

A Kato Legend: Creation Myth

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The sandstone rock which formed the sky was old, they say. It thundered in the east; it thundered in the south; it thundered in the west; it thundered in the north. "The rock is old, we will fix it," he said.

There were two, Nagaitcho and Thunder. "We will stretch it above far to the east," one of them said. They stretched it. They walked on the sky.

In the south he stood on end a large rock. In the west he stood on end a large rock. In the north he stood on end a large, tall rock. In the east he stood on end a large, tall rock. He made everything properly. He made the roads. He made a road to the north (where the sun travels in summer).

"In the south there will be no trees but only many flowers," he said. "Where will there be a hole through?" he asked. At the north he made a hole through. East he made a large opening for the clouds. West he made an opening for the fog. "To the west the clouds shall go," he said.

He made a knife. He made it for splitting the rocks. He made the knife very strong.

"How will it be?" he considered. "You go north; I will go south," he said. "I have finished already," he said. "Stretch the rock in the north. You untie it in the west, I will untie it in the east."

"What will be clouds?" he asked. "Set fires about here," he told him. On the upland they burned to make clouds. Along the creek bottoms they burned to make mist. "It is good," he said. He made clouds so the heads of coming people would not ache.

There is another world above where Thunder lives. "You will live here near by," he told Nagaitcho.

"Put water on the fire, heat some water," he said. He made a person out of earth. "Well, I will talk to him," he said. He made his right leg and his left leg. He made his right arm and his left arm. He pulled off

some grass and wadded it up. He put some of it in place for his belly. He hung up some of it for his stomach.

When he had slapped some of the grass he put it in for his heart. He used a round piece of clay for his liver. He put in more clay for his kidneys. He cut a piece into parts and put it in for his lungs. He pushed in a reed (for a trachea).

"What sort will blood be?" he enquired. He pounded up ochre. "Get water for the ochre," he said. He laid him down. He sprinkled him with water. He made his mouth, his nose, and two eyes. "How will it be?" he said. "Make him privates," he said. He made them. He took one of the legs, split it, and made woman of it.

Clouds arose in the east. Fog came up in the west. "Well, let it rain, let the wind blow," he said. "Up in the sky there will be none, there will be only gentle winds. Well, let it rain in the fog," he said. It rained. One could not see. It was hot in the sky. The sun came up now. "What will the sun be?" he said. "Make a fire so it will be hot. The moon will travel at night." The moon is cold.

He came down. "Who, I wonder, can kick open a rock?" he said. "Who can split a tree?" "Well, I will try," said Nagaitcho. He couldn't split the tree. "Who, I wonder, is the strongest?" said Thunder. Nagaitcho didn't break the rock. "Well, I will try," said Thunder. Thunder kicked the rock. He kicked it open. It broke to pieces. "Go look at the rock," he said. "He kicked the rock open," one reported. "Well, I will try a tree," he said. He kicked the tree open. The tree split to pieces.

Thunder and Nagaitcho came down. "Who can stand on the water? You step on the water," Thunder told Nagaitcho. "Yes, I will," Nagaitcho said. He stepped on the water and sank into the ocean. "I will try," said Thunder. He stepped on the water. He stood on it with one leg. "I have finished quickly," he said.

It was evening. It rained. It rained. Every day, every night it rained. "What will happen? It rains every day," they said. The fog spread out close to the ground. The clouds were thick. The people then had no fire. The fire became small. All the creeks were full. There was water in the valleys. The water encircled them.

"Well, I have finished," he said. "Yes," Nagaitcho said. "Come, jump up. You must jump up to another sky," he told him. "I, too, will do that."

"At night when every kind of thing is asleep we will do it," he said.

Every day it rained, every night it rained. All the people slept. The sky fell. The land was not. For a very great distance there was no land. The waters of the oceans came together. Animals of all kinds drowned. Where the water went there were no trees. There was no land.

People became. Seal, sea-lion, and grizzly built a dance-house. They looked for a place in vain. At Usal they built it for there the ground was good. There are many sea-lions there. Whale became a human woman. That is why women are so fat. There were no grizzlies. There were no fish. Blue lizard was thrown into the water and became sucker.

Bull-snake was thrown into the water and became black salmon. Salamander was thrown into the water and became hook-bill salmon. Grass- snake was thrown into the water and became steel-head salmon. Lizard was thrown into the water and became trout.

Trout cried for his net. "My net, my net," he said. They offered him every kind of thing in vain. It was "My net" he said when he cried. They made a net and put him into it. He stopped crying. They threw the net and trout into the water. He became trout.

"What will grow in the water?" he asked. Seaweeds grew in the water. Abalones and mussels grew in the water. Two kinds of kelp grew in the ocean. Many different kinds grew there.

"What will be salt?" he asked. They tasted many things. The ocean foam became salt. The Indians tried their salt. They will eat their food with it. They will eat clover with it. It was good salt.

"How will the water of this ocean behave? What will be in front of it?" he asked. "The water will rise up in ridges. It will settle back again. There will be sand. On top of the sand it will glisten," he said. "Old kelp will float ashore. Old whales will float ashore.

"People will eat fish, big fish," he said. "Sea-lions will come ashore. They will eat them. They will be good. Devil-fish, although they are ugly looking, will be good. The people will eat them. The fish in the ocean will be fat. They will be good.

"There will be many different kinds in the ocean. There will be water-panther. There will be stone-fish. He will catch people. Long-tooth-fish will kill sea-lion. He will feel around in the water.

"Sea-lion will have no feet. He will have a tail. His teeth will be large. There will be no trees in the ocean. The water will be powerful in the ocean," he said.

He placed redwoods and firs along the shore. At the tail of the earth, at the north, he made them grow. He placed land in walls along in front of the ocean. From the north he put down rocks here and there. Over there the ocean beats against them.

Far to the south he did that. He stood up pines along the way. He placed yellow pines. Far away he placed them. He placed mountains along in front of the water. He did not stop putting them up even way to the south.

Redwoods and various pines were growing. He looked back and saw them growing. The redwoods had become tall. He placed stones along. He made small creeks by dragging along his foot. "Wherever they flow this water will be good," he said. "They will drink this. Only the ocean they will not drink."

He made trees spring up. When he looked behind himself he saw they had grown. When he came near water-head-place (south) he said to himself, "It is good that they are growing up."

He made creeks along. "This water they will drink," he said. That is why all drink, many different kinds of animals. "Because the water is good, because it is not salt, deer, elk, panther, and fishers will drink of it," he said. He caused trees to grow up along. When he looked behind himself he saw they had grown up. "Birds will drink, squirrels will drink," he said. "Many different kinds will drink. I am placing good water along the way."

Many redwoods grew up. He placed water along toward the south. He kicked out springs. "There will be springs," he said. "These will belong to the deer," he said of the deer-licks.

He took along a dog. "Drink this water," he told his dog. He, himself, drank of it. "All, many different kinds of animals and birds, will drink of it," he said.

Tanbark oaks he made to spring up along the way. Many kinds, redwoods, firs, and pines he caused to grow. He placed water along. He made creeks with his foot. To make valleys for the streams he placed the land on edge. The mountains were large. They had grown.

"Let acorns grow," he said. He looked back at the ocean, and at the trees and rocks he had placed along. "The water is good, they will drink it," he said. He placed redwoods, firs, and tanbark oaks along the way. He stood up land and made the mountains. "They shall become large," he said of the redwoods.

He went around the earth, dragging his foot to make the streams and placing redwoods, firs, pines, oaks, and chestnut trees. When he looked back he saw the rocks had become large, and the mountains loomed up. He drank of the water and called it good. "I have arranged it that rocks shall be around the water," he said. "Drink," he told his dog. "Many animals will drink this good water." He placed rocks and banks. He put along the way small white stones. He stood up white and black oaks. Sugar-pines and firs he planted one in a place.

"I will try the water," he said. "Drink, my dog." The water was good. He dragged along his foot, making creeks. He placed the rocks along and turned to look at them. "Drink, my dog," he said. "I, too, will drink. Grizzlies, all kinds of animals, and human beings will drink the water which I have placed among the rocks." He stood up the mountains. He placed the trees along, the firs and the oaks. He caused the pines to grow up. He placed the redwoods one in a place.

He threw salamanders and turtles into the creeks. "Eels will live in this stream," he said. "Fish will come into it. Hook-bill and black salmon will run up this creek. Last of all steel-heads will swim in it. Crabs, small eels, and day-eels will come up.

"Grizzlies will live in large numbers on this mountain. On this mountain will be many deer. The people will eat them. Because they have no gall they may be eaten raw. Deer meat will be very sweet. Panthers will be numerous. There will be many jack-rabbits on this mountain," he said.

He did not like yellow-jackets. He nearly killed them. He made blue-flies and wasps.

His dog walked along with him. "There will be much water in this stream," he said. "This will be a small creek and the fish will run in it.

The fish will be good. There will be many suckers and trout in this stream."

"There will be brush on this mountain," he said. He made manzanita and white-thorn grow there. "Here will be a valley. Here will be many deer. There will be many grizzlies at this place. Here a mountain will stand. Many rattlesnakes, bull snakes, and water snakes will be in this place. Here will be good land. It shall be a valley."

He placed fir trees, yellow-pines, oaks, and redwoods one at a place along the way. He put down small grizzly bears. "The water will be bad. It will be black here," he said.

"There will be many owls here, the barking-owl, the screech-owl, and the little owl. There shall be many blue jays, grouse, and quails. Here on this mountain will be many wood-rats. Here shall be many varied robins. There shall be many woodcocks, yellow-hammers, and sap-suckers. Here will be many mocking-birds and meadowlarks. Here will be herons and blackbirds. There will be many turtle-doves and pigeons. The kingfishers will catch fish. There will be many buzzards and ravens. There will be many chicken-hawks. There will be many robins. On this high mountain there will be many deer," he said.

"Let there be a valley here," he said. "There will be fir trees, some small and some large. Let the rain fall. Let it snow. Let there be hail. Let the clouds come. When it rains let the streams increase, let the water be high, let it become muddy. When the rain stops let the water become good again," he said.

He came back. "Walk behind me, my dog," he said. "We will look at what has taken place." Trees had grown. Fish were in the streams. The rocks had become large. It was good.

He traveled fast. "Come, walk fast, my dog," he said. The land had become good. The valleys had become broad. All kinds of trees and plants had sprung up. Springs had become and the water was flowing. "Again I will try the water," he said. "You, too, drink." Brush had sprung up. He traveled fast.

"I have made a good earth, my dog," he said. "Walk fast, my dog." Acorns were on the trees. The chestnuts were ripe. The hazelnuts were ripe. The manzanita berries were getting white. All sorts of food had become good. The buckeyes were good. The pepper-nuts were black. The bunch grass was ripe. The grass-hoppers were growing. The

clover was in bloom. The bear- clover was good. The mountains had grown. The rocks had grown. All kinds that are eaten had become good. "We made it good, my dog," he said. Fish for the people to eat had grown in the streams.

"We have come to south now," he said. All the different kinds were matured. They started back, he and his dog. "We will go back," he said. "The mountains have grown up quickly. The land has become flat. The trout have grown. Good water is flowing. Walk fast. All things have become good. We have made them good, my dog. It is warm. The land is good."

The brush had grown. Various things had sprung up. Grizzlies had increased in numbers. Birds had grown. The water had become good. The grass was grown. Many deer for the people to eat walked about. Many kinds of herbs had grown. Some kinds remained small.

Rattlesnakes had multiplied. Water-snakes had become numerous. Turtles had come out of the water and increased in numbers. Various things had grown. The mountains had grown. The valleys had become.

"Come fast. I will drink water. You, too, drink," he told his dog. "Now we are getting back, we are close home, my dog. Look here, the mountains have grown. The stones have grown. Brush has come up. All kinds of animals are walking about. All kinds of things are grown.

"We are about to arrive. We are close home, my dog," he said. "I am about to get back north," he said to himself. "I am about to get back north. I am about to get back north. I am about to get back north," he said to himself.

That is all.