

124. A Hiko:l'ath Sees Thunderbird and the Aurora Women
(William)

He thought it over and said to her that he should go for a walk for a while.

"Say," he said to his wife, "Make me some lunch, I'm going for a walk. I'll set out in the morning before the people wake up."

His wife bundled up his lunch putting four strips of dried blubber inside. He set out walking. He started to bathe, bathing all day, rubbing himself ritually. Just four bites of food would he take so he wouldn't run out of lunch because he knew he would be gone a long time and that he would be walking all over the place bathing at night. He scrubbed himself ritually, then at daybreak made his fire and ate again. For four days he would bathe. Bathing and rubbing during the day, he would go right past the evening and start making his fire when dawn came. He would want to warm up by the fire and start eating. He wanted to put in four days and nights bathing; he wanted to stop smelling bad.² On the fourth day he stopped bathing ritually. He went to sleep. He was very sleepy because he never slept for four days.

Something grabbed him from the back, right here at the shoulder joint on the right side.

"Wake up! Hurry! Why do you sleep? Don't you want to see me?" it said to him.

He opened his eyes, woke up in a hurry! Whoever it was was nowhere there. He sat up. His mind started working. He became aware that he had seen something while half asleep and half awake.³ He started bathing again. Then he stopped bathing, stopping just about midday. He set out walking again. Now he heard something squealing but didn't know where it was coming from. Looking for it he stopped and sat down on a rock. He wanted to see it but could not find it. He stood up and started looking again. He didn't see anything. He looked up and spotted it way off yonder - there in the sky he saw something twirling and twisting coming down. It came closer to where he was standing on the rocks, watching as it approached, and when it landed the man went over. There it was not far off, a large feather. He took it. The man passed out from grabbing the feather. It spoke:

"You will see something," said the feather to him.

He was dreaming. It said to him that he would see something. He woke up, came back to life. All right he still had ahold of the feather; he did not let it go, did not hide it. After one

day there was thunder. The feather that he found must have belonged to a Thunderbird. He sat down and listened to the thundering sound coming from afar, gradually coming nearer. It came into view. It started to hail hard, hailing on the tree tops. The man was afraid to look. Then he saw there on the rocks a fire. And also on the rocks was what had to be a Lightning Snake which must have been the coiled thing that dropped away from the Thunderbird. the hail got really strong now. Then the man saw there, flown onto the rocks, a bird. The man keeled over, his limbs all going dead. He was conscious but could not get near it. He could only use his eyes to watch. He saw clearly what the bird looked like, how it was dressed. He saw how the Lightning Snake looked. He really observed it well, what its appearance was. Then he could not see the bird anymore as it had lifted off. The man revived, his limbs coming back to life. For four days he stayed there on the rocks where he saw the supernatural thing.

He set out walking the wrong way, not going home for a while. He was afraid because he had seen the supernatural thing. Then he saw people, ten of them. The man stopped where he saw something, saw some people. That evening he was still there. Then he saw when evening came that there was a fire. There were ten beings there. The fire flared up really high! It was as if it had become daylight the way the fire flared up. It must have been what is called the N'a:n'a:st'o:.⁴ The man remained on the rocks as he watched this unusual thing which made it seem like daylight. Then he saw that there were women there. The ten he saw must have been women, those people he saw. There they were, pouring something on the fire. These must have been the Ts'i:tlts'i:ya'otltaqiml.⁵ The weather got nice. He finished getting an year's worth of experience.⁶ Now he was powered by two supernatural things. He started walking towards his home. When he arrived, he went in.

"Come here," he said to his younger brother.

he started discussing things, telling his younger brother of what he saw, that he had seen a great big bird. He told him he knew what it was and that he also saw what's called N'a:n'a:st'o:, that he saw those two things.

"We will make this our family topa:ti right," he said.

He said so because the bird had said to him that he gave him lots of names. He knew how many names he had received from it. And it was what he started painting on a board, a wide board. He had two figures on it. He put on the bird just as he had seen it. Then he put on the Lightning Snake, also exactly as he had seen, and a feather of the kind he saw. He painted the feather just as it had been, red on top with black at its main stem. That's how the painting was. He placed it there at the head of

the house, set up on edge on the floor. It now became his *topa:ti* right. It got to be his story, his legend. Now he had it put away for future use. He kept it for the time his girl reached the age of puberty when he would give a puberty rite ceremonial.

At that time he told his fellow villagers how it happened that he got a Thunderbird. He finished telling them, he finished telling them about that. It was now evening. Then he began showing what he saw, that he had seen another thing, the *N'a:n'a:st'o:* or Northern Lights. He started showing those that evening. All this he was doing at his house. His fellow villagers were watching, amazed. No one knew what he was doing because they had never seen anything like that before. He was doing this for the full traditional period of four days because he had been told in his supernatural experience that it was a full four day ceremony when showing it. When he finished he started telling of how he got these things. He told everything. Then he named his girl *Ts'i:tlts'i:ya?otl* or *Ts'e:tl?is* for short, *N'a:n'a:swi?is*,⁷ *N'a:n'a:sat'aqs*⁸ and *N'a:n'a:y'alok*.⁹ He got the names from the bears.¹⁰ His name now was *Hih:qto?a*,¹¹ his name became *Yaya:tspiy'a*,¹² his name became *Hihiwito?a*,¹³ his name became *Hihwahso?a*,¹⁴ His name became *Mi:xtachi:k*.¹⁵ Thus many names he got. That's how I got to come into possession of the Thunderbird right.