literature; a classification of narrative elements in folk- tales, ballads, myths, fables, mediaeval romances, exempla, fabliaux, jest-books, and local legends. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedekatemia, Academia Scientiarum Fennica 1932-36.

## Corresponding Author

**Yash Devjibhai Chaudhari\***

Research Scholar, CMJ University, Shillong, Meghalaya, India

**E-Mail – [yash0184@gmail.com](mailto:yash0184@gmail.com)**