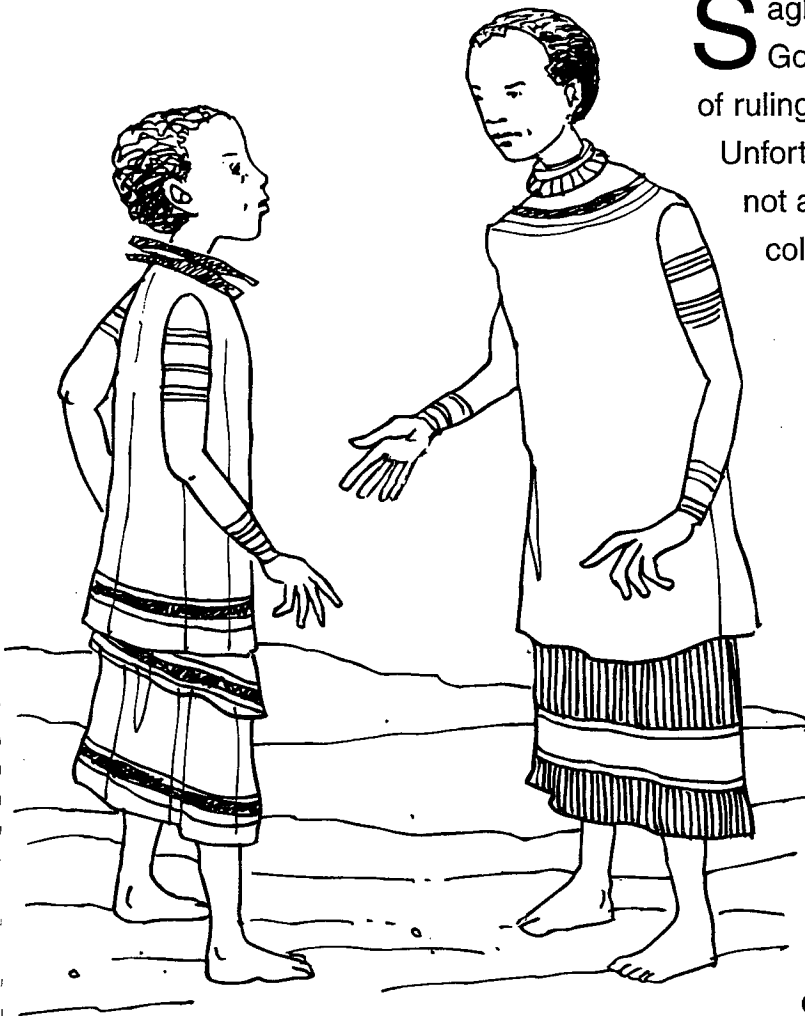


# The Earth and Sky

## An African Myth from Benin



**S**agbata and Sogbo, the sons of the Goddess Mawu, shared the task of ruling the world and the heavens.

Unfortunately, the two brothers could not agree on anything, not even the color of the clouds.

Mawu would not take one side of the argument or the other. "You have to learn to get along," she said.

Sagbata, the older brother, packed up all their treasures. "I can't remain in the sky with you any longer. You won't listen to anything I say. Since I am the older brother, all treasures belong to me. I'm taking them to Earth. I leave water and fire here with you because I have no way to carry them."

"The sooner you go, the better," Sogbo said.

After Sagbata left, Sogbo became the favorite of his mother and the other deities. They allowed him to do whatever pleased him. To get even with his brother, who was caring for the Earth, Sogbo kept the rain in the sky and would not allow any water to fall on the Earth.

The plants didn't grow, and the people and animals were hungry. The people went to Sagbata and complained. "Why should we worship you when the Earth burns and there is no water? Go back to the sky. We lived well before you descended to Earth. You bring us misfortune."

"The rains will come," Sagbata said. Weeks, months, and years passed. It didn't rain.

Sagbata called two sky prophets to him and asked them why it didn't rain. "Your brother is holding back the rain. Until you can live peacefully, the rain will stay in the sky," they told him.

"I can't climb back to the sky to talk to my brother. It's too far. What can I do?"

"Call the wututu bird and ask him to take a message to your brother. If you offer to share the Earth, he might share the rain," the sky prophets said.

The wututu bird answered Sagbata's call. "Take this message to my brother," requested Sagbata. "Tell him that I have been selfish. I will let him rule the Earth with me. He can care for the villages and all the people."

The wututu bird flew back to the land of the sky and delivered the message to Sogbo. "Tell Sagbata that I will agree to help him rule the Earth," replied Sogbo.

The wututu bird flew back to Earth. Before he had returned to Sagbata, it began to rain. Sagbata greeted the bird and said, "I know my brother has accepted my offer. Because you have served the two of us well, I will tell all people on Earth that you are sacred and cannot be harmed."

The two brothers became good friends. The wututu bird carried messages of goodwill from one brother to the other. The grass and plants grew again, and the people weren't hungry anymore.

