

MAIDU CREATION MYTH.--Part 1.

Found at: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/nam/ca/mdut/mdut03.htm>

When this world was filled with water, Earth-Maker floated upon it, kept floating about. Nowhere in the world could he see even a tiny bit of earth. No persons of any kind flew about. He went about in this world, the world itself being invisible, transparent like the sky.

He was troubled. "I wonder how, I wonder where, I wonder in what place, in what country, we shall find a world!" he said. "You are a very strong man, to be thinking of this world," said Coyote. "I am guessing in what direction the world is, then to that distant land let us float!" said Earth-Maker.

In this world they kept floating along, kept floating along, hungry, having nothing to eat. "You will die of hunger," said Coyote. Then he thought. "No, I cannot think of anything," he said. "Well," said Earth-Maker, "the world is large, a great world. If somewhere I find a tiny world, I can fix it up."

Then he sang, "Where, little world, art thou?" It is said he sang, kept singing, sang all the time. "Enough!" he said, and stopped singing. "Well! I don't know many songs (?)," he said. Then Coyote sang again, kept singing, asking, for the world, singing, "Where, O world, art thou." He sang, kept singing; then "Enough!" he said, "I am tired. You try again."

So Earth-Maker sang. "Where are you, my great mountains, my world mountains?" he said. He sang, and all the time kept saying, "Where are you?" He stopped singing. "Enough!" he said. "You try also." Coyote tried, kept singing. "My foggy mountains, where one goes about," he said. "Well, We shall see nothing at all. I guess there never was a world anywhere," said he. "I think if we find a little world, I can fix it very well," said Earth-Maker.

As they floated along, they saw something like a bird's nest. "Well! That is very small," said Earth-Maker. "It is small. If it were larger, I could fix it. But it is too small," he said. "I wonder how I can stretch it a little!" He kept saying, "What is the best way! How shall I make it larger!" So saying, he prepared it. He extended a rope to the east, to the south he extended a rope, to the west, to the northwest, and to the north he extended ropes.

When all were stretched, he said, "Well, sing, you who were the finder of this earth, this mud! 'In the long, long, ago, Robin-Man made the world, stuck earth together, making this world.' Thus mortal men shall say of you, in myth-telling." Then Robin sang, and his world-making song sounded sweet. After the ropes were all stretched, he kept singing; then, after a time, he ceased.

Then Earth-Maker spoke to Coyote also. "Do you sing too," he said. So he sang, singing, "My world, where one travels by the valley-edge; my world of many foggy mountains; my world where one goes zigzagging hither and thither; range after range," he said, "I sing of the country I shall travel in. In such a world I shall wander," he said.

Then Earth-Maker sang--sang of the world he had made, kept singing, until by and by he ceased. "Now," he said, "it would be well if the world were a little larger. Let us stretch it!"--"Stop!" said Coyote. I speak wisely. This world ought to be painted with something, so that it may look pretty. What do ye two think?"

Then Robin-Man said, "I am one who knows nothing. Ye two are clever men, making this world, talking it over; if ye find anything evil, ye will make it good."--"Very well," said Coyote, "I will paint it with blood. There shall be blood in the world; and people shall be born there, having blood. There shall be birds born who shall have blood. Everything--deer, all kinds of game, all sorts of men without any exception--all things shall have blood that are to be created in this world. And in another place, making it red, there shall be red rocks. It will be as if blood were mixed up with the world, and thus the world will be beautiful," he said. "What do you think about it?"--"Your words are good," he said, "I know nothing." So Robin-Man went off. As he went, he said, "I shall be a person who travels only in this way," and he flew away.

Earth-Maker spoke: "You had better lie down here on your face."--"All right!" said Coyote, and, kneeling down, he lay on his face. Then Earth-Maker stretched the world with his foot. Stretching it once, he extended it towards the east, extended it on that side; then to the south, then to the west, he stretched it; then to the northwest and to the north he stretched it. Having extended it only a little ways, he said, "All right!"

Coyote stood up and looked around. "Well, I think it would be better if this world were just large enough to go around it." By and by Earth-Maker said, "You had better kneel down again, and lie flat on your belly. Do not look up. You must not!"--"Very well," said Coyote, "I will not look up." He lay down; and Earth-Maker, stretching the earth with his foot eastward, stretched it as far as it would go. He extended it fully toward the south, toward the west, toward the northwest, toward the north. "All right!" said he.

Coyote stood up, and, having risen, started to walk hither eastward. Earth-Maker, when he was left alone, stood for a time, then, departing, he went toward the south. In the direction of the sunset he went far around, going over to the northwest, going around to the north, going all the way around to the east. And having gone around, having returned to the spot where he had first turned off, he prepared things.

He made two white men; then he made others, white, but a little different. As he made them, he counted them. He kept on making them--made one black, then another almost black. Two of each only he made. Then he counted all the countries, and, as he counted, assigned them, gave them to the countries. "You are a country having this name, you shall have this people," he said. "This sort of people, naming you, shall own the country. These people shall grow, shall keep on growing through many winters, through many dawns. They shall continue to grow until, their appointed winters being past, their dawns being over, this people having finished growing, shall be born," he said. "Very many winters will have passed before they shall be born. And they shall have children, girls and boys; and these children, growing up, shall have children in their turn," he said. When several winters have passed, there will be very many people."

Then again, to another sort of people, he gave another country, saying, "This people, I leave you in this country, and ye shall be the owners of this land. Ye shall be a people with a name." And they also were a different sort of people, a people with a name; and their country also was named, it is said. "Your country also shall have a name," he said. "Ye too shall have a name, and your children shall fill the land, and every single child shall have a name," he said. "There, growing steadily, many winters, many days, shall pass before ye are fully grown. Then ye shall possess this country," he said.

Thereafter he spoke to another, again he gave a different kind of country to a different kind of people. He said, "Ye shall be a different-speaking and a different-looking people. Ye also shall possess a country," he said.

"Your children, if they weary of this land, going from this country to one with another name, to a country that is good to live in, shall remain there. There every country shall be full of people, who will continue to be born," he said. And then he divided the world among many. To one he gave one sort, to another he gave another. Ye shall all have different names," he said. Finally he finished giving, he distributed all.

Then after a while, continuing on his way, he came hither, kept travelling; and after arriving in the middle of the world, he made other people. "Ye shall be mortal men like this," he said; and, having made two, he left them. "Ye here, growing steadily, when so many winters shall have passed, very many winters, many days, ye shall be fully grown," he said. "Then ye shall be mortal men, ye shall be born full-grown. This country shall have a name. Beyond these mountains there shall be another country, which also shall have a name. Ye shall not be born soon," he said. Then he named everything, and, having left the people here in the middle of the world, he went away.

Continuing on his way, he went to all countries that were of the proper sort; and when he had gone as far as mortal men were to live, he stopped. Then there again he created two--two more, it is said, he laid down, and again two more. He kept counting them; and when he had counted them all, he spoke. "Ye shall remain here," he said, "and your country shall have a name. Although living in a small country, in one that is not large, it shall be sufficient for you. This I leave; and growing continually, so many winters passing, very many winters passing, many days passing, ye shall be fully grown. And then ye, being fully grown, shall be born," he said. "Then your food will grow,--different sorts of food, all kinds of food; and ye, being born with sufficient intelligence, will survive," he said. Then he pushed them down under a gopher-hill.

He spoke again. "Ye, too, shall possess a small country. 'Come, now! leave this country!' (this ye must not say to others, wishing to take their land.) Ye shall be people who will not drive others away, driving them off to another country. Ye shall be different, ye shall name your country. Ye also shall be a differently named people. There, growing continually, many days being passed, many winters having passed, ye shall be born, when your birthday has passed," he said. "Living there and having children, when other winters are passed, they will become a little larger, and will keep on thus, growing all the time, until, when enough winters shall have passed, always becoming more numerous, ye shall have enough people. Your children, all without exception, shall have names. This country also, in the same way is named; all countries shall have names, just as yourselves. If ye are going to look at the country over there, then, when ye go, (ye shall say) 'I am going to that place,' naming it; then all people will understand where ye are going," he said.

Then, counting the people on this side (in this direction), he left them; and, speaking to those on this side, he said, "Ye also shall be mortal men. So many winters passing over, (?) ye shall be born. All the time growing, each winter ye shall grow a little, a very little. Again, when the winter is over, continually growing, when many winters are passed, ye will have finished growing; then ye shall be born, full-grown. There ye also shall have a country, and your country shall be one bearing a name, and ye too shall be named," he said. "Ye shall have children; and when your children have grown larger, then, looking all over this country, ye must tell them about it, teach them about it, naming the country and places, showing them and naming them to your children. 'That is such and such a place, and that is such and such a mountain.' So, when ye have caused them to learn this, teaching them, they shall understand even as ye do yourselves." Then, placing them between his thumb and finger, he snapped them away.

And when he had given countries thus to all that he had counted out, there was one pair left. "Ye also, ye shall be a, people speaking differently. There will be a little too many of you for you to have the same sort of a country also. So ye shall have that kind of a country, a great country," he said. "Now, wherever I have passed along, there shall never be a lack of anything," he said, and made motions in all directions. "The country where I have been shall be one where nothing is ever lacking. I have finished talking to you, and I say to you that ye shall remain where ye are to be born. Ye are the last people; and while, ye are to remain where ye are created, I shall return, and stay there. When this world becomes bad, I will make it over again; and after I make it, ye shall be born," he said. Long ago Coyote suspected this, they say.

"This world will shake," he said. "This world is spread out flat, the world is not stable. After this world is all made, by and by, after a long time, I will pull this rope a little, then the world shall be firm. I, pulling on my

rope, shall make it shake. And now," he said, "there shall be songs, they shall not be lacking, ye shall have them." And he sang, and kept on singing until he ceased singing. "Ye mortal men shall have this song," he said, and then he sang another; and singing many different songs, he walked along, kept walking until he reached the middle of the world; and there, sitting down over across from it, he remained.

But, in making the world, Robin-Man sang that which was pleasant to hear. He, they say, was the first created person,--a man whose song passed across the valleys, a man who found the world, a man who in the olden time sang very beautifully-sounding songs. And Earth-Maker, going along, and having passed by the middle of the world, made a house for himself, and remained there. That is as far as he went. That is all, they say.