



## **Ñanderu Sapukai**

Argentinean Fairy Tale of the Mbyá people

*told by Hilario, chief of the nearby community of the kindergarten Kyringue'i Aty Ñeoguanga.*

*Images of the kindergarten*



Once upon a time the world was still in its infancy. Heaven and earth had already taken their present form, and plants and animals also populated the land. Ñanderu, the father of all men and gods, watched the animals and felt sorry for them. For he saw how they fought hard in their daily struggle for survival and how the crushing of food caused them particular difficulties. He pondered for a while how best to help the animals. Finally, he created a heap of teeth. There were a great variety of teeth. There were big and small teeth, pointed and blunt and square and round. They were as different as the animals on earth are different.

Ñanderu Sapukai - he now summoned all the animals to give them their teeth. As the summons sounded, the jaguar was napping not far away in the sun. But as the king of the jungle, he was always alert and had pricked up his ears, so that he jumped up immediately and ran to Ñanderu. He was the first to receive a row of beautiful, large teeth from Ñanderu. Both pointy incisors to tear his prey and blunt molars to grind bones. The next animal to appear was the crocodile. It had been lying completely still in the water, hidden behind a tuft of grass, watching how Ñanderu gave the teeth to the jaguar. When the jaguar disappeared again, the crocodile crawled out in a flash to take a closer look at Ñanderu's new creation. After initial skepticism and an extensive discussion of the



best hunting strategies, the crocodile was convinced of the suitability of several razor-sharp teeth. As now the crocodile and also the jaguar were supplied with teeth and Ñanderu had resounded his call several times, all the other animals arrived one after the other and got their teeth.

Only the armadillo and the anteater didn't show up. They were a good bit downstream, so absorbed in their game between the roots of some huge jungle trees that they hadn't heard Ñanderu's calls. After Ñanderu had given enough teeth to each animal according to its needs, there was one tooth left and Ñanderu made his call one last time. Lo and behold, this time the armadillo heard it too, and came scurrying. But Ñanderu had only one tooth left. He took this tooth and broke it into many small pieces, which he then put into the armadillo's mouth. Since then, the armadillo has only tooth crumbs in its mouth.



**The tale comes from the kindergarten  
Kyringue`i Aty Ñeoguanga, Misiones,  
Argentina.**

*For almost two years, Elisabeth Rybak and Paula Kiefer have been building a kindergarten in Misiones in the rainforest of Argentina, as part of their voluntary service. In the indigenous village of Ñamandu there already is a school for the children of the Mbaya-Guaraní culture. While the state will not fund a kindergarten for the school, the younger children come to school anyway. Therefore, without further ado, the two volunteers founded a kindergarten. After a short time, they received support from other Argentine Waldorf Kindergartens and from Germany.*

After some more time had passed, the anteater was the very last one to approach. Ñanderu was very sorry, but all his teeth were already distributed, so that he had none left to give to the anteater. That is why the armadillo has only very small teeth and the anteater has none at all. Ever since, both have to dig through the earth in search of small animals and larvae that can be caught by the tiny teeth of the armadillo and licked up by the tongue of the anteater.



**Freunde der  
Erziehungskunst  
Rudolf Steiners**

The collection of tales from all over the world is the result of the single-day campaign Waldorf-One-World-Day, short WOW-Day.  
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