

## The Origin of the Hummingbird and Akangau

Hummingbird and Akangau (Fruit Crow). Translated by Tod Swanson from the Kichwa text in Foletti, 1985:119-21.

Our people used to tell that story like this. In the old beginning time there was a house inside the monte. In there Acangau man and a Hummingbird man lived. Acangau man was a big mouthed person, a talkative person. Hummingbird man was a lazy person. He was a person who slept until the sun was high. (That Acangau bird man was an auca (savage) bird, a person of strong voice.) Their house was filled up by three women: Pucsiri woman, Oncolo woman, Jubin woman. Pucsiri woman was a long flute owner, a big woman (jatun). Jubin woman on the other hand was a fat woman. Oncolo woman was a small woman. Oncolo woman was Tula Quingahualiru planting stick owner. She also owned a Nubihualiru stick for planting yuca with. Those women were [garden] medicine owners. The yuca they grew was large, good eating yuca.



When it was still night Acangau man used to get up and go out to his chakra to work carrying his ax to clear trees with. By contrast Hummingbird man used to go out to cut trees in his chakra at noon. Among the three of them the women admired Acangau man. But Hummingbird man they called "Lazy Man" and didn't value him much. They always served drinks (chicha) to Acangau man first and they gave him lots to eat, thick delicious chicha, good food. But they gave watery chicha to hummingbird man. Saying "he's a hard working [man]" they fed Acangau well.

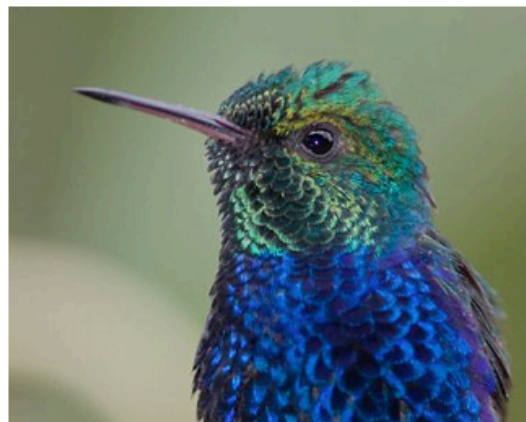
One day [the women] said "Let's go test them to see who can clear a hectare to plant corn" "That Acangau man is a worthy man," they thought. He only came back to the house to sleep. He left at dawn and only came back in from the chakra to sleep." That is why those women now said, "Let's go see what kind of a chakra Acangau man is planting." But when they went out there and looked they found no sign of work done by Acangau at all. When they looked more carefully Acangau man appeared on top of a big mountain hauling a black stone. From the base of the mountain he would haul it to the very top and then roll it down again and then haul it up again to the top. Acangau man had just been playing.

Seeing that he had just been playing a lot those women got scared. "What sort of a man is this. Why fed him like that for no good reason. He just plays a lot for no reason," the said, "There is no work that has been done, there is just a stripped mountain, a great big mountain stripped naked by rolling his boulder down it." They saw it clearly, then having watched from a distance (i.e. without being seen) they went back to cook. "Wait till this afternoon" they said, "We have been giving that Acangau man lots to eat for no good reason, he is not worth much, he is lazy."

In the afternoon the appointed time arrived to keep their contract. Hummingbird man returned to the house first. They showed him good, delicious food and said "Eat this Hummingbird man!" "No sisters, give me watery chicha, I am (I have become) a watery liquid eating man," that is how that man spoke...."Later when [the generations] of children are growing up, they will say about me "he is one who drinks thin liquids like a humming bird"...he said.

As he was saying this, "pis pis" he [flew] out and went away turned into a [humming] bird. He went away mad.

After that they waited for Acangau. Acangau came home in the late afternoon and this is the way they made his food: they mixed [lalu (leaves that make you itch) with red peppers. "You can bathe in this too" they said making his soup. Later they gave it to Acangau because he was someone who played so much. As he ate it he said. This is something that I have to push down with my hands, it will be sweeter if I rub my throat with my hands. So scratching and scratching his throat he said with my hands it will get sweeter. He scratched and scratched until blood started coming out. "I am Acangau man, a man who for no reason plays around by rolling rocks off mountain tops," he said "Why did I deceive them, Why did I act like this?" "Atatau, atatau, tau, tau, tau," he said to those women and flew off to land in a tall tree, high in the mother tree, the tree called Lupuna. After he took off Acangau spoke again "My generations of children who grow up after me will stay like this, they will speak like this."



After that Pucsiri woman, Oncolo woman, Jubin woman, the three of them said to each other " Now lets go to Hummingbird man's chacra!" When they went to see hummingbird's chacra they found that he had cleared all the land between four mountains. From the base of one mountain to the base of the other mountain, between the bases of four mountains it looked clear as the sky. They stood there saying "Now lets plant". "One woman will start from one leg (corner of the chacra). Another woman from another leg. And another from still another leg. That was we will finish quickly," they said. When the sun was going down in that big chacra they were just standing there planting. They called out to each other "Oooo! Oooo! Oooo! Sister are you planting? Oooo! Oooo! Oooo! Yes sister I am planting."

In that great chacra they were not able to finish, among the sisters they did not meet, they disappeared. Crying Oooo! Ooo! Ooo! [two of] those women turned into frogs. They laid down in there and then they disappeared in there in the chacra of hummingbird man. Then Pucsiri woman turned into [the pucsiri] bird. She rose up, but it was no good and when she found that the yuca digging stick was too heavy for her she said this: "The generations of children who grow up after us will tell this story of how we were left this way in beginning times. Oncolo woman and Jubin woman said this: "The generations who grow after us [will say] "They turned into those green creatures who cry Oooh! Ooo! in the ravines"<sup>12</sup> That is the way we were left, turned into the frogs that live at the bases of the mountains.