

Navajo / Diné Creation Legend

The First World: According to the Navajo creation story, the first world was small and pitch black. There were four seas and in the middle an island with a single pine tree existed. Ants, dragonflies, locusts, beetles & other insects lived there and made up the Air-Spirit People of the first world...When the blue and yellow clouds came together, the First Woman was created, while the black and white clouds came together to form the First Man.

The First Woman saw the light of the First Man's fire and tried to reach him three times before she finally found his home. He asked her to live with him and the First Woman agreed. The Great Coyote was formed in water and came to the First Man and First woman, telling them he was hatched from an egg and knew all the secrets of the water and the skies. Shortly after, second coyote appeared named First Angry, who brought witchcraft into the world.

The next part of the Navajo creation story involves the First Man, First Women, First Angry and the coyote born in the water climbing into the second world, followed by all other creatures.

The Second World: When they got to the second world, they found other beings living there, including various types of birds. A swallow welcomed them and they lived in harmony together for 23 days until one of the Air-Spirit People insulted the swallow chief's wife. The swallow chief found out and banished the newcomers who left for to the third world.

The Third World: In this Navajo legend, the third world is called the Yellow World and was home to six mountains, where the holy people already lived. These holy people were immortal and traveled by following rainbows. There was the Talking God, Black God, Water Sprinkler and House God. First Woman soon gave birth to many different twins, who were taught by the holy ones, especially how to pray with masks, and many other things. Later they returned to their parents. Over the next eight winters, the twins found mates and brought many people into being.

The Fourth World: The people came into the fourth world before the sun and moon were created. They were on an island with high cliffs in the middle of a bubbling lake. With help from the Wind God, people were able to leave the island. First Man and First Woman built the first Hogan to live in.

Questions to Consider:

What was the First World like?

Describe it:

Who or what else do First Man and First Woman find in the First World?

Are the animal people in the story like regular people? Explain:

What do you think all the traveling in this story might tell us about the Navajo?

What might the masks represent in the story?

What hint tells you that this story is a Navajo creation story?

