

## Incan Creation Myth The Creator Kon-Tiki Viracocha

According to the **Inca**, in the beginning of the world, a long time passed in darkness and flood. Then, out of a lake called Collasuyu (modern Lake Titicaca), the god Kon-Tiki Viracocha emerged, bringing some human beings with him. Then Kon-Tiki created the sun (**Inti**), the moon and the stars to light the world. Finally, the creator god Viracocha, whose name means "*divine origin*," called the sun, moon, and stars, and told them to rise into the sky above Lake Titicaca. The moon became the sun's wife, and the stars their daughters. There was an island in the center of the lake. When the sun finally rose over the island's eastern side, the **Inca** people were released from the horrible darkness that they had endured for so long. They rejoiced at the appearance of the creator god and his power to bring them light in the form of the god of the sun. Out of great rocks Kon-Tiki fashioned more human beings, including women who were already pregnant.



Because Viracocha was considered to be a mysterious force, the **Incas** believed that they had to contact him through the sun and thunder gods who ruled the heavens and brought them light and rain. Viracocha was described as a great bearded figure, full of light, who wore robes and carried a staff of gold. It was Viracocha who initially journeyed through Peru. As he did so, he brought life to the animals, plants, birds, and insects, and taught language and culture to the humans who lived in the lands through which he passed.

Viracocha also performed miracles, and his presence at a particular site was often the reason given for the creation of an unusual rock formation, a spring, a waterfall, a cave, or a river. These places were called *huacas*, or sacred places of worship.



Lake Titicaca, Bolivia

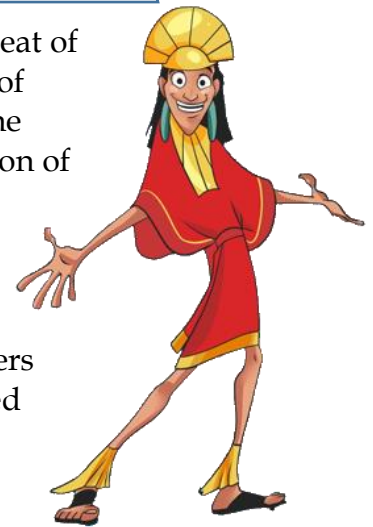
The people who lived near *huacas* sometimes considered them to be the place from which their ancestors had emerged. At certain times of the year, they performed rituals at these sites and gave offerings of food, chicha (a kind of alcoholic drink made from maize, seeds, and fruits), and precious objects such as shells, feathers, and gold or silver figurines.

Viracocha's journey took him from his place of origin in the east near Lake Titicaca to the western coast of Peru where he departed, walking across the Pacific Ocean and disappearing into the west. The description of his journey from east to west, his gold staff, beard, and robes--all symbols of age rather than youth--identifies this deity as the sun at the time of the summer solstice, when his power is the strongest. The **Incas** called this aspect of the sun god *Inti*, or Lord Sun. At the winter solstice, when the sun was at its weakest, he was called Churu-Inti Punchao, or the "Child Sun."

The sun was also considered a sky god who included the god of thunder named Thunupa. This god, who was sometimes thought of as the sun's brother, ruled over such lesser sky deities as the gods of hail, lightning, rainbows, storms, whirlwinds, the planet Venus, and constellations of stars.

### **Cuzco Origin Myth: Manco Capac and the "Children of the Sun God"**

Cuzco was the most important city of the Inca and was the seat of the Incan Empire. The founder of the first dynasty of the kingdom of Cuzco was Manco Capac. In one legend he was brought up from the depths of Lake Titicaca by the sun god Inti. In another he was the son of Tici Viracocha. Regardless of his origin, the **Incas** told a story that the sun god sent Manco Capac (his son) and Mama Ocllo (his daughter) to earth to instruct the people of Peru in the arts of farming, weaving, making pottery, cooking, astronomy, and all the other skills that would help them live a better life. The **Inca** rulers believed that their ancestors were the offspring of the sun and called themselves "children of the Sun." These rulers also thought of themselves as the sun god's representatives on earth, and the people worshiped them as the sun's direct descendants.



#### **Source:**

Feld, Evelyn Dana. "The Inca Origin Myth." *Calliope X.7* (2000): 36.