
Contes et légendes – Short Stories

Gluskonba Makes the People Abenaki Legend

Gluskonba or Glooscap is the Indian culture hero who teaches to the Abenaki the arts of civilization

After Gluskonba had traveled around for some time, he began to notice that something was still missing from the world. He wanted to hear the voices of people. "It is time", he said, "to make human beings."

So he gathered together some red earth and began to shape it. He formed it just as he had formed himself out of the dust, which fell from the hands of Tabaldak (the Creator or the Owner). First he made a head, which was pointing towards the north. To this day, the Indian people always sleep with their heads to the north. Then he shaped two arms, one towards the east and one towards the west. Towards the south he made two legs. Last of all, he shaped the body and connected all of the parts of the first human together. Finally, he breathed upon his creation and the first person became alive and sat up. That person, though, was alone and lonely, even though Gluskonba tried to amuse this new person and keep this first human being company. So Gluskonba had to make another human being. Then, now that there were two people in the world, a woman and a man, they were no longer lonely.



This is one story of how the human beings were made by Gluskonba, but there is another story, too. This story tells how Gluskonba made the first people out of stone. Because they were made of stone, they were very strong. They did not need to eat and then never grew tired or slept. Their hearts, too, were made of stone. They began to do cruel things. They killed animals for amusement and pulled trees up by their roots. When Gluskonba saw this, he knew he had made a mistake. So he changed them back into stone. To this day, there are certain mountains and hills which look like a sleeping person. Some old people say those are the first human beings Gluskonba made, whom he turned back into stone.

Then, instead of making more stone people, Gluskonba looked around for something else to make human beings. He saw the ash trees*.

They were tall and slender and they danced gracefully in the wind. Then Gluskonba made the shapes of

men and women in the trunks of the ash trees. He took out his long bow and arrows and shot the arrows into the ashes. Where each arrow went in, a person stepped forth, straight and tall. Those people had hearts which were growing and green. They were the first Abenaki. To this day, those who remember this story call the ash trees their relatives.

***Fraxinus** is a genus of flowering plants in the olive and lilac family, Oleaceae. It contains 45-65 species of usually medium to large trees,

mostly deciduous though a few subtropical species are evergreen. The common English name of the tree, ash, goes back to the Old English *æsc*, while the generic name originated in Latin. Both words also meant "spear" in their respective languages. The leaves are opposite (rarely in whorls of three) and mostly pinnately compound, simple in a few species. The seeds, popularly known as keys or helicopter seeds, are a type of fruit known as a samara. Most *Fraxinus* species are dioecious, having male and female flowers on separate plants.

Sources: native-languages.org/glooskap.htm
and Wikipedia

