

Earthquake Legends

Legends explain why something happened. Long ago, no one knew why earthquakes happened. So people thought of reasons why they happened. These reasons are called legends. A legend is a story. Here are some legends about earthquakes. After you have read these legends, make up your own legend.



West Africa

(I like this one.)

The earth is flat, like a plate. It is held up on one side by a BIG mountain and on the other by a Giant. The Giant's Wife holds up the sky. The earth trembles whenever he stops to hug her. (Okay, where are the giant and his wife and the mountain standing?)



India

In India, people thought that the earth was held up by four elephants that stood on the back of a turtle. The turtle was balanced in turn on a cobra. When one of these animals moved, the earth shook.



New Zealand

The Maori legend says that Papa (Mother Earth) has a child in her womb, named Ru. When Ru stretches and kicks as babies do, he causes earthquakes. Ru is the Maori god of earthquakes.



Here's a new one...

The Muppet Babies TV Show

According to Nanny, the earth gets a tummy ache and then it has to burp. The Muppet Babies called earthquakes Earth Burps.



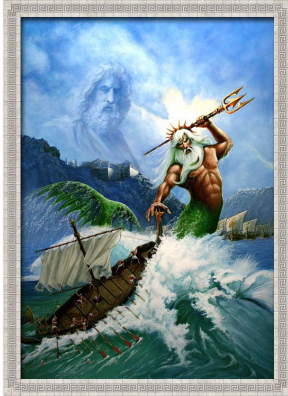
Japan

Namazu, (a great catfish) lies curled up under the sea. The islands of Japan rested on his back. Kashima Daimyojin, (catfish god) held a big stone over his head to keep him from moving. When Kashima let his mind daydream, the Namazu moved, and the Earth trembled.

American Indian Legend from Tennessee

Once upon a time there was a young handsome Chickasaw chief. He was called Reelfoot because he had a twisted foot. He fell in love with a Choctaw princess. The princess's father would not give Reelfoot his daughter. Reelfoot kidnapped her. The Chickasaw tribe gave them a big wedding and a feast. The Great Spirit (God) got angry and stomped his foot. The shock caused the Mississippi River to overflow its banks and drown the entire wedding party. (Reelfoot Lake, on the Tennessee side of the Mississippi River, was formed because of the New Madrid earthquake of 1812.)





Greece

Poseidon is the god of the sea and the god of earthquakes. When he gets mad, he strikes the ground with his trident. This causes earthquakes (According to Rick Riordan, Poseidon is the father of Percy Jackson. The first Percy Jackson book, "The Lightning Thief" is now a movie.)



Mexico

In old Mexico, they thought it was the devil. When el Diablo (the devil) wanted to make trouble on the earth, he made giant rips in the earth from the inside.





Central America

The square earth is held up at its four corners by four gods, the Vashakmen. When they decide the earth is becoming overpopulated, they tip it to get rid of surplus people.



Siberia

In ancient Siberia, they thought the world sat on a sled driven by a god named Tuli. When the dogs who pulled the sled scratched their fleas, the earth shook.



East Africa

The earth is held on the horn of a cow. The cow stands on a stone. The stone is on the back of a fish. When the cow's neck hurt, she tossed the globe from one horn to the other.

(Okay. Why did so many different countries have legends that said the earth was on the back of an animal?)



Belgium

When people on Earth are very, very sinful, God sends an angry angel to strike the air that surrounds our planet. The blows produce a musical tone that is felt on the Earth as a series of shocks.

Assam

(Look up this country on a map)

In Assam there was a legend that said there was a race of people living inside the earth. Sometimes they shake the ground to find out if anyone is still living on the earth's surface. When children in Assam, feel a quake, they shout "Alive, alive!" so the people inside the earth will know they are there and stop the shaking.

