

In the Beginning

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Advanced
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In the beginning there were four beings, and they lived on an island no larger than a hat. On this island there were no trees or grass or any other living thing besides these four people and one bird. One day they sent this bird out across the waters to see what he could find, and when he returned he brought some earth, a piece of rattan, and some fruit.

Melu, the greatest of the four, took the soil and shaped it and beat it with a paddle in the same manner in which a woman shapes pots of clay, and when he finished he had made the earth. Then he planted the seeds from the fruit, and they grew until there was much rattan and many trees bearing fruit.

The four beings watched the growth for a long time and were well pleased with the work, but finally Melu said:

“Of what use is this earth and all the rattan and fruit if there are no people?”

And the others replied, “Let us make some people out of wax.”

So they took some wax and worked long, fashioning it into forms, but when they brought them to the fire the wax melted, and they saw that men could not be made in that way.

Next they decided to try to use dirt in making people, and Melu and one of his companions began working on

that. All went well till they were ready to make the noses. The companion, who was working on that part, put them on upside down. Melu told him that the people would drown if he left them that way, but he refused to change them.

When his back was turned, however, Melu seized the noses, one by one, and turned them as they now are. But he was in such a hurry that he pressed his finger at the root, and it left a mark in the soft clay which you can still see on the faces of people.

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