

# The Myth of the Earth Grasper

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Recontextualized by Rick Hill

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## A) Characters in the story

**De'haen hiondie'sonk** - He Tosses About the Sky (He Shakes the Skies) *a.k.a. Hoksten'a'* - The Ancient Man

**Goksten'a'a** - The Ancient Woman, his sister  
(*This shows the importance of maternal relations*)

Her daughter: **Awe(n)ha'i'** - Mature Blossoms, *Mature Flowers, or Mature Earth*

Her son: **De'hadon hwendjiyen'dons** - He, the Earthquake

**De'haon hwendjiawa'khon** - He-Earthholder, aka **Hoda'he'** - He Has a Standing Tree (Keeper of the Standing Tree)

**Ga'ha'syendiet'ha**, the Fire Dragon, *a.k.a Comet*, whose body is white

**Ga'hende'sonk** - She is the Leader - Daughter born of Mature Blossom

## Turtle Man

**De'hae'hiyawa'k 'hon** - He Holds the Sky (He Grasps the Sky in Two Places), twin son of the daughter and Turtle Man, *a.k.a. Master of Life*. Hewitt also noted that "wa-hung" or "wagon" means "hold" and that **Ung-kee-dra'-swa-wa-kung** = He holds the sky by his mind, meaning his memory comes from the sky.

**O'ha'a** - Flint, his brother, *a.k.a Spirit of Winter*, or Dawiskaron - Crystal or Ice

He, our Elder Brother - the Sun - the transformed body of Earthquake

**Soikah gahkwah** - Grandmother Moon

*First Ongwehonweh:*

**Awenhaniyonda** - Inseparable Flower, the first woman

**Odendonni'a** - Young Tree *a.k.a Sapling*, the first man, literally Little Tree.

**Hadu'i'** - World Rim Dweller, *a.k.a. Our Dear Grandfather*, literally, He Drives (things away)

**Ho'nigo(n)heowa'ne(n)** - His Mind Is Great, the one who created the clan system.

## B) The Story Begins . . .

*De'haen hiondie'sonk* - He Tosses About the Sky *a.k.a. Hoksten'a'* - The Ancient Man wanted to bring spiritual power to his sister's children (*Significance of niece and nephew concept*)

He concealed them away so that they would grow with goodness of mind.

The uncle returns and tells them he is about to die, and that they must take his body and place it at the top of the highest tree. (*Importance of tree as connector to world above*)

“If some trouble should ever happen and you need to hear my voice again, it will be possible to do so.”

The children and their mother made a bark coffin, and placed his body at the top of the highest pine tree. She continues to conceal her children.

Messenger for *De'haon hwendjiawa'khon* - He-Earthholder, also known as *Hoda'he'* - He has a Standing Tree (Keeper of the Standing Tree) arrives and says that they will receive a revelation from The Ancient Man. (*Importance of dreams, visions and revelations*)

Daughter cried continuously and mother said she should go visit The Ancient Man. Her brother carried her up the tree and they removed the bark and when she saw his face, peace came over her mind. They returned to their home.

Messenger returns and invites them to a feast put on by the Chief *De'haon hwendjiawa'khon* - He-Earthholder. All the other people have attended (Sun, Moon, Stars, Tree, Bush, Grasses, Animals, Birds, Water springs, Flowing waters, Light, Clouds, Corn, Beans, Squashes, Tobacco, Night, Daylight, Thunderers, Water, Comet, Blue Sky and Air). (*Origin of elements of the Thanksgiving Address*)

The mother goes and the Chief tells her that she has the power to tell him what is on his mind. The Wind was the only one lacking. *De'haon hwendjiawa'khon* - He-Earthholder was unhappy because all of the beings had failed to aid him and he was about to cast them to the ground and renew the world.

The mother says that her children will soon come forward and reveal his vision. The Chief showed her the Standing Tree. He said his feast will continue until the blossoms fall off of the tree. He said, “The only thing that keeps everything in good order is that those enjoying themselves must keep things interesting and entertaining to me.” (*This is why we are to show our thankfulness and dance, play lacrosse, plant and celebrate the cycles of nature*)

Back home, the brother tells his sister that the uncle in the tree wants her to visit. He tells her to go to the Chief and that the blossoms on the tree provide all the light in that world. She must tell him that she is from “the place where stands the standing tree”. She will tell him that the feast brought her there and that her name is *Awe(n)ha’i’* - Mature Blossoms. (*She is related to the light in the Sky World that comes from the blossoms on the celestial tree*)

Her uncle told her that the Chief will say that the purpose of the feast was fulfilled and she will take away all the things that he will cast from this world into the next. (*Pattern for distribution of personal property at death feast*) Her uncle said that the Chief will ask her to make mush from chestnuts. The hot mush will splash on her body, but she is not to cry out. He will send two dog spirits to lick away the mush. She is not to be scared. It is a test.

Her uncle then said that the Chief will tell her that he dreamt that the people uprooted the Standing Tree of Fruits and Flowers. He also dreamt that he and his wife sat at the hole that was created when the tree was uprooted. She should not be afraid to sit there.

She then goes to see the Chief. Her elder brother says that she will one day leave this world, and she will someday recall her brother. She will then call him *De’hadon hwendjiyen’dons* - He, the Earthquake. “Someday you will think of me and when that happens, everyone who is aware of this will remember what happened here.”

## The Marriage

*Awe(n)ha’i’* - Mature Blossoms arrives at the lodge of the Chief as the feast continued. The Chief was glad she arrived, for it was the purpose of the feast. He told her that now she can take all of the things away with her as he has cast them through the ground so that they can be transformed and renewed. (*This transformation also works in reverse, as we are transformed into spirit beings as we return to that original place of being*)

She was placed on a mat for a bed. She then went and prepared the chestnut mush. Although she got burned by the splashing mush she did not stop. When the mush was ready she called the Chief and he then sent his dogs to lick the mush from her body. They were rough and painful, but she did not flinch or cry out.

They ate then went to a lacrosse game. The Chief told her not to talk with anyone there. People tried to speak with her but she remained silent. The next day another game was held. The Chief sent her to gather water. On her way back, a lacrosse player asked her for a drink. After, he said *Nia’weh*. She responded and said *Ni’o*. She threw away the remaining water and went back and filled her bucket again.

The Chief was mad because she spoke with someone. He told her to go back and tell her mother about all that has happened. She gathered her things and went home. Her mother, upon hearing what had happened said, “I have been delaying this too long,” and gave her daughter huckleberry combread to give to the Chief to acknowledge their marriage. The mother took a basket of bread and went to see the Chief.

She gave him the bread and said that it confirms their marriage and shows her consent to it. The Chief was pleased and said that the people will eat the bread to acknowledge the marriage. He said that the daughter must return, and not stop on her journey. He gave the mother some dried meat to share with the people of her village to confirm the marriage. *(This sets the pattern for the bride to provide corn bread, and the groom boiled meat at a wedding)*

*Awe(n)ha'i'* - Mature Blossoms headed for her new home, but met a man that looked like her husband. She ignored him. The man transformed himself into a fox. Soon she saw her husband again. This one was a transformed wolf. As she neared the village, her husband came to greet her, but it was really a bear. It was not until she entered the lodge that she spoke and her husband was happy to see her.

They slept together, but with the bottoms of their feet touching. When they sat up, their breath co-mingled. *(The breath of life)* She became pregnant.

The Chief said he had a dream and it was the custom of the people to guess what his dream is so that the vision of his soul can become real. All the beings of the Sky World assembled for a great feast. They all shouted what they thought was his dream, but he waved them all off as they were not right. It was as if a great negative force was keeping the dream unknown and his mind free from peace. *(The Good Mind is the goal and the dream guessing rite was an important tool to restoring that Good Mind)*

*Ga'ha'syendiet'ha*, the Fire Dragon, also known at the Comet, whose body is white, stepped forward and said that his dream was to have the Standing Tree uprooted. The Chief was thankful and explained the rest of his dream. He saw himself and his wife sitting at the opening created by the uprooted tree. Their feet dangled over the chasm, and they shared food.

## The Uprooted Tree

The people gathered around the tree and pulled it from the ground. They could only see blackness below. The blossoms withered. Chief said that the conditions that create fate have come to pass. "All that exists here can become new. All things shall come into a constant state of unending transformation and retransformation."

The Chief and his wife sat at the hole in the Sky World and ate some food. He then said, "Now you depart from here," and he thrust her into the chasm and she disappeared from sight.

The Sky World dwellers then replanted the Tree of Light.

*Ga'ha'syendiet'ha*, the Fire Dragon, seizes Mature Blossoms as she falls and offers her aid because "your former husband accused me of those things for which he has cast you from the Sky World." He gave her some dried corn and dried meat and went with her half way then disappeared.

She heard a voice that told her that all of the beings in the Sky World were cast below. There was a dark endless sea. Ducks floated on the water.

*Hahowen* - duck - saw her and shouted to the others. A loon called the other water birds to rise up and catch her. All the birds united their bodies and broke her fall but they could not decide what to do with her.

The *Hanoghye* - muskrat - said he would dive to the bottom and bring up some earth. After a long time, he returned but he was long dead.

*Nagayagih* - beaver - found some earth in his paws and mouth. The beaver put the earth on his back but it was too heavy.

*Hanyadengona* - Great Turtle - offered his shell. If the earth would grow, he too would grow with it. The birds placed Mature Blossoms on the earth on the turtle's back, and then flew away.

### **The Turtle Island**

The earth grew in size. Mature Blossoms gave birth to a daughter. The child grew rapidly. She soon became a young woman. A man being wearing yellow clothing asked her to marry him but she said that it was up to her mother to decide whom she should marry. (*Pattern for arranged marriages by the female relatives of the bride*)

She told her mother and her mother did not consent. She returned to tell the being that she could not marry him. As he departed, he transformed into a fox.

A few days later, she was approached by another, who was dirty and had wide flaps on his leggings. His marriage proposal was accepted by the mother. The daughter invited him to her lodge. He says that he would not live with them, but only visit. He is a Turtle Man.

During the night, Turtle Man entered their lodge and placed two arrows near the daughter. One had a flint point, the other had no point. He had a third arrow but laid only the two side by side and told the daughter not to move them.

In the morning, Turtle Man returned and took his arrows. The daughter was very happy and it soon became apparent that she was pregnant. She could hear two male voices within her body. One said that he will create human beings and make them happy to live on the earth. His brother promised to do as his brother did and have an impact on the earth.

When it was time to be born, one was born in the normal way, while the other decided to emerge from his mother's armpit, despite the pleading from his brother that to do so would kill their mother.

Mature Blossoms put the boys under their mother's death bed and she prepared the body and placed it at the entrance to the bark shelter. She said her daughter would rise in ten days. (*The origin of the ten day feast concept*)

The boys grew rapidly. Mature Blossoms asked them if they knew where they were from and where they were going. One said that he came from the Sky World and will grasp with both hands the knowledge of that place, and after awhile he will return to the Sky World. She gave him the name *De'hae'hiyawa' 'khon* - He Holds the Sky.

His brother said that he was not thinking about those things and was only concerned with the flint tipped arrow his father left for him. It was to defend himself. She named him *O'ha'a* - Flint.

Flint wanted to see his "sleeping" mother. He ordered her to rise, but she did not. He said that if she would not rise, he did not care. He then left to wander the world to entertain himself.

Mature Blossoms favored Flint. Food became scarce and she wanted to save what she had for herself and Flint only. She made a bow and arrow for Flint but refused to make one for Skyholder.

Flint attached an arrowhead to the arrow and went to his mother's body. He ordered her to wake up and when she did not, he shot her with the arrow, and then destroyed her body. Upset by what his brother had done, Skyholder names his mother *Ga'hende'sonk* - She is the Leader, for she took the lead in establishing a home on earth and was the first to depart from this earth.

Skyholder told Mature Blossoms that it was not fair that she treated them differently and he asked her once more to make him a bow and arrow. She consented.

Skyholder shot an arrow at a bird, but missed and he chased his own arrow as it went into a lake, but he found himself at a place where there was not water, but at a lodge with a man tending a fire.

The man said he wanted to tell Skyholder that his grandmother does not respect him. The old man told Skyholder that he is about to fulfil his destiny, but that the differences with his brother is a serious matter. The old man gave him food and told him to take some seeds with him, but that when his grandmother and brother come for food, he must tell them that they have to be careful about how much they eat.

The old man told Skyholder that he had the power to create things, and he could come back if he finds he needs anything.

## The Creator Twins

Skyholder went on his own and built a lodge on the other side of the island, away from his grandmother. He planted a sun flower outside his lodge and it gave off light. He thought that it

will be a sign to humans. He then created red willow as a medicine, as well as strawberries, thimbleberries, mulberries, huckleberries and all kinds of food plants. He built a fire and roasted some corn.

The wind carried the appetizing aroma of the roasting corn to his brother and grandmother. Flint followed the aroma to his brother's lodge and watched him as he roasted the corn. He asked him what he was doing.

"I am preparing food which will sustain human beings who will live on this earth in the future."

Flint asked for some, but his brother refused, saying that it was not time yet, but that soon there will be plenty on earth. Flint noticed all kinds of growing plants and flowers in his brother's lodge.

Skyholder went back to see the under water man - his father - who warned Skyholder that his grandmother will try to undo what he is accomplishing. Turtle Man told him to trade corn for the substance of life (the power to freeze living things) within his brother - flint. He was to pull the flint from his brother's mouth and have his brother break it off. Then, Skyholder will enjoy success in his work.

This happened and Skyholder gave his brother two kernels of corn, one for Flint and one for his grandmother. She wanted more.

Skyholder created birds - blue bird, robin, pine martin - two each, male and female. He told them to live in the trees and shrubs he created. They flew and sang beautiful songs.

He then made the deer, moose, and buffalo - two each, male and female. He told them he made things for them to live on and set them loose.

He then made passenger pigeons, porcupines, wild turkeys, bear, and raccoons.

Flint and his grandmother decided to visit Skyholder's lodge to see what he was doing. Along the way, they could smell many wonderful fruits, including raspberries.

They asked for some food and Skyholder gave them each a kernel of corn. They went out and he showed them all of the things he created and planted. His grandmother said that what he did was wonderful and asked if they could take some of the fruits. Skyholder said no, because he had just planted them, but that soon they would be plentiful.

They returned to their home and Flint said that he too could create things. They saw many animals pass their lodge - deer, bear, and elk. The animals made great noises with their feet, wings and voices - many languages were heard in the air. Flint says that he will learn how his brother makes things and will copy that because his brother has grown stingy. He will make abundance for them.

When he asked Skyholder what he used to make all these things, Skyholder picked up a handful of dirt. "The earth is alive!" He took the earth and made the living bodies of the plants and animals, but one day they will die and become part of the earth once again.

Flint says that only the flint stone and the deer antler can cause him to die.

Flint returns to tell his grandmother he wants to capture all the animals hold them in a mountain and thereby have control over them. He created a great cavern and placed all of the animals his brother created in the cave and covered the entry with a big rock.

Flint returned to his brother to find him making many arrows, in anticipation of the hunt. But Flint would go to the cave, open it and kill an animal to provide meat for his grandmother. Skyholder could not find any animals. He went to his father for answers. Turtle Man told him what his brother had done, and how to help the animals escape. To keep them from being captured again, he instructed the animals on how to avoid being seen and to keep free. The animals disappeared into the forest.

Skyholder then shot a deer, raccoon, bear, buffalo, moose, and duck and sent them to the lodge of his grandmother so that she would have something to eat. He dressed them out, hung the meat and placed the fur around the lodge so that his grandmother would be the first whose mind is made satisfied by the things which live on the earth. This is what he had in mind for the humans he was about to create.

Skyholder then focused his attention to his brother, who was making his work more difficult. He cut the island in two and thrust fresh water between the two islands so that he and his brother would be separated.

As their food supply grew sparse, Flint went hunting but could not find any game. He saw them jump into the fresh water and swim to a distant island. Flint decided to find his brother and tell him about this new island. He searched in vain for his brother.

Flint then told his mother what he had seen but she said that there was nothing she could do. He decided to remake the animals like his brother had done. He took some earth and tried to make a butterfly, but it flew away as a moth. He tried to make pigeons from the earth, but they were misshaped, and had fur and teeth (bat). He tried to make a sunflower, but it turned out to be a thistle. He made many small beings, but they all flew up and disappeared. (Flies)

Skyholder shows up and questions what his brother is doing. He uses his power and mind to make the best of it. Flies will eat the bodies of dead animals. Bats will fly at night so they won't interfere with the birds. Some animals will find the thistle as a form of food.

## The Earthquake

Skyholder returned to his lodge to try to make an orb of daylight. He sought out the advice of Turtle Man. The father told the son that he needed to invite his grandmother's brother -

Earthquake - to inspect the Creation. He was also to take two red willows. By scrapping the bark of one, he can create an emetic. With the other he could create a fire, and when the smoke rises, he is to jump into it and say, "Now, Elder Brother, you and I shall meet!" They will meet half way between the earth and the Sky World, and the Elder Brother will grant his wish for he has much power. (*Purification to gain spiritual power*)

This he did and he met this man (Earthquake). Skyholder explained that the earth has grown large, that he will add more islands and daylight is needed for the whole earth. The man being said that he will attach his body to the underside of the Sky World. He will circle the creation and return to that spot each day. He will care for what Skyholder has created. Skyholder said that the sunflower will measure the approach of the sun.

Earthquake told Skyholder that his brother had cut off the head of his mother and it was still at the lodge of his grandmother. Perhaps he could assign her a duty so that the brother and sister could work together.

Earthquake warned Skyholder that Flint will still cause him difficulty. He also told him that someday, at the end of the world, he will make the earth shake. Skyholder told him that at midday, the Sun will rest for a short time and regain its strength. People will direct their thoughts toward the sun at that moment. (*Ceremonies are to be completed by midday. This is why the Feather Dance is done at that time during Gaiwiio*) He will be called He, our Elder Brother. The sun would then have time to consider the thoughts of the people.

## The First Human

Skyholder now focused on making Human Beings. From the living earth he made a human body. He added some flesh from his own body, a portion of his own blood, gave it the power to speak and gave it his own breath. The Human being came to life and stood before the Skyholder, who told the First Man, "I have placed you on earth so that you can beautify it by cultivating it." Then the first sunrise occurred to warm the earth and create a beautiful sight. The Sun and the Moon are provided to light and heat the earth so that the plants, animals and humans can live. People are to travel during the period of daylight and rest during the period of darkness.

Seeing the new daylight, Flint wanted to see his brother to find out what was happening, but the island had grown more distant. He took the bark from a birch tree and made a canoe. When he landed his canoe, he saw a human being and asked where he had come from.

"I came to life in this place," the human replied.

"Who finished your body?"

"The one who finished my body lives near here."

They went to Skyholder's lodge. They went for a walk so that Flint could see all that has happened. The earth was still growing. Things were multiplying. In time, humans would become more numerous.

Flint went home and told his mother about all that he had seen.

“Now, it is fulfilled,” she said and told of her brother’s pledge to one day come to the earth. The sun is her elder brother.

Flint tried to make a human, but the creature leapt from his grasp and dove into the water. The creature would not listen to Flint’s commands. He tried again. This time the creature, which was small and had a long tail, climbed up a tree. The creature would not listen to Flint’s commands.

Flint tried again, determined to get it right. He made another creature, told it to stand and walk about. This one seemed right.

He then tried to create a deer and bear. Both creatures ran away.

Skyholder appeared and they went for a walk, Flint hoping to show off what he had created. When they saw the first creature he thought was a human, his brother said, that is not a human, it is a frog. The next was a monkey. The next was an ape (large monkey). The deer turned out to be a wolf. The bear was a grizzly bear.

Flint was more determined to show up his brother. He decided that he would make more creatures, send them to his brother’s island to eat up all the animals that Skyholder had created. He knew that this would lead to a showdown.

His grandmother said she would not go with him unless he could show her how they were going to cross the water. Flint said he would build a bridge. He called upon the powers of the night to help him. It got extremely cold and a bridge of ice was formed.

## The Grandmother Acts Up

Skyholder invited his family to eat the fruits of his creation. He roasted some corn, but told his grandmother that she had to wait until it was cooked before she could eat it. “We will eat together. It is well known that we all have an equal right to it.” (*The dish with one spoon idea*)

The grandmother thought that he was stingy and grabbed a handful of ashes and threw it on to the roasting corn. She was mad that he was always thinking of the humans and not her.

“You have spoiled something that which will bring happiness to people,” he told her.

Skyholder and his grandmother came upon a tree with large fruit (some say it was an apple tree). She wanted to pick one, but he told her to wait until it ripens, then there would be plenty. She got ashes and threw them on the fruits, which turned black and sour. She said that the people will call the fruit crab apple, the sour fruit and no one will make use of it except the animals.

“You are putting too much energy into making life difficult for your grandchildren, the human beings,” he said. He stopped showing her what he had created.

She said that she would return to play a game to see who will be in charge of all things here in the world. He told his brother that the animals, plants and humans are still growing and that they all have spiritual power. Flint understood that spiritual power was the missing element to what he had created.

When they went to return, the ice bridge had melted. Flint made a canoe. When they arrived at their lodge Flint began to make more creatures to cause trouble on his brother's island. There were many, but they were all ugly. He told them to go to the island and eat whatever they felt.

Skyholder sensed their arrival and sent them back. He imprisoned them in the cave that his brother had made before.

### Skyholder Creates the First Female

Skyholder returned home and made a companion for the first human he had made. He gave it a portion of his own life, his own mind, blood and breath. He then commanded her to stand. He called forth the man and stood them together. He said that they should become a couple and only through hard work that they will have peace of mind. The man was not to distress the mind of the woman.

He named the female *Awenhaniyonda* - Inseparable Flower. He told her that only through hard work will they live a vigorous life. She will suffer in giving birth. Yet she must tend the fire for her family and help her partner keep a peaceful mind.

“Future generations of human beings will take the same shape as you two, and there will be numerous humans who will inhabit the earth. Each of you individually live a number of days on earth, and you will be united in marriage during your natural lives.”

“You will see human beings take shape through your two bodies. Your minds and your blood will be bound together, and it is my wish that you two married people will have one mind at all times. Don't either of you distress the other's mind during the days which are ours. Only death will separate you, and the only difference in the number of days you have.”

He said that we are to marry only one person.

### Dueling Brothers

Flint soon discovered all of the animals he created had disappeared. He went to his brother and asked if he saw the animals. Skyholder told him to search the entire island. As he did, he came across the two humans.

Flint then asked his brother if it was all right if he created humans. Skyholder said it would be okay only if he was careful and copied the form exactly. Flint then went to the shore and decided to make a human from the white foam on the water, but he could not bring it to life. He asked his

brother to help him. Skyholder told him to make second human. He then took a part of his mind, blood, power to speak, power to see, and placed his breath in the body. He then commanded them to stand.

But he told Flint that what was created might one day become hostile toward Skyholder.

Flint said that since they shared in creating these humans, they will share in what happens to them.

Skyholder says that they will call the first humans *Ongwe honweh*. The second set will be called Axe Maker.

Flint asked where the animals he created were, and Skyholder pointed to the mountain and asked who created the cavern. Flint understood that his trick had been played upon himself and he lied, saying the animals must have created the cavern. They went to that cavern and Skyholder removed the rock. Out came the fierce, ugly animals, crawling or dragging their bodies, snarling at each other. Skyholder felt that these creatures should be kept from harming the human beings. Flint said that there were other, larger creatures in the cavern and he replaced the rock to keep them inside.

The grandmother asked Flint to remove the head of her daughter from their lodge and place it up high so that humans who travel about can see it and be reminded about what happened on earth. Skyholder said that she will live again, and when darkness comes, her head will shine, give off heat to protect the earth from becoming too cold. She will help support life on earth. She will cause all the animals and humans to be at peace at night. Humans will use her to measure time and will govern themselves by her changing cycles. However, Flint did not want the head placed in the sky, only in a tree. Skyholder said that they could do as they pleased.

## The Great Sacred Gamble

Then Skyholder reminded his grandmother of her challenge. In ten days they will play. Skyholder returned home and assembled the people and told them of the impending crisis. If his grandmother were to win, she would destroy all the growing things that allow the animals and people to live.

He told them that there will be two seasons. One will be hot and the plants will grow and mature. The other will be cold and the water will freeze. He told them the nighttime sun will be his mother, their grandmother. She will aid the Elder Brother sun. The Moon will go through a cycle and disappear for three days, but will return and grow.

Mature Blossoms and Flint arrived to play the game. Skyholder asked the humans to witness the events, for in the coming days the humans will see many things and Flint will do abnormal things that will cause their descendants much fear.

Mature Blossoms had a bowl and six peach stones. One side of the stones was darkened. The game required five of one color to score one point, and a field of six of one color to score five points. Skyholder said they will each use their own stones and will have only one throw at a time, and they will play to whoever scores three points first. Skyholder got six chickadees and asked for their help. He took their heads to use as his stones.

Mature Blossoms threw first, but she did not score any points. Skyholder placed his chickadee heads in the bowl and they rolled around very lively. He told them to use their power so that they can win and all will continue to live. As he shook the bowl, the voices of the animals rang out in a great clamor. The pieces sang as they flew high in the air, out of sight.

Skyholder shouted for a perfect score. His grandmother shouted “pshaw - let there be nothing.” It was a contest of their power. After a time he heard the bird songs getting louder. They landed in the bowl with a tremendous noise and rolled in the bowl for a long time. The contestants were shouting. Then they became still and all turned up black - a perfect score.

Skyholder then told his grandmother that she was not able to take away all that he had created. It was now settled that the humans would populate the earth and that the memory of what happened would pass from generation to generation. They would know of her - The Ancient One - and what happened here.

He said that the man would be called *Odendonni*’a - Young Tree. Together with *Awenhaniyonda* (Inseparable Flower), their lives will endure as long as the earth lives. Their names mean that there will always be growing bushes, trees and grasses. Always new things will be coming into life.

“Now we must give thanks that we have triumphed for all time and can continue to be peacefully contented. You, Young Tree, will off the first Thanksgiving. You will cry out three times and repeat your words, and that will signify that now we are all happy. This is what will happen for all time, for whatever reasons people will rejoice.”

As Young Tree’s loud voice rang out, all the animals could hear and joined in. He then asked Flint and his grandmother for the head of his mother. Flint refused and challenged his brother to destroy all of his powers. The Grandmother said that it would not be a good idea to challenge each other. All that she and Flint had tried was lost. They headed home.

## Hadu’i’ Appears

Since he won control of the world, Skyholder took on the name Master of Life.

The humans began to have children and their family traveled about the earth. Skyholder asked them to help retrieve his mother’s head. They had to purify themselves with red willow for three days. Young Tree was to seek deer antlers and pieces of flint on their island and place them up high. Skyholder would do the same on the other island. When Flint sees this happen he will think that everyone is against him and will sit silently in his lodge.

Skyholder went to Flint's island, was removing the antler and flint from the ground when he saw his mother's head in a tree, with Flint waiting in ambush. As he turned to leave, Skyholder came across a man-being, *Hadu'i'* who said that he was examining the world that he had created. He came from the West.

Skyholder said he would like to see how much power *Hadu'i'* had since he claimed to have made the earth. *Hadu'i'* shook the great turtle rattle that he carried and all of the animals feared its mighty noise.

Skyholder said that was not enough and *Hadu'i'* should move a mountain in the distance to where they stood. They turned away from the mountain, held their breaths and turned to see that the mountain had moved a bit as commanded by *Hadu'i'*.

It is obvious that you did not make that mountain. Now I will try to move it. If it moves, that is proof that it is I who has created all." They turned away from the mountain again. "Mountain, move here to our backs," said Skyholder. He told *Hadu'i'* to hold his breath and when he released his breath, the mountain will have moved. After a time, *Hadu'i'* was aware that something grazed his back, so he turned quickly to see what it was and his face struck the mountain ledge. Skyholder noticed that *Hadu'i'*'s nose and mouth were twisted.

*Hadu'i'* said that it was true that Skyholder had the power and when he turned to see what was happening, his face was struck. It was then that he understood that Skyholder had finished the earth. To humble himself he offered to help the humans who were about to populate the earth. They will have visions. They will get sick and their faces and bodies will become contorted. Sometimes bad medicine will be used on them. If the people make wooden forms patterned after his face, he will use his power to help them recover.

*Hadu'i'* also said that Flint was out to destroy the good work of the Skyholder. Flint will make people become ill and suffer mental anguish. He wants to destroy humans. *Hadu'i'* will help the people and they should address him as "Our Dear Grandfather."

The face should be carved from the white pine, which is particularly hardy. The face will be used as a means to call on him so that he can blow upon one who is ill. A society of the *Hadu'i'* will impersonate him and go from house to house. They will blow ashes on people and it will be just as if *Hadu'i'* was blowing on them. People will use tobacco to call upon him, and when the tobacco is thrown in the fire, *Hadu'i'* will inhale the smoke. Ashes from that fire will be used on the sick.

When they call upon him, they must also have a favorite meal of corn mush. Once these duties were settled, the *Hadu'i'* and Skyholder parted.

## Making the Sun and Moon

Skyholder then got Young Tree. He made a canoe and asked for volunteers - people of faith to help. A number emerged including a fox who said that he will grab the head and run with it. Fisher said he will take the head from fox and fly with it swiftly. Skyholder did not think they could succeed. Then beaver said he will help. He will cut down the tree where the head rests. Fox and Fisher said they would paddle the canoe.

Young Tree and Skyholder disembarked and when to the lodge of Flint. Young Tree tried to climb the tree to retrieve the head, but was forced back. Skyholder released that humans had no instep so he created such so that Young Tree could climb trees. He was now able to climb, but in his hurry to descend, he slipped and he clumsily tore the branches and stripped the bark of the tree. The tree shone brightly. Skyholder said that forever this would be known as a sycamore tree.

Suddenly Flint and his grandmother appeared and she saw the head was gone. As she shouted all of the animals gave up a great roar. Flint felt that he was at the risk of death because all of the antler and flint had been placed up high. He was helpless. He needed to get the head back.

The Grandmother followed the tracks from the tree and shouted for them to bring back the head. Youngtree took off running but the old woman was gaining on him. They reached their canoe and beaver, otter and muskrat began to paddle swiftly. The Grandmother reached the shore and pleaded with them to return the head. They ignored her, except muskrat who took pity on her and offered to return the head. Skyholder cast him from the canoe and said that he will always be a lowly animal, hanging around the shore line.

The Otter got scared and offered to leave the canoe. Skyholder said that he did not have to come and in the future he will be shy and hide himself in the depths of the water. Grandmother was left crying along the shore.

When they arrived safely, Skyholder told the beaver that he would always have great power to control the flow of waters. The beaver will be able to decide to make earth or dam the waters for itself.

Skyholder used the air to remake his mother's flesh. She stood before him again. He explained that it was his brother who caused her ruin and that he continues to cause trouble. Skyholder told his mother that her duty will be to tend to the earth, the grasses, bushes and forests, as well as the animals and humans that grow there. She will assist Elder Brother who makes the earth warm so that the plants will ripen. At night she will cause the earth to remain warm and cause the dew to fall. She will continue to assist her grandchildren, the human beings.

The people will see that she slowly draws nearer, slowly increase in size night after night. Until she reaches the place where the sun usually shines, then her form will be complete and full. As she continues, her size will start to grow less until she returns to the place she started. This length of time will be constant and the people will hold her in high esteem.

The people will refer to the sun as “O Sun, our Elder Brother, and the Great War Chief.” And they will refer to her as “O Our Grandmother Moon.” People will use tobacco to address them. The smoke will become their word. The Skyholder said that he will use the bark of the red willow and threw it in the fire.

He told his transformed mother to jump into the fire. This she did and her body rose with the smoke. Skyholder then told Inseparable Flower that her body would change each month along with the moon. As the moon is renewed, it will be a sign that the life that women carry within is also renewed and that this is the time when new human beings can be formed. In this way, the power of the Grandmother Moon is extended to all things that grow - animals and humans.

With the emergence of the first moon, the first people were surprised to see a change came over Inseparable Flower after three days. Skyholder told her that the Moon and the life of human beings will forever be tied together.

## The Brothers Fight

Skyholder then told them he was about to have a major disagreement with his brother and to watch for signs to let them know what is happening. First, the beasts held within the cavern would be released. They will eat the flesh of everything in the new world. Skyholder would then move his Grandmother to another place in search of peace. He headed off to the island inhabited by his brother and the fierce and ugly creatures. His grandmother refused to go with him until he showed her the moon rising in the east, its rays bursting through the woods.

She realized that it was the head of her daughter and was pleased. Skyholder tells her to go to his lodge and wait until he is done. He tries to reassure her that he will not fight his brother, that it does not matter that both made things in the world. She wanted her grandsons to be in agreement.

The grandmother finds Skyholder’s lodge empty until the first people arrive. She is worried, but they tell her to keep having good thoughts. They told her that her daughter watches over them. She found comfort in that fact.

Back at Flint’s lodge, Skyholder waited for days for his brother, but he did not return. Skyholder went looking for him, but came across two humans. They thought that it must have been Flint who made the Moon appears, but Skyholder explained to them what had happened. He then took some flint stones into the lodge and placed them where Flint usually sat. As he turned, his brother appeared.

Flint realized that his grandmother was gone and was siding with his brother. When he saw the flint stones, he knew that a fight was about to take place, or he would be taken prisoner or killed. He prepared to defend himself and take control of everything.

Skyholder tried to reassure his brother that they did not have to fight, that they could help each other. He wanted peace in this world and the world above.

Yet Flint said that the flint stones and antler that were placed in his lodge are the things that had the power to destroy him. Who has done this? Who has carried off his mother's head? Who has taken his grandmother? Who was trying to kill him?

"No one can help me," Flint said, "and if I am to live, I can help no one. And I will have pity on no one. I will be happy when I am in control of everything."

"I don't know what you are talking about," replied Skyholder, "There is no problem here, and everything is peaceful."

Flint was jealous of his brother. He really wanted the people to give up their respect for Skyholder. He wanted to control the way people thought about his brother. He wanted them to dislike Skyholder. He felt that he had lost everything.

Skyholder wonder why his brother was so angry. After all, it was Flint who had killed his own mother. Even though she was brought back to life forever, Flint was still unhappy. "It will become the custom for all time that one who kills a human being will not be forgiven."

Flint challenged his brother to step outside and settle this matter once and for all. Flint called upon the beasts to destroy all the creatures he did not create. He called upon the power of the darkness to destroy all in the world he did not create. He called upon the waters to help him destroy the things made by his brother. He also called upon the power of the mind to destroy those things he did not create.

Flint challenged his brother to a fight. He called upon the power of darkness to fight the power of daylight. He grabbed a flint tipped arrow and said that he had already killed one human and will use the arrow to kill another. They struggled over that arrow and as they did the sky grew dark with massive clouds, and the winds grew fierce. Skyholder let go of the arrow, stepped back and cast a mountain at his brother.

But Flint escaped and they chased each other around the island. Skyholder kept casting the mountain on his brother, but Flint would always emerge unharmed. They threw rocks at each other. Finally the mountain was covered with rocks. Then Skyholder called upon Earthquake to help him. The earth shook from within. The earth quake was so strong that Flint surrendered to the power of his brother. Flint agreed to stay nearby, but not act up. For if he did, he knew he would be imprisoned somewhere else. Skyholder let him go to his home one last time.

## Use of Tobacco

In the meantime, Skyholder made stars so that the darkness of night would not be so complete. He will make the Morning Star to bring the day.

Skyholder explained what had happened to his grandmother and how no one was destroyed. He told her to return to her home to the place where she first acquired the power of thought. After ten days, he and his brother, if they still agree, will join her at that place.

He made a fire and threw the bark of the red willow on the fire. He told his grandmother to jump on the smoke. He told her that when he joins her in the Sky World, he will make life on earth continue by making rain so that the earth will be continuously renewed.

Skyholder then told the first humans, as they watched the grandmother ascend to the Sky World, that in the future, only the words and thoughts of the mind will be able to make this journey to the Sky World, carried by the smoke of the burning tobacco. No person will be able to ascend in the smoke, but the words on the smoke will be as if the speaker were to ascend himself.

However, if there are upright people, who have done no wrong, after they have lived their allotted days, they will ascend and live among the stars. As long as the earth shall live, the number of stars will increase. There will come a time when no one on earth will be able to count all of the stars in the sky. Some of the animals will also become stars.

## Creating the Morning Star

Skyholder went to the underwater lodge of *De'haon hwendjiawa'khon* - He-Earthholder. He made *T'henden hawit' ha'* (He Brings the Day With Him) and told him of his duties to transform night into day. The Skyholder said that it was this Morning Star that provided all of the thoughts that inspired all of his work on the earth. He was really transforming the Sky World chief, the Keeper of the Celestial Tree, into the daylight bringer. At daybreak, *T'henden hawit' ha'* will reveal himself for a short time as the Morning Star.

*T'henden hawit' ha'* agreed to what was being done but warned Skyholder not to leave his brother behind when he departs from the earth. His brother still seeks to destroy all of his work. *T'henden hawit' ha'* explained that there is a nighttime path in the sky called *O'nio'da*- the Milky Way, but that this path will be divided because the minds of the brothers are different. The people on the earth will always be able to see this path.

For as long as the earth shall last, the Morning Star will be the first to see what has been created. Then the Sun will follow and look upon the Creation. The Moon will then follow. In this way, there will never be a time when the Sky World Beings are not observing the world below.

At the next sunrise, when the Morning Star was visible, Flint appeared to accompany his brother back to the Sky World. Skyholder had contemplated destroying all of the creatures Flint had made because they were dangerous to leave behind. Instead, he decided to keep them in the cavern. "Only at the end of time, when my works decline, will they be able to leave the earth."

He appointed the *Hadiwennodadie's* - the Thunderers - as the ones whose duty it will be to attend to the needs of the earth, to make sure that day and night are renewed, that the waters will

be renewed and the earth will be cleansed. The Thunderbeings will also assure that the dangerous creatures will stay confined within the earth.

Skyholder was at his lodge with the first humans to greet the first Morning Star. Flint arrived. However Flint wanted to remain in the earth. They negotiated and finally agreed that the humans will live with the animals with no vicious traits, separate from the creatures created by Flint.

## The Original Instructions

Flint also requestes that they should travel the island one more time and visit all that they have created so that the first humans will remember the stories of the Creation and will use those stories to remember the Twins of Creation. This was agreed to and this is why we have this Creation story.

After their final tour, Skyholder reminded the first humans to use tobacco when they wanted him and the spirit helpers to hear their words. He told then he and his brother will leave footprints in the sky for them to observe. The pathway is divided, showing them that there are two kinds of minds that have come into being on the earth, in the Sky World and among human beings. This will be the path they will take when their number of days has come to an end on earth; they will then see him personally. *This is the origin of the concept of duality in Haudenosaunee philosophy - a reciprocity that exists in all things.*

He told them that the Thunder Voices will be coming from the West and that humans should pay attention to them. If they come from the east, it means that earth is nearing its end. The brothers then departed.

Soon afterward the first humans heard the thunder in the west. They decided to offer a thanksgiving and threw tobacco in the fire. That night they saw the stars very clearly and Young Tree said that all the things the Creator - He Who Finished Our Bodies - has said have come true and that they will do their duty as he described it to them.

They soon had children and many families lines descended from them. They all knew that one day the Skyholder would come back to them. However, the people forgot some of the Original teachings. They did not offer thanks. They did not do their duty.

The Skyholder did return and told the people that they have forgotten how to be thankful. He said that they all share the earth equally. He then taught them the Four Ceremonies. From time to time, the people were to gather and recognize the things that grow and support their lives:

\* When they see the seasons first fruit they will gather to mutually rejoice. They will congratulate one another that so many people have seen life renewed. They will eat the fruit. They will give thanks to the Skyholder.

\* He has patterned the four ceremonies after the ceremonies in the Sky World.

- \* O:stowa'gowa
- \* Gone'o
- \* Adonwe
- \* Gane:hwe'go:wa:h

When these are performed all should be happy.

\* The first time the Four Ceremonies will be presented will be at a Harvest Festival at the end of the season when all has matured. The flesh of the game will also be cooked. The people will think: "I am thankful that I am in good health and that I have again seen that upon which we live, that I have again seen the ceremony that was ordained for us."

\* The people will dance in one direction, in a circle around the singers, with the right side of the body on the outside.

\* When the weather turns cold, the four dances will be celebrated again. This time the animals will deserve special attention because the change in season has brought a change in their bodies. They have become weaker. But when the cold weather returns, they have become stronger and their meat becomes fine. It is then that people will hunt.

\* The Great Prized Ceremony, called *Ganonhwaiwih* begins with the ashes stirring in the homes of the people. "I am grateful that I am alive and in good health" When the ashes are stirred by a paddle, one singer will raise his voice. All will rejoice, all minds will unite in this action. The white dogs will be sacrificed because it is highly prized by the Skyholder. He wears a cloak of white dog skin.

\* The sacrifice of the white dog will assure that the animals in the woods will come forth again; that the plants will continue to provide for the people; and that infants will continue to be born so that a continuous line of humans shall stand on the earth, assemble to offer tobacco and to look skyward and have a single voice of thankfulness.

\* The Skyholder taught them the Thanksgiving Address:

- \* Mother Earth
- \* Elder Brother Sun
- \* Grandmother Moon
- \* Grandfathers
- \* grasses, shrubs, trees
- \* springs of water,
- \* The Wind
- \* The daytime
- \* The nighttime
- \* Stars

Through this the Skyholder will be thanked repeatedly.

\* People have duty to possess the power to be happy. They should be in the habit of giving thanks when they see that all of the Skyholders work pleases the minds of children. They all have a right to what was created. People need to comfort one another and greet one another with thanksgiving. The happiness of life shall be the foremost matter. This will create peace of mind. People need to help each other and tend to each other's thinking. For when they forget these principles, life will become lost.

\* In the future, people and families will disagree. They will forget happiness and peace. They will destroy one another. The path of the Milky Way will divide and there will be two minds among the people of the earth.

\* Skyholder said that he and Flint will disagree in the future and Flint will try to release his creatures to destroy everything on earth. Skyholder will return to make sure that things continue with a Good Mind.

The first humans followed these original instructions. They did as he instructed, but one night they looked to the sky and saw the Milky Way divide into two and the people began to disagree. Young Tree admonished the people and warned them that if they did not remain grateful and value peace, or their peaceful minds, humans would be unable to live. People ignored him.

## The People Mess Up

Strife developed and people began to mysteriously disappear. There was an eclipse of the sun and children began to disappear. The Thunder Voices appeared and it rained for three days. Then a rainbow appeared for the first time. It connected the earth with the Sky World. Young Tree said that it was a sign that Skyholder has returned because the people have not done what they were supposed to do.

Skyholder did arrive and explained what was happening. Discord is rampant. The rainbow is a symbol of the Skyholder's power. When the day comes that the rainbow stretches across the entire sky, from east to west, then the earth will end. From time to time, the people will see a rainbow as a reminder that the Thunder Voices are doing their duty to refresh the earth and bring forth new life.

He reminded them of the power of the earth:

- \* trees to make bow and arrows
- \* yellow sunflower, the first source of light
- \* red willow, the first plant on earth.
- \* Great Bluebird, the first animate being on earth.
- \* These first three colors are seen in the rainbow so that people will remember the Skyholder's work.

Skyholder reminded them that in addition to the Four Ceremonies, they are to gather and celebrate life when the wild strawberries ripen; when the raspberries ripen; mulberry and green corn; when maple sap flows.

Skyholder placed an important matter among the people - love. They are to love one another. For only then will there be peace.

He left once again and the people performed their duties as he had said. But after awhile, people began argue about how to perform the ceremonies. It was then that people began to notice ugly animals in the woods that began to kill the people. Only a few continued the ceremonies. Most people lived in a state of grief. Finally, the ceremonies stop.

The Skyholder appeared again, for the last time. He explained that it was his brother that was causing these bad things to happen. He reminded them that they are to continue the ceremonies, continue to love one another, live in peace and remember him day after day, night after night. People began to use the sweat lodge to forecast the future. Sickness came and many died. People went insane. Gossip raged among the people. Some people committed murder. Again the ceremonies were not performed. There was nothing but fear and the women and children wept constantly.

The plants began to produce less fruit. Skyholder appeared again and assembled all of the people. He admonished the people for listening to his brother and disrespecting each other. He told them that are two paths in life and in the afterlife. One is for those who keep the ceremonies going. When they go to the Sky World they will find happiness. In the Sky World, the Four Ceremonies are being continuously performed. There is no sickness and no one is sorrowful.

The other path is for those that have a hateful mind. It leads to his brother's place where they will see that which is ruinous. There will be great suffering. If a person fails to keep the Good Mind, they will perish on earth and will perish in the place of ruin. They will die twice. There will be a fire that grows hotter with the hatred of his brother. To avoid this, Skyholder provides a medicine for the people to fight the disease that now travels the land. Whichever path one chooses, they must obey its destiny.

The people gathered one of every kind of grass and shrubs. Skyholder held up a plant and said that it will be medicine, but only a few knew its name. He said that in the future only a few would know how to use the medicine plants, that they will work with tobacco to help people in mind body and spirit. He described how the helper will take tobacco to the medicine plant, explain who is to be helped, offer the tobacco and a thanksgiving, and then pick the plant.

Skyholder told the people that in the warm weather, they must learn how to plant corn, beans and squash. When they plant, they should perform the Great Feather Dance. Another dance will be held when the green beans are ready, when the green corn is ready and when the squash is ready. A kettle of food will be made to feed everyone and a thanksgiving will be offered.

He departs once again, but tells the people that if they fail to keep the Good Mind, he will send another person to help them. If that fails, he will send another messenger. If the people fail for a third time, they will see the earth begin to withhold its bounty. Earthquakes will follow.

## The Gift of Corn, Beans and Squash

Skyholder fixed his path on earth and placed the three sisters at the end of that path. He told the people not to waste them, and to share them with each other. He instructed them to send two young people who have just reached the age of puberty to collect the three plants, to be called “Our Mothers,” in a mound beside an open grave. The woman will first take the corn then the bean plant. The man will take the squash. At that point they will understand the meaning of the grave. It lies there for everyone, but they will not know when or where they will die.

He said that he will hear if anyone thinks of him and asks for help. He headed to the West as all of the people watched him disappear. They sent the young couple as instructed. They went far to the west to find the plants. At the mound, they assumed that he was buried there, with his head to the West and his feet to the east.

The Elders had the people celebrate the success and decided that people should help each other in the planting and cultivation of the crops. They should help each other in the harvest and share its bounty with all the people. They decided to hold a bowl game in the spring for the benefit of the three sisters. They decided that they will commemorate the first bowl game between the Skyholder and his mother. The men will play against the women. The men won the first game.

## The Origin of the Clans

They planted and held a dance when the plants sprouted. They held another dance when the harvest came. But tragedy also struck. People began to die. So, many died that few were left to perform the ceremonies. The elders held a council and said that the deaths had caused a sadness that threw the world in crisis. The elders asked for ideas about how to stop the deaths. A young man suggested that it was time to form clans.

The clans could then deal with the deaths. The clans would be divided into two sisterhoods and when there was a death on one side, the other side (with clear minds) could conduct the burial rituals so that the good words would cheer people up, and the darkness would be lifted from their minds. The elders, after a long discussion, adopted the idea. But the elders could not figure out how to make it happen, so they turned that responsibility over to the young man who had suggested the clans.

He assembled the people and asked the eldest women of each clan family to lead the clan. They went to a river and he pulled down a grape vine from a tall tree and threw it across the river. The next morning, each of the head women went to that spot to dip for water. One by one they crossed the river on that vine. But the sun suddenly set and the vine broke and floated away. Now there were two camps of people, one on each side of the river.

The next morning he went and asked them what they had seen. The first woman had seen a deer; the next saw a bear; then a snipe; and then an eel. The young man and the ancient ones then departed and he cast another grape vine across the river and the people followed him. At the first camp, he asked the eldest woman what she had seen. Wolf. The next woman saw a beaver; then turtle; then bear cub. But this made two bear clans and he said that it might need to be changed in the future.

He told them to sit on council with each of their two cousin clans on opposite sides of the fire. The first business of the councils would be to decide on the two bear clans. They decided that the ancient bear clan should join with the bear cub clan. They said that there was one family he did not visit. So he went and asked the head woman what she had seen. It was a hawk.

The young man then told the people that the women are the leaders of the clan. They must give names to all of their clan members. They referred to this young man as Ho'nigo(n)heowa'ne(n), meaning His Mind Is Great. The Elders honored him by giving a thanksgiving and singing the Personal Chant. The people held their arms upward and shouted three times. They crossed back over the river. From that day forward, there would always be people on opposite sides of the river.