**Ainu Creation Myth (Japanese)**

According to Ainu mythic poetry, the world was created when oil floating in the ocean rose like a flame and became the sky. What was left turned into land. Vapor gathered over the land and a god was created. From the vapor of the sky, another **god was created who descended on five-colored clouds**. Out of those clouds, the two gods created the sea, soil, minerals, plants, and animals. The two gods married and produced many gods including two shining gods—the Sun god and the Moon god, who rose to Heaven in order to illuminate the fog-covered dark places of the world.

Okikurmi of the Saru region is a semidivine hero who descended from Heaven to help humans. Humans lived in a beautiful land but did not know how to build fire or make bows and arrows. Okikurmi taught them to build fire, to hunt, to catch salmon, to plant millet, to brew millet wine, and to worship the gods. He married and stayed in the village, but eventually returned to the divine land.

Ainu historical heroes include Kosamainu and Samkusainu. Kosamainu, who lived in eastern Hokkaido, led an Ainu rebellion against the mainland Japanese ruling the southern tip of Hokkaido, called Matsumae. He destroyed ten out of the twelve Japanese bases but was killed in 1457. Samkusainu organized Ainu in the southern half of the island during a 1669 uprising, but after two months they were destroyed by Matsumae forces armed with guns.