

GODDARD PLINY EARLE

MYTHS AND TALES FROM
THE WHITE MOUNTAIN
APACHE

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White Mountain Apache

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*Myths and Tales from the White Mountain Apache / Anthropological Papers
of the American Museum of Natural History Vol. XXIV, Part II:*

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History Vol. XXIV, Part II**

Introduction

These myths and tales are the free translations of texts recorded in the dialect of the White Mountain Apache. The texts themselves with word for word translations follow as Part IV of the volume. They were recorded, with one exception, during the winter of 1910 as a part of the studies made in the Southwest under the yearly grant of Mr. Archer M. Huntington. The creation myth, secured from Noze, differs in important incidents from the versions given above from the San Carlos as well as from versions secured from other White Mountain

Apache. It should not be assumed that these differences are tribal, it is more probable that they are individual, since forms from the San Carlos and Navajo are closely similar to each other.

The greater number of the remaining narratives were secured from the father of Frank Crockett, the interpreter employed. Several of these are ceremonial and religious in their character and probably would not have been given except for the son's influence. Two of these were later secured from San Carlos informants in more extended form but highly corroborative in their general agreement.

The main purpose in recording these narratives was to secure sufficient and varied connected texts in the dialect of the White Mountain Apache. As a collection of mythology and folklore it is probably far from complete. It is assumed, however, to be fairly representative.

Pliny Earle Goddard.

January, 1919.

Creation Myth.¹

There were many houses there. A maiden went from the settlement to the top of a high mountain² and came where the rays of the rising Sun first strike. She raised her skirt and the “breath” of the Sun entered her. She went up the mountain four mornings, and four times the breath of the Sun penetrated her. This girl who had never been married became pregnant and the people were making remarks about it.

She went up the mountain on four successive days and four days after that, eight days altogether, she gave birth to a child. Four days later, the child stood on its feet. His fingers and toes were webbed and he had neither eyebrows nor eyelashes and the hairs on his head were scattered, one in a place. His ears were round with only the openings. Everyone said he did not look like a man. After four more days he walked well and played with the other children.

His mother went again to the east and lay down under a place where water was dripping. The water fell into her as it dripped

¹ Told by a White Mountain Apache called Noze, at Rice, Arizona, in January, 1910. Noze was a native of Cedar Creek and came to the San Carlos Reservation when it was organized. He was for a long time the chief of a considerable band which in 1910 had greatly dwindled. He died some time between 1910 and the next visit in 1914.

² This mountain was said to be called *tsidalanasi* and to stand by the ocean at the south. This is a remarkable statement as east would have been expected and as is so stated in fact in a following paragraph.

from the hanging algæ. She did this four times and became pregnant. After four days they all saw that her abdomen was enlarged and when she had been in that condition four days, eight days in all, she gave birth to another child.³ When it was four days old it stood up and was able to walk well. Its appearance was like that of the first child. It had webbed hands and feet and was without hair. It had round ears with holes only. The children walked about together, the head of one being higher than that of the other.

The people were asking, “Whose children are these going about?” They wanted to know who would make them like human beings. “Who are the kin of the woman whose children are going about among us?” The mother had a sister who wondered why the people were saying these things, for the boys had a father who lived a long way off.

The boys were eight days old and big enough to run about and were becoming intelligent. They asked their mother where their father was living. “Why do you ask?” she said. “You cannot go to him.” “Why do you say that? Why do you hide our father from us?” the boys asked. “Well, do you really want to go where your father lives?” she asked them. “Why do you suppose we are asking?” the boys replied. “We will go where our father lives.” Their mother told them that they were talking foolishly, that the distance was great, and that they would not be able to go. The

³ This makes the boys brothers in our use of the word. They are always so called in the Navajo account according to which their mothers were sisters. Matthews, 105.

boys insisted but were again discouraged by their mother. They finally said that it must be they had no father if they could not go to him. The mother then consented and said they three would go to the top of a great mountain. She cut a supply of meat and after four days, when it was near dawn, they started. They came to the top of the mountain when it was day and stood there facing the Sun. The woman stood between the boys holding them by the hand. When the sun was rising she said: "Look, your father is rising. Observe well. His breath streams out from four sides. Go towards the streaming out of his breath. There are dangerous things living in the east. What have you to go with?" She had a brown fly and she gave it to the boys, that it might sit by their ears. The fly was to show them the way and tell them where the dangerous ones lived.

She told them they were to start at midday. They remained there until the sun reached the sky hole.⁴ They then went four times around the trees on top of the mountain. The woman started home and the boys set out on their journey.

The boys went toward the east but the Sun was going in the opposite direction.⁵ The boys sat down and cried. A Raven, spreading out his wings, alighted nearby and asked the boys why they were crying. The boys replied that their father lived over there and that they were going to visit him. The Raven asked if they were carrying anything in the way of food with them. They

⁴ At the center of the sky.

⁵ And therefore the boys were not seen by the Sun.

replied that they had some meat. The Raven said they might ride on his back if they would give him some of the meat. The fly told them it would be all right to ride on the Raven, that the Raven could see half the way and that there someone was living who knew the remainder of the way. They were told by the Raven to break up the meat and put the pieces in his mouth, that two of the parcels would sustain him until he finished the journey as far as he knew the way. They were directed to get on the Raven's back. The Raven began by flying near the ground, then went higher and higher, circling around. A hot rain fell but the Raven covered them with his wings. They kept putting the meat into the Raven's mouth. When they had fed the Raven two pieces of the meat they passed through a cloud where the large Eagle lived. The Raven told them that that one (the Eagle) would now take them, that he knew all the places because he saw everything upon the earth; that he himself would go back.

The Eagle asked them where they were going, saying that he lived in a dangerous place. The boys indicated the direction they were going, saying they had been told their father lived there. Eagle said it was true their father lived at that place and asked if they had heard about his house. The boys replied that their mother had told them that the Sun was their father and that he lived over there. Because she had told them this they were on their way to see him. Eagle asked them by what means they intended to go, saying even he was in danger from the Sun. The fly staying by the ear of one of the boys flew away and soon

returned with the statement that the dangerous places did exist and that Eagle, with whom they were sitting, was the one who knew and was in control of these dangerous places. Before the house of the Sun was ice, interlocked like fallen timber. Eagle addressed the boys, asking if they had with them anything from the earth, meaning meat. They replied that they had and each of the boys took some from his pocket. Eagle asked for some of it, which when it was given him he ate.

Eagle then said they would set out, for he knew the trail. He requested them to put meat in his mouth as he flew with them, indicating the amount which would be sufficient, for the trail. When they were seated on the Eagle he started down with them, circling around as he flew. A storm of hail fell on them, the hailstones being large with thirty-two points.⁶ The eagle protected the boys by covering them with his wings which were rolled back over them. When they had passed through the storm Eagle asked that meat be put in his mouth. When he had been fed he flew away with the boys and went through a hole which was there for him. When he came to the trail he alighted and pointing out the path told them that it led to the house of the Sun.⁷ He said that he himself would now turn back home.

The boys went forward until they crossed a shallow valley

⁶ The sacred numbers are 4, 12, and 32.

⁷ This method of making the journey has not been encountered before in this connection, but is an incident in a European story secured from the San Carlos, p. 82, above. The usual account includes a series of obstacles some of which resemble the incidents of a European story. See p. [116](#) below.

beyond which was the house, which had projections running out in four directions. When they walked with their eyes closed the house went out of sight, but when they opened their eyes the house settled down again. It did this four times and then it stood firmly. The two boys walked on and coming to the house, stood in front of the entrance. An old woman who was the wife of the Sun sat there.

She advised them to go on wherever they were intending to go, since a person of mean disposition was soon to arrive. The woman who spoke to them was really handsome but she sat there in the form of an old woman. The boys replied that they had been told that their father lived there, and that they had started to come that morning. The woman replied that she did not know who their father was. The boys said that the Sun was their father and they had come to visit him. The woman then asked who had told them that the Sun was their father. They said their mother had told them so. The woman told them that their father would soon return and asked them to be seated on a chair she indicated. When they were seated, the chair kept whirling around with them. When the chair would lift up the woman would make it come down again. When the woman saw the chair come down again she announced herself as nearly convinced they had spoken the truth.

Saying that the Sun was now coming close, she took four silk blankets⁸ of different colors which had been sewed together

⁸ Clouds according to the Navajo account, Matthews, 111; and below, p. [117](#).

projecting in four directions and rolled the boys up in them. She put them into an inside room. They heard the Sun come back and heard him speak. "Old woman, where are the two men who came here?" he asked. The woman replied: "I have not seen anyone. No one has been here." "You say there is no one. They must have come, for here are their tracks," the Sun replied. "You must have been cohabiting with someone else. You say you travel over this broad earth and that you do not visit anyone. You must have been deceiving me about it for two men came in from that trail saying they are your children," his wife said. The Sun asked that they be brought in, and the woman opened the door, brought in the roll of blankets, and threw it down. The Sun shook the blankets and two men stood up. The Sun spoke: "Hesh, do you consider these to be my children? They do not look like me." He stood by them and repeated his question, calling attention to their webbed hands and feet and their round ears. "Are you really my children?" he asked them. "Who is called the Sun, I wonder?" the youngest of the boys said, and water fell from his eyes. "Well, maybe you are my children. Sit here and wait," the Sun said. Their fly looked around and reported that the man was their father. After examining the room everywhere, the inner corners, the windows, and door, the fly told them that ordeals were being prepared for them. He said that soon a blazing sky would be arranged, into which they would be thrown. The fly looked around for downy feathers which he gave the boys.

When the Sun had finished eating he asked that those who

said they were the Sun's children should be brought in. He threw them into the place of danger. He pushed them in with lightning which had sharp spines. They turned into downy feathers and stood in front of him again. "It is true," the Sun said. He threw them in four times, pushing them down. Each time they turned into feathers and came back in front of the Sun as before. The Sun then said he was convinced that they were his children. His wife said: "They told you they were your children, but you have treated them badly." The Sun replied: "They certainly are my children but I did not believe it before." The Sun asked his wife to prepare a sweatlodge as soon as they had eaten.

She made a sweatlodge covered with a blue blanket on one side, a black one on another side, a white one on another side, and a yellow one on another side. His wife had the stones heated red hot, like red hot iron. They three went right in, but the Sun only came out again. When the bath had been heated the fourth time the boys were as if they had been boiled. He pushed back the skin which was between their fingers and toes. He fixed for them their lower leg muscles, their knees, their thighs, their biceps, their elbows, and their lower arms. He made the hair of their heads come to their hips, twisting it off at that length. He made their ears, their eyelashes, and their eyebrows, their noses, their mouths, and their faces. He fixed every part of their bodies as it should be. The Sun went out of the bath with the boys and sat with them on the seat where his wife usually sat. They were just

like men.⁹ When the wife of the Sun came and stood in front of them she looked at them closely, but could not distinguish one from the other. “Move, husband,” she said. The one sitting in the middle moved himself. “You told me you had not been with any woman but you fooled me. These are your children. You must have a wife. Go home with them,” the woman said.

The Sun spoke to his wife, saying that these were his children but that if he went away with them to the earth she would be lonesome. Only today there was a good sunset. “Just now when you said 'no' your eye winked,” he said to her. “I am jealous of what is far away,” she said. The Sun said he would not go, but would talk to his children.

“My boys, shall I give you names?” “Yes, it is not well to be without names,” they replied. Then the Sun said he would name them. He told the older his name would be Naiyenezgani and that he must behave well.¹⁰ He told the other one that he would be named Tobatc'istcini. “When you are upon the earth you will be called so and you will tell them that your father named you that. You shall say, 'He made my name Naiyenezgani.' But you, 'Tobatc'istcini he made my name,' you must tell them.”

⁹ Thus far the myth seems chiefly to deal with the adolescence ceremony of the boys. The San Carlos account brings in the Sun's father and brothers of the Sun's father as performers of this ceremony, while the Navajo account mentions the daughters of the Sun. See p. 11 above, and Matthews, 112.

¹⁰ Other versions make this the second naming of the elder brother. His boyhood name was “Whitehead,” p. 31. Still other names are known to the Navajo. Matthews, 263-264.

The Sun then asked them for what they had come. They told him they had come for his horse, his saddle, his bridle, his halter, his rope, and his saddle blanket. The Sun asked who had told them he had such property. The older one replied that their mother had told them what property he had and had told them that she would be happy if they brought it back to the earth. She said that he (the Sun) would also be happy. The Sun replied that he had no property, no horse, saddle, bridle, halter, rope, or saddle blanket. The fly had told them that the Sun had these, but he looked around again and reported that the Sun had them close by.

“Let us go over there,” one of them proposed. They went to a fenced enclosure and entered through a gate. The yard was so full of black bears that the mass of their moving backs occupied the entire space. “Which of those are my horses?” the Sun asked. “They are fearful animals,” the boys replied. “These are my horses,” the Sun insisted and mounted one of them and rode around on it. The fly informed the boys that they were being deceived. The Sun proposed that they should go in another direction to another enclosure. Inside this yard were white-tail deer, mule deer, elk, and mountain-sheep. The Sun announced that these were his horses and told the boys to choose any one they liked and catch it. “Which is the largest?” he asked them. “These are not horses,” the boys replied, “they are named deer. We asked you for horses.” The Sun insisted they were his horses and that he rode them great distances. “Well, you have outwitted

me. I thought I would succeed in outwitting you, but you have won.” The younger brother asked the Sun what he was concealing from them, saying he could find them. The Sun asked them not to say that and proposed that they look in another place where he had a few horses confined. They went to the place indicated and found the place filled with antelope, sheep, goats, and pigs. “Catch any one of these you want,” the Sun said. “You tend to them here alone,” the boys replied and walked out leaving the Sun who followed behind.

They went to the house and ate a meal. Their fly told them that the Sun's horses were in the enclosure that had four doors. When they had finished eating they went to this enclosure which was a house with a roof having holes in it. It had spikes like irons, sticking up from it. It was closed and completely dark. “There are horses in there,” the fly told them. The Sun said, “I told you it was useless.” One of the boys asked that they might look in. There was a door there which he opened. A little beyond it was another door, a little beyond another, and a little beyond that another, and still beyond that another. They now came to horses in the enclosure but could not enter. By standing on something they could see through a hole in the roof. They could not get in between the horses until they were caused to separate and to open up a passage. The Sun then told them to catch the horse that they thought was his. The fly sitting by one of their ears told them they were to catch the horse with a rope which they should induce the Sun to give them. When the Sun again urged them

to catch the horse without delay, they asked whether they should lead the horse by the mane or carry him out in their hands. The Sun, with spotted ropes in his hand, went right through the door which he opened. He gave one of the ropes to each of the boys, telling them to catch the horses which were his. The animals were milling around in the enclosure. In the center was one which was not moving, a sorrel with a small white spot on its forehead. Its mane reached the ground. When it raised its head one of the boys started toward it, the horses separating. He threw the rope and caught the horse which he led back. The Sun then told the other boy to catch a horse, wanting to know who had told him which horse to catch. There was a stallion running around the outside of the herd. Its mane reached the ground; he was acting wild but the fly told them that although he acted as if he were mean he was really gentle. He directed them to take both these horses from the Sun. When the other boy started with his rope toward the stallion he was running around the outside of the herd and coming toward the boy. When he came close and saw the boy he stopped and then wheeled back. The boy lassoed it and immediately the horse trotted up to him, nosing his arm. He led the stallion up beside the sorrel horse which was a mare. The Sun said: "There they are, ride them, take them with you to the earth."

The boys then asked for the horse trappings for which they had also come. The Sun said he did not know what they meant by horse trappings. The younger boy said, "Well, if you do not know what horse trappings are, do not again put them on these horses

in the corral.” The Sun asked who it was who had made them as smart as he was himself. They replied that he, the Sun, had made them smart and had made them speak wisely. They then asked by name for bridle, halter, saddle blanket, and saddle.¹¹ Turning his back to the boys he walked away and opened a door, bidding the boys enter. They went in and saw saddles lying there with bridles hanging on the saddle horns. The blankets were lying beneath. Before they went in the fly flew in and selected two out of all the saddles. One was lying at the east and the other at the west. The first was blue and the other yellow. The fly had returned to one of their ears by the time the Sun said: “There are those saddles, take the ones you want.” The fly told the boys that the saddles which looked good really were not, but that they should choose the blue and yellow ones, indicating them, and the blankets, halters, bridles, and ropes of similar colors lying by them. These were the Sun's own particular set of trappings. When the Sun urged them to hurry up each boy stepped toward the saddle he had chosen. When they did so the saddles moved of themselves with the blankets and bridles. There was a sound “gij” of the moving leather and “tsil” as they came to rest.

The Sun turned his face away and took a black silk handkerchief which had two white stripes around the border from his pocket. With this he wiped his eyes. “I raised you for just this purpose,” he said. The Sun started to walk toward the

¹¹ To know by name things or animals hitherto unknown is often mentioned as a great feat. P. 24.

horses. Their fly had told them not to touch the saddles, that the Sun himself would fix them. "They belong to you," the fly said. "Everything is alive; the rope on the horse moves about of itself. The saddle will jump on of itself."¹² The fly told them this. The halter was gone, the bridle and saddle blanket which had been lying on the saddle were gone. The halter, bridle, and saddle blanket that had been with the blue saddle were also gone. The Sun called them to come where he was standing. They both went out again and the doors of the saddle room and of the stable were shut.

They went to the Sun, who was standing between the two horses so that their heads projected as he held the bridles. They started away, the boys walking in front of the Sun as he directed them to do. They passed through the four doors to a post standing in front of the Sun's house. He led the horses to the post where they stood without being tied.¹³ There were four chairs standing inside the Sun's house; and one by itself for the woman.¹⁴ His children sat on the chairs and his wife sat on the one which was

¹² It is seldom that the Apache conception of animism is so plainly stated. Songs however abound in the designation of objects as "living."

¹³ When a youth went through an adolescence ceremony he did it with a definite career in mind. The normal myth of this type put the emphasis on the weapons secured and feats of warlike prowess in killing the monsters; that is, the warrior idea is uppermost. This version stresses the acquisition of horses and probably is a specialized myth for those who wish to be successful in acquiring and breeding horses.

¹⁴ The house of the Sun with the stable and corral, the furniture of the house, and many other references indicate the home of a European and such seems to be the conception.

hers. The Sun addressed them as follows: —

“My boys, I will instruct you about the dangerous places you will come to. The horses know the dangerous places on the way back. My wife is pleased with you and treats you well. That is why you are to have these horses, one of which is hers. The other is mine and so is the saddle, bridle, halter, and saddle blanket. They are all mine. You will go back to your kindred. When you are near, hurry. I will give you something.”

The Sun got up and reached inside to a shelf from which he took up an iron knife like a sword. Turning around he took up a bow and arrows having iron heads. There were two of the arrows. “I give these to you,” he said. “You are giving us these! Our mother did not know about them. Why does she not give us something?” the boys said. The Sun's wife said she would speak a few words to them. “You shall be my nephews. Your mother shall be my sister. She shall be like me. Because of this I have treated you well. She shall be the same as I. I become an old woman and at other times I am as if I were two years old. She shall be the same way.¹⁵ You shall tell her this before the Sun travels far. I am the one telling you; he did not tell you. I will name my sister. Your father will give you names.” The Sun picked something up and was still holding it. “Wait, I will tell you something and after that

¹⁵ The two wives of the Sun are often mentioned. The Navajo account has Estdzanadlehi go to the west where the sun visits her daily. Here and there, especially in the songs, the Moon is coupled with the Sun, and is feminine in sex. That the Moon and the Earth should both be called the “Woman who renews herself” is interesting. These conceptions are generally vague and implied rather than expressed.

he will give you a name. I name her Nigostsanbikayo.¹⁶ Every one will call her that. She will come to me. You, too, will come to me. I give a name to your mother. She will be called Ests'unnadlehi and she will help you. I make a name for her, Ests'unnadlehi, and with that she will help you. When she has children again they will be two girls. These girls will belong to the people for there will be people.¹⁷ She will help them. I, too, will help them when they come to me. He, too, will help his children. That is why I am telling you and you must remember it well. I have finished. Your father will tell you about the objects he is about to give you.”

The Sun gave the elder boy a weapon saying, “This will be called a 'blue sword.' You will use it against the monsters on the earth. Because of that I gave you the name, Naiyenezgani.” He gave the weapon to him saying, “That is all for you.” Addressing the younger, he said, “Now I give this to you, Tobatc'istcini. You will use this which I give you against those who prey upon people. You are to help each other. I shall be near you watching you. Whatever you do will be known to me. It will be well if you kill these evil ones. The people will live everywhere.” He gave him the bow with the injunction that he should draw the bow three times without releasing the arrow and then he should shoot the dangerous beings and they would fly apart. Having said this,

¹⁶ Earth, literally “There on the earth.”

¹⁷ The narrator said those mentioned at the beginning of the narrative were not real people but just like shadows. The other versions have only the one family existing at this time.

he proposed they should eat something. The Sun's wife was still sitting in her accustomed seat. The men went to the table, well loaded with food prepared by some unknown agency, and began to eat. The Sun's wife gave the elder one a spotted belt with a yellow fringe hanging from its border.

When they had finished the meal, the Sun said he did not know how the visitors were to return. They went where the horses stood and the Sun said, "Children, this stallion will go well in the lead. Now mount the horses." He held the stirrup and saddle horn and told the boys to get on. They did so and rode away from the Sun's house where towards the east a post stands up with white hair¹⁸ which reaches to the ground and turns up again. The rain falls on it. They rode their horses around this post four times and came back where they were standing before, as the Sun directed them to do.

When they had finished, the Sun's wife came up to them and told her husband to count for his sons the two saddle blankets, two halters, two bridles, two ropes, and two saddles. The Sun told them to start home; that he was well acquainted with them. He charged them to take good care of the saddle blankets and directed that the gray horse should go in the lead because he knew the trail to the place midway between the earth and the sky. From that point the sorrel horse was to lead because that one knew the way from there on. When they returned where their mother lived he told them to stake the horses out for four nights. The sorrel

¹⁸ The reference may be to moss, especially as rain falling on it is mentioned below.

was to be staked toward the east and the gray to the west. Having ridden the horses among the people they were to unsaddle them in some good place. A white saddle blanket was to be placed toward the east, a black one to the south, a yellow one to the west, and a blue one to the north.¹⁹ The bridles, halters, ropes, and saddles were to be brought to the camp. He charged them to keep in mind what he was telling, for he was telling them this that they might be good men. He divided his property between his boys. He told them after the horses had been running loose four days to go to them early in the morning. This might be in any good place where canyons meet, making a flat. When they came to them they were to hold out their hands, palms upward, towards the horses. They were to catch the horses while they were licking their hands. They were to consider what he told them and when they should go for the horses after four days, the four canyons coming together would be full of horses. When their horses had been caught by holding out their hands, the saddle blankets, one on the other, were to be put on them and the horses were to be saddled. They were to ride the horses all day until sunset when they were to be turned out again. Having turned them out, they were told they might go the next day to see what was happening. Having finished his speech he dismissed the boys.

They went with the Sun until they came to the top of the ridge,

¹⁹ The narrator said it was true that horses would not pass a blanket so placed in a narrow canyon. This order of the colors and their assignment varies from the one more generally found of black for the east and white for the south. P. 7, and Matthews, 215.

where they stopped. The Sun felt the horses all over. He felt of their legs, their feet, their faces, their ears, their manes, their backs, petting them. "Goodbye, my horses," he said, "travel well for my boys down to the earth. There is food for you on the earth the same as here." He addressed the gray horse, telling him to be the leader on the way toward the earth since he knew the way. He told the boys not to look at the horses' feet nor to look behind them, but to keep their eyes fixed on the tips of their ears.

They started; before they knew it the horses had changed places, and the sorrel was leading. They thought the earth was far off but they soon found the horses were trotting along on the earth. Now the horses were running with them toward their camp. They rode up slowly where the people were walking about. They rode to the camp side by side, and the people all ran out to look at them. Their mother was standing outside watching them and they rode up one on each side of her. "Mother, Ests'unnadlehi, unsaddle our horses," they said to her.

The people all came up to them. The woman, laughing, ran her hand over the horses saying, "Your father gave you large horses." When the people had all come there, the boys told them to call their mother Ests'unnadlehi. They all called her by that name. The older boy said they were to call him Naiyenezgani. The younger one said they were to call him Tobatc'istcini.²⁰ They addressed them saying, "When we were here before you used to

²⁰ This announcing of names is probably to be explained as ceremonial. Ordinarily, it is improper, probably because immodest to call one's own name.

laugh at us because we were poor. We used to walk because we were poor. We have visited our father where he lives. The Sun's wife named our mother. Call me Naiyenezgani. That one was given the name, Tobatc'istcini. These will be our names and be careful to call them correctly. Do not come near these horses. We will stake one out here and the other one there. They will remain tied out four days. You may go.”

Before sundown on the fourth day the horses whinnied. They went to their horses and saddled them. They rode around among the camps until sundown and then rode them to a flat where four canyons came together. They hung a white saddle blanket toward the east, a black one to the south, a yellow one to the west, and a blue one to the north. Their fly told them to hang the blankets in four places, making an enclosure of them. After four days they were to come and would find conditions different. He charged the boys not to miss doing just as their father had told them. They went back to the camp carrying the saddles, bridles, halters, and ropes. After two days had passed their fly flew away. He returned, reporting that there were many horses filling the place where the four canyons came together. The next day he reported that the horses were so thick one could walk on their backs. The next day (the fourth), about sunrise, the two boys went there with their ropes in their hands. When they came to the eastern canyon it was full of white horses, the southern one was full of black horses, the western was full of yellow horses, and the northern canyon with blue (gray) horses.

They took down all the saddle blankets and piled them together. With valleys in four directions full of horses they did not know their former horses from the others. They considered how they might distinguish them. The horses were milling around near where a blanket hung. They were all mingled together with the colors mixed. The men approached the horses but they stopped before they got to them. They extended their hands with pollen on the palms and the horses whinnied. Then two horses trotted up to them and licked the pollen from the hands of their owners who caught them while they did it.²¹

²¹ The use of pollen for sacred purposes is a very important feature among the Athapascan of the Southwest. It is always preferred to the cornmeal used by the Pueblo peoples.

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