

Babel Legends

GUATEMALA

The Quiches of Guatemala told of a time when the tribes multiplied and left their old home to a place called Tulan. Here the language changed, and the people sought new homes in various parts of the world as a result of not being able to understand each other.

INDIA

The Mikir tribe in northeastern India tells of the descendants of Ram who were strong men and were growing dissatisfied with earth and aspired to conquer heaven. They began to build a tower.

Higher and higher rose the building, till at last the gods and demons feared lest these giants should become the masters of heaven, as they already were of earth. So they confounded their speech, and scattered them to the four corners of the world. Hence arose all the various tongues of mankind.

POLYNESIA

Polynesians on the island of Hao said that Rata and his three sons survived a great flood. Then

they made an attempt to erect a building by which they could reach the sky, and see the creator god Vatea [Atea]; but the god in anger chased the builders away, broke down the building, and changed their language, so that they spoke diverse tongues.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

A legend of the Gaikho tribe of Burma (Myanmar) says,

In the days of Pan-dan-man, the people determined to build a pagoda that should reach up to heaven. . . . When the pagoda was half way up to heaven, God came down and confounded the language of the people, so that they could not understand each other. Then the people scattered.