



The Story of Pan Gu

In the beginning there was nothing—no earth, no sky, no sun, no moon, no stars, no water, no living creatures and no plants. Everywhere was shapeless, dark and gloomy. The universe was like a gigantic egg and inside lay the giant Pan Gu, curled up and asleep in the dark.

After sleeping for 18,000 years, Pan Gu slowly began to wake up. In the dark silence, all he could hear was the sound of his own breathing, and all he could see was darkness. He began to feel the space around him and realised he was trapped inside an egg. He was so angry that he punched and kicked until the egg started to crack and fall apart. All the pieces swirled around him in chaos and then began to separate—the lighter parts floated upwards and became the sky, and the heavier parts floated downwards to become the earth. Pan Gu was pleased, especially when it became light so that he could see. He thought the sky was still too close to the earth and was worried they would get mixed up again. So, standing firmly, he took the weight of the sky on his shoulders and began to push it upwards away from the earth.

Pan Gu grew taller and taller, lifting the sky away from the earth, until he was satisfied that it was miles and miles away. This task took thousands more years and exhausted him. Now a towering giant, Pan Gu knew he was dying, but he was happy because he could see that the sky no longer needed his support and that heaven and earth were fixed. As he slowly collapsed, his last breaths became the wind and clouds and his tired sighs and grunts became the rumbling thunder. Pan Gu wanted to make the world beautiful, so his limbs became mountains and hills, his muscles became fields and his blood flowed as rivers and streams. Forests and flowers grew from his skin, and his tears and sweat became the rain. His teeth and bones sank below the ground and formed layers of rock and precious stones. Pan Gu's hair and beard floated up to the sky and became the galaxies and stars, and his eyes became the sun and moon, so he is still able to watch over us.

This is one of many Chinese creation stories.