

YAVAPAI CREATION STORY

(Adapted and much abridged from Hoomothya's Long Journey Chapters 2-3)

This is one story of how the Yavapais (the People of the Sun) first came to be and live in this land.

Hundreds of years ago the ancestors of the Yavapai (People of the Sun) came up from the underworld on the first corn plant into a big hole (Montezuma Well). The people were healthy and happy and no one from the tribe ever left that place. Only Ihija, the dove, had one day flown up over the edge and seen the world.

When Gwi, (the Cloud) sent much rain that fell for many days, the people knew that soon everyone would drown. They chose a young girl called Kamalapukwia (First Woman) to go to the outside world and be saved and start a new people. They placed her and Ihija, the dove, with food for the journey in a small log canoe. After tossing about for days, the canoe came to a jolting halt as it hit Mingus Mountain. Nya (the Sun) coming up from the other side of the mountain greeted her, told her she would be the mother of many people and impregnated her with a child.

Ihija guided her to her new cave home in the Red Rock country (Sedona) and helped her gather food for the winter. In the spring she gave birth to a little daughter who she named Am-ja-ku-poo-ka (Going Around on the Earth). Several years later Am-ja-ku-poo-ka became impregnated by Gwi, the Cloud; she named her son Sakarakaamche (Lofty Wanderer). One day Amjakupooka went to the river to gather watercress; she never returned.

Sakarakaamche grew up to be very brave and strong and dominated all the animals in the land. But he and his grandmother were lonely. One day as he sat by the banks of Oak Creek, he picked up a large piece of red clay and rolled it around in his powerful hands. Before he knew what was happening he created a large family of living people. The Children of the Sun grew quickly in numbers, and soon their villages were scattered throughout the land. They were healthy, happy people, as happy as people could be.

Sakarakaamche (Lofty Wanderer) traveled throughout the land teaching the Sun People many things that he had learned from his grandmother, Nya and Gwi. Once a year Lofty Wanderer called his people together to teach them how to live and play and worship. Unfortunately, at one such meeting a child's game turned into a fight, and the fathers of the various clans entered into the battle.

Suddenly, Lofty Wanderer appeared before his people. "It is now time for the clans to separate," he said. He sent the people who were to become the Yumas

to the banks of the Lower Colorado River and the Mohaves farther up the river. The Hualapais moved north to the thick pines and the Havasupais to the Grand Canyon. Only the Yavapais, the People of the Sun, remained in the land they had always known-in the center of the world where everything had begun.

Note: For all the exciting and interesting details read Hoomothya's Long Journey by Elaine Waterstrat.