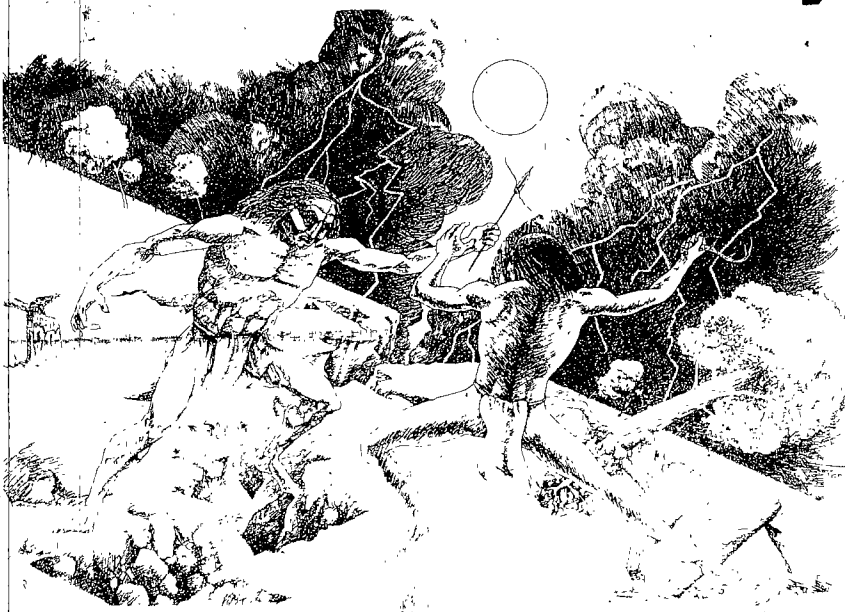


The Mohawk Creation Story



Introduction To Creation Story

When you read this Iroquois Mohawk Creation Story, I hope that you will bear in mind that all races of the world have Creation stories. This particular one belongs to the Mohawk.

The Creator gave it to us. It is not a garage sale or second hand story, it is Mohawk through and through. Sometimes, it is funny and hard to believe. If it is funny, then laugh. The one thing I ask you to do is realize that the Creation Story of all races of people through out the world are equally as funny and hard to believe as well. When human beings laugh the Creator is pleased.

THE CREATION OF HUMAN BEINGS

It is said that after all life forms were created the very last life forms to be created were the human beings. Teroniahwakon took from the rich soil of the rivers edge some clay and he began to mold this clay into a form that resembled himself and his grandmother. He made one female and one male. After completing these dolls he built a fire and knew that he must fire or bake them, that they may have life. It is understood that each life has a fire burning within all individuals. That is the spirit or soul. When this individual fire goes out, the body will become cold and lifeless and in today's terms we call it death. Now Teroniahwakon takes the pair of human figures and places them into the fire to be baked. Because the twins never created humans before, they didn't know exactly what to do. So Teroniahwakon left the pair of human figure dolls in the fire too long. When he pulled them out they were burnt. Their bodies were black and their hair was cinged from the fire. So it is that the first human beings created were the black people. Now Teroniahwakon picked up the black dolls and he blew into the mouths of the black dolls three consecutive times and the eyes of the black dolls began to move and blink. Soon the dolls arms and legs started to move. So it is the black people who were the first of the human beings to be created. The next human dolls that were made were made by Sawiskara. Sawiskara took the foam from the sea and mixed it with other things and soon there were a set of dolls both man and woman. Sawiskara then placed the dolls he made into the fire to be baked, but he didn't want the dolls to be black like what happened to Teroniahwakon. They were in the fire a short time and Sawiskara pulled them out. The time was not long enough and they came out only half cooked. The skin of the dolls was white and the hair came out yellow. The eyes were greenish blue and they looked very fragile. Sawiskara picked up like Teroniahwakon, and blew into the mouths of the dolls, but nothing happened. He tried again and still nothing happened. Sawiskara then asked his brother to help him. One would think that because of the treatment Sawiskara gave to Teroniahwakon, he would not help his brother. No, Teroniahwakon was always forgiving and picked up Sawiskara's human dolls, blew into their mouths three times, and the dolls became alive. The white race thus was born or created. Not Teroniahwakon again was not satisfied and so he picked up from the river bank some more clay and molded another human figure that resembled himself. Teroniahwakon then placed them into the fire for baking. This time he will monitor the firing somewhere in the middle of the black and white races firing time. When Teroniahwakon pulled them out of the fire the yellow Asian race of people were created. Now Teroniahwakon blew three times into the mouths of the fired dolls and they too began to have life movements. At this point the twins noticed that the eyes of these humans were slanted. Now Teroniahwakon gathered from the river shore some red clay and again began molding human figures, the male ones resembling his grandmother. When he completed the dolls he then placed them into the fire to be cured or fired. Then Teroniahwakon pulled the dolls out, blew three breaths of life into the mouths of the dolls. The dolls immediately began to blink their eyes and move their bodies. These dolls had straight, dark, shiny hair. Their skin was not burnt nor was it white. They were just right. Their eyes were a dark brown or black. So it was the Onkwehonwe the North American Indians who were created. Teroniahwakon was very pleased. All the four races of people were created by the same parents. The Mother is the Earth, and the Father is the Creator. Our elders have said that in the family of humans, the white human will be the youngest brother. The younger brother will always be curious and will always hear when his brother speaks. At this point I would like to make the example of a young child who is always adventurous. You can almost be certain the child will do this or that when you are not looking. So it is up to the elder others to always make sure the younger brother doesn't do anything to hurt himself. The four main races of human beings then began to multiply. The twin brothers still had their frequent conflicts.

One day when Teroniahwakon was leisurely wondering and admiring the now vast land he by chance ran into a being whom he did not know. This being was also surprised to see Teroniahwakon. The two just stood there looking at one another. Finally, Teroniahwakon asked the stranger who he was and where he came from. The stranger said that he had been here forever and that he was the Creator of this Earth. In order to settle this disagreement they decided to have a contest to see who had more power. This whole episode, of course, is the first knowledge of Hatowi, which becomes the grandfather to the human beings. Hatowi is what is known today as the wooden mask medicine society. I will not go further with this section as we will discuss it in detail when we talk about Hatowi later on.

The time did pass on. The human beings did reproduce. The landscape of the earth was given character and definite identities. All and all, everything seemed satisfactory. It is said that Sonkwaiatison (Our Creator), then looked very admirable upon the planet earth and the twins' accomplishments. Sonkwaiatison then asked the twins if there was anything that the creator could do for them. Immediately Sawiskara responded to the Creator by saying "Creator, my brother, Teroniahwakon is always pestering me. He is always taking things from me. Creator, I want you to put something between me and Teroniahwakon."

Now it was Teroniahwakon's turn to respond to Sonkwaiatison. Teroniahwakon didn't respond right away. Teroniahwakon began to walk and give very serious thought to what Sonkwaiatison said. Hours went by when finally Teroniahwakon faced Sonkwaiatison and said, "With the power you gave to my brother and I, I see nothing lacking to my needs. If I should feel the pain of hunger, all I need to do is pick the wild potatoes and the multitude of berries and my pains of hunger will go away. If I should become ill the medicines are growing everywhere. I need only to pick them and my illness will go away. If my throat were to become dry with a great thirst I can go to any stream, brook, river, or lake and drink the clear, pure, fresh, cool water and my thirst will be quenched. My Creator, I have no need or request. Everything I need is at my foot. All I say to you my Creator is Niawen (Thank you) and Watkononwaraton (Acknowledgement by greetings and gratitude all in one thought) for all the life that I have."

Now Sawiskara became very angry and jealous of Teroniahwakon and Sawiskara then started a fight with Teroniahwakon.

Sawiskara used a flint spear and Teroniahwakon used the antlers of the deer. The fight was very vicious as Sawiskara was very determined to defeat Teroniahwakon. The result of the fight was in the favour of Teroniahwakon. Sky woman, the grandmother who always sided with Sawiskara, became very angry and scolded Teroniahwakon. For the first time Teroniahwakon lost his temper, grabbed his grandmother by the hair and swung her around and around until he let her go. Her body was thrown into the dark sky where she is to this very day. Sky Woman, the grandmother who always sided with Sawiskara, will be with Sawiskara during the nights. On rare occasions she comes to visit Teroniahwakon during the day. Now after the big fight, Teroniahwakon didn't kill Sawiskara, but he cast him to the side of the world that is dark, or night. Sawiskara was given, forevermore, the night time to be his realm. That is why the elders say that at night time it is so easy to get into trouble. This section must not be confused with the European mind set that there is evil or good. Sawiskara is mischievous, but he also represents an essential part of life, night is usually when most children are conceived. Night is when our grandmother, the moon orchestrates the human females' monthly cycles. My grandmother used to say that it makes no difference if you were of the black, red, white, or yellow races. It made no difference if you were the richest or poorest woman; even Queen Elizabeth or Elizabeth Taylor were mescapable from grandmother moon's orchestration. Grandma Moon each month says to the human females, "You must now discard your old unpure blood (menstruation) and your body will reproduce new blood which will be like making a new bed so that a brand new human being can be conceived and born." It may be 1989, but the Mohawk people still call the moon grandmother as the Creator instructed her to be the "Grandmother" of all mothers. Her cycle is twenty-eight to thirty days. If Grandmother Moon were to quit shining you can rest assured that there will not ever be another baby born to any nation the world over.

At this point Teroniahwakon is said to have become the sun. This is precisely the reason that Mohawk and other Iroquois nations offer their sacred tobacco in prayer just as the dawn is coming. It is at this point in time that is the most powerful. The Creator instructed it be so. Also, I would like to mention at this time that before Onionkwaonwe (sacred tobacco) is burnt as an offering, it is preceded by three cries or yells. When each human race was created, it took three breaths of life for life to begin. For this reason, three loud yells will

restate out gratitude in a most humble way for that beginning and continuing life.

The sun, who is called our eldest brother, or Teroniahwakon, was instructed to shine his light and give his energy. It is said that our eldest brother the sun begins his journey in the east and travels to the west. As the brother sun travels no one can avoid his light which is his eyes. He looks at each and every Mohawk and what they are doing. He then goes to the Oneida's, to the Onondaga's, to the Seneca's, to the Dakota's, to the Pomo's, and the Hoopa's. At the end of his journey to the western most part of our land, the Creator waits to hear the old brother Sun's report.

Now the Creator begins to separate the land as was requested by Sawiskara. The Creator pulls apart a piece of land that becomes known as Africa. There he places the human beings that are black. The Creator then instructs them by giving them songs, languages and ceremonies for that land. The Creator tells them that as long as they will follow those sacred instructions that their life will be everlasting.

Now he pulls away another large piece of land that becomes known today as Europe. There the Creator places the human beings that are white. The Creator gives the white human beings songs, languages, and ceremonies. He instructs them to always follow those instructions and they will have everlasting life.

The Creator now pulls another large land mass away that becomes known as Asia. There the Creator places the Asian or Oriental people. The Creator instructs the Oriental people to always follow the instructions and they will also have everlasting life.

Now the Creator decides to leave the red race of Onkwehonwe people on the remaining land mass. He then gives us, the Onionkwaonwe, our songs, languages, and ceremonies. The Creator told us to always follow his instructions and we too will have everlasting life.

Now if each of the four major races of human beings do not follow or do their original teachings (ceremonies), the life forms of the universe will slowly cease to produce life and the world and its people will die.

Now at this point I would like to make some explanations. The instructions given to each of these four races of human beings by the Creator are on and the same, these ceremonies are based on nature. When the people cease to do the ceremonies for the life of the trees, the spirit and power of the trees will say that the people no longer need them and will think the instructions given them by the Creator is finished and complete. The same goes for the old Brother Sun, the Mother Earth, the Grandmother Moon and etc.

In the English language, which comes from Latin and Greek, the first day of the week is called Monday or Moon day, the day called Sunday is set aside to have ceremonies for the sun. In Africa these original instructions are still to be found. If a real Mohawk and a real African were to exchange knowledge one would think they are on and the same. The same is true if you can find a real white man, and a real yellow man (Oriental). The reason I found this to be true is because I have had the wonderful privilege to visit African and Oriental people who still follow their original teachings. There was no reluctance or feeling of mistrust. In fact, it felt like I knew them for many years. There was a great sense of brotherhood. When the elders say you will have everlasting life it does not mean that I will live one thousand years. It means that my spirit and blood will be carried to my sons and daughters and etc.

The Creation story divides the world into two parts that are connected: the world of day and world of night. The birth of life and the death of life. The feeling of happiness; the feeling of sadness. There is a harmony and it is this harmony that creates life and the amount of peace in that life. The twin brothers represent this world. Both brothers have to be acknowledged for what they are and symbolize: the positive and the negative. Without one the other will not work. Each twin brother has control of half the world. Our job in life is to acknowledge each with respect and appeasement. There are two sets of ceremonies; one that takes place only in the day and another set that takes place only in the night.

We must be always careful with our judgements and not disfavor one twin over the other. Each twin's power controls half the world. If we were to offend one, then half the worlds power will be against us. Our power is so small, we would not stand a chance. Harmony is the human position to our universe.

Indian Time would like to thank Tom Porter of the St. Regis Drug and Alcohol Division for sharing this story with the people of Akwesasne Niawenkowa, Sakokwenonkwas!

Many thanks also to John Fadden for the beautiful illustrations Niawenkowa, Kahionhes!



ALTERNATIVES FOR HOUSEHOLD HAZARDS

If you use: Abrasive Scouring Powders, All-Purpose Cleaners, Ammonia - Try instead: 1) Baking soda, borax, or table salt sprinkled on a wet sponge 2) Liquid soap or borax in 1 qt. of hot water 3) add vinegar or lemon juice to cut grease 4) Clean often.

If you use: Aerosols - Try instead: Use non-aerosol products when possible: 1) Deodorants: roll-ons, creams, sticks 2) Hair Spray: setting lotion, gels 3) Shaving Cream: brush and shaving soaps.

If you use: Air Freshener - Try instead: 1) Set out a dish of vinegar 2) Leave opened box of baking soda in rooms, closets, or refrigerators 3) Open windows and air out home often 4) Use fresh flowers, pine boughs, make sachets of fragrant herbs and flowers.

If you use: Chlorine Bleach - Try instead: Use baking soda or borax to whiten.

If you use: Drain Openers - Try instead: To prevent problems: 1) Use a drain strainer 2) Don't pour grease down the drain 3) Pour boiling water down the drain twice a week. When drain is sluggish: 1) Use a plunger or mechanical snake 2) Pour a handful of baking soda and 1/2 cup vinegar down the drain and cover tightly. Let sit for 15 minutes followed by two quarts of boiling water.

If you use: Furniture Polish - Try instead: 3 Parts olive or mineral oil with 1 part vinegar or lemon juice.

If you use: Glass Cleaners - Try instead: 2 Tablespoons of vinegar to 1 quart of water. Use newspapers to dry glass.

If you use: Laundry Detergent - Try instead: Use products made from natural soap. Use 1 cup baking soda, white vinegar, or borax for removing smells - they don't add any odors of their own.

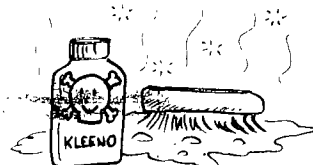
If you use: Mothballs - Try instead: Cedar chips enclosed in cotton sachets.

If you use: Oven Cleaners - Try instead: 1) Clean often 2) Pour lots of salt on fresh spills, scrape off when cool 3) use baking soda to remove grease.

If you use: Rug, Upholstery Cleaners - Try instead: Sprinkle cornstarch and vacuum or use soap-based non-aerosol rug shampoo. To brighten color, apply 1 qt. white vinegar to 3 qts. boiling water with a wet rag.

If you use: Spot Removers - Try instead: 1) Clean stains immediately with club soda 2) Rub with cornstarch paste, brush off when dried 3) Grass or milk spots are softened by glycerine or glycerine soap 4) For wine & coffee stains, put item in glass, enamel or stainless pot. Bring to boil & Simmer 2-4 minutes in mixture of milk and water.

-taken from resources vol 7 no 2 by Dana Durbury Submitted and translated by AEEP.



KAIEN NOHOTEN ENWATON ENSATSTEH, TOKAH ENSEREH ATSTEH NIENSATIH NEH IOTETENION:

Tokah kikon neh satstha: iotetention oteserasonha, tanon oni neh kaneconi iotetention - Neh kikon ensatenion: Watenkwatah, kioiotsis, tanon teionekaiotsis, tanon ioiatsis kara onwatan ensatsste.

Tokah kikon neh satstha: Katshtakon iwah neh iotch tanon icionih skonkies - Neh kikon ensatenion: Nek ensatsste neh katshtakon iwah nioteionarosta, tosh ensatsste neh icionihoskonkies.

Tokah kikon neh satstha: niontenonakonhonstakwa niatekon tekaestanon iotetention - Neh kikon ensatenion: Watenkwatah, tanon teionekaiotsis enwatan ensaksakeron ensatenionskonste.

Tokah kikon neh satstha: ionoharetakwa kaneconi karakentakwa. Neh kikon ensatenion: Watenkwatah tanon borax konwarats, ensatsste.

Tokah kikon neh satstha: Tokah iotkahoron tsi ieskenetakwa. -Neh kikon ensatenion: Kanonwakentakwa ensatsste tosh neh kemeh toh iensasenteh, tekem neh tsaukera teionekonkies niensatih, enwatan oni sewatsana tsi nikon watenkwatah tanon teionekaiotsis ehniensatih ensakakohotsi.

Tokah kikon neh satstha: Kanonkon ienens teiastaratetakwa. Neh kikon ensatenion: Asen niotkiokwakeh kienih tanon enska neh teioiatsi kanekoniaton enwatan ensatsste.

Tokah kikon neh satstha: niontisoroharetakwa. - Neh kikon ensatenion: tewatowaserakeh teionekaiotsis tanon skatssetha onekanos thensiesteh, tanon tekoronies oiatonsera ensatssteh ensarakoweh.

Tokah kikon neh satstha: Ononwarethasonha. -Neh kikon ensatenion: Neh arch newatenkwatah, teionekaiotsis, tenkiniena enwenseratoko nahoten ensenohareh.

Tokah kikon neh satstha: Kokowa iakotekwatah teiotwenionion. - Neh kikon ensatenion: Onentakwentensera tewakararion neh ensatssteh.

Tokah kikon neh satstha: Niontenatarontakwa ionoharetha. Neh kikon ensatenion: Iotkateh ensarakoweh, kioiotsi iesoh entisatih tanon neh onen enkawistoteh toneh ensarakoweh, watenkwatah oni ensatssteh neh kienih enkarakoweh.

Tokah kikon neh satstha: Oswenkarakeh ieniens tanon kanonkon ieniens kahorokanion. - Neh kikon ensatenion: watatihonkwa otesera tensarehiatch tanon tewekwa ensatsste tensesekwe, tanon skasetta teionekaiotsis tensiesteh asen nikasatakeh teionekonkies onekanos.

Tokah kikon neh satstha: Tokah kaknonwe eniaoraneh enwatanistaronion. - Neh kikon ensatenion: Neh ensatssteh kanekarakan watekatakwas, tokah oni nehensatssteh tikon watatihonkwa otesera toneh onen enseserakowe.

-taken from Resources Vol. 7 No. 2 by Dana Durbury: submitted and translated by AEEP.