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How Yeu-dlang-ndu separated the sky from the earth.

Narrated by Wang Jian-guo.

They say that in olden times when sky and earth still clung closely together, there was a certain Yeu-dlang-ndu. He was very strong, and had three heads and six shoulders, but with his hands and feet spread out he was wrapped and held tightly between sky and earth for long ages, for thousands of years. As Yeu-dlang-ndu grew to full manhood he began stretching his hands and feet upward, pressing out the sky into a dome above, and pushing sky and earth completely apart. For earth's people this brought comfortable living and good health.

The result, however, was that sky and earth were no longer at peace, in fact a conflict arose between them, and Yeu-dlang-ndu, unable to put up with it, dropped them, throwing them aside. At this the sky had to spend all the time searching for earth's knee and thigh. In the course of the search, holes were made in the earth like a net, and this so angered the earth that it began to rock the sky all day long by rocking its knees and thighs. It rocked them to the point that the sky broke into pieces. For earth's people this was a grave situation. Crops could not be raised, markets could not be run, and no one dared to enter into negotiations for marriage.

With rising concern and alarm earth's people sought a remedy. They summoned earth's smiths to come and discuss it. Earth's smiths said, "Go away to the South and fetch gold, copper and iron ore, together with coal and charcoal in large quantities for us to forge pillars of copper and pillars of iron. First of all we will take the polished sky and the earth and secure them firmly in order that life may be protected. Then, presently, we will construct a crucible to smelt the gold and silver ore and fashion the sun and moon to go circling around the sky".

Earth's people dug the copper ore and the iron ore, they likewise dug sufficient coal. Then the smiths forged pillars of copper and pillars of iron. It took them ninety-nine years, but eventually they forged four pillars which supported the sky. At the same time as they were forging the copper pillars and the iron pillars, they shovelled up gold ore and silver ore to smelt in the crucible. The fire glowed fiercely with curling flames, and the liquid gold and the liquid silver boiled and bubbled to the point that the smiths could not handle it. When the pillars of copper and the pillars of iron had been completed and they returned to look, the liquid gold and the liquid silver was boiling and bubbling, and none of the smiths had any way of dealing with it. It could not be poured out, so, quickly, they took rocks and earth and, having stopped up the crucible, they flung it away into the sky. The liquid gold and the liquid silver became twelve couples of sun-maids and moon-youths which went circling around the sky. So it is.