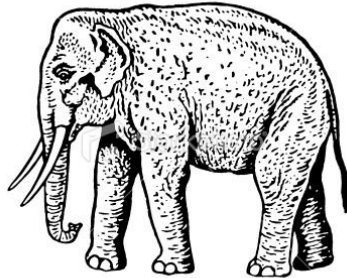


Gabon creation myth

In the beginning of time all the earth was water. The creator Mebere was alone with only the great spider Dibobia-Abo for company. Hanging from his giant web in the heavens, he dropped an egg into the ocean from which life began to emerge.

The land started to form and Mebere decided to make a ruler for it, so he created the elephant, the leopard and the monkey. He was pleased with them but decided to make a creature, like himself, which would be the most powerful and rule over the animals. He gave life to man and called him Fam, which means power.



Before long, however, Fam grew arrogant and mistreated the animals and misused his power. When he stopped worshipping Mebere, the creator was furious and hurled thunder and lightning upon the world. A great storm and flood swept away everything on the earth – except Fam who had been granted immortality.

Mebere then decided to renew the earth and try again. He sprinkled a new layer of earth over the planet and a tree grew upon it. The tree dropped seeds which became more trees. The leaves which fell from it into the water became fish and those which dropped on the land became animals. Even today the old earth land lies deep beneath this one and if anyone digs deep enough, it can still be found in the form of coal!

Mebere then made a new man, this time, one who would know death and he named him Sekume. Sekume then fashioned a woman from the bark of a tree. These humans were made with both Gnoul (body) and Nissim (soul). When Gnoul dies, Nissim lives on in the afterlife. These people, who were the first mortals to live on the earth, went on to produce many children to populate the world as we know it.