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## Tatape Pekkappih Sun Killer (Cottontail and the Sun)

Jon P. Dayley

*Boise State University*

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territory in the 1840s, the Euro-American immigrants stripped the areas around the trail of food and forage and fired wilfully at lone Indians. The Shoshone retaliation included attacks on wagon trains and harrassment of the Mormon colony at Fort Lemhi. The tensions between settlers and Shoshone led eventually to the Battle of Bear River on 29 January 1863, when troops from Fort Douglas, Utah, led by Col. Patrick E. Connor, almost annihilated the 400 or so members of Bear Hunter's Cache Valley band. Shoshone revenge was forestalled by a series of treaties promising \$2,000 to neighboring bands whom Connor's campaign had "reduced . . . to a state of utter destitution." Dissatisfied with their confinement on a reservation, some of the Shoshone joined Chief Buffalo Horn and his Bannock warriors in fighting the Bannock War of 1878.

Reservation life can have devastating effects on a traditional culture, but the

Shoshone kept alive their oral tradition. Ella E. Clark reported that "Many of the [Shoshone] storytellers were superb actors—even some that I heard and watched in 1950." The following tale was tape-recorded in 1968 by Jon Dayley, a linguist who wrote about the Shoshone in the thesis he submitted for his master's degree at Idaho State University. Here he presents the tale in the original Shoshone, then gives an English translation, and finally an interlinear dual-language text. First, though, he tells us who told him the story, when he heard it, and what the circumstances of the telling were. He then explains the nature of mythological folktales in the Shoshone oral tradition and gives some basic information about the Shoshone language. In addition to his work at ISU, Dayley has also studied the Mayans and their language.

**FURTHER READING:** See the selected list of titles in the bibliography at the end of this section of the anthology.

## TATAPE PEKKAPPIH SUN KILLER (COTTONTAIL AND THE SUN)

Edited with Comments by  
Jon P. Dayley

**COMMENTS:** The following Shoshone tale, *Tatape Pekkappih* "Sun Killer," also known as "Cottontail and the Sun," was told to me in 1968 at Fort Hall, Idaho, by Mrs. Myrtle Nevada. I recorded the tale on tape and later transcribed, translated, and linguistically analyzed it with the aid of Mrs. Nevada's niece, Mrs. Lillian Vallyley. Mrs. Nevada was a well-known storyteller and had been telling tales like this for many years. She was in her late seventies in 1968, and unfortunately, like most of the other great Shoshone *natikwinnawappinnii* "storytellers," she has since passed away. The tale was told in *Tukku Tikka* "Sheep Eater" Shoshone, the dialect of Northern Shoshone spoken by Mrs. Nevada and Mrs. Vallyley.

The setting of the tale is in a Mythological Era well known to Native Americans and other enthusiasts of Native American folklore. The tale takes place in an era, long since passed, when animals, and sometimes inanimate entities as well, were people-like. They are often referred to as people, and they may have proper names like people. For example, in this tale, Cottontail is referred to as *Tatapu* (*ppih*) and Sun as *Tatape*, whereas the common noun for cottontail in Shoshone

is *tapun* and that for sun is *tape*. Beings in the Mythological Era could talk, boast, laugh, lie, and cheat, and they had human wit, emotions, desires, and short-comings. They often cooked food, wore clothes, and had hands to make tools and build houses, and in general, they did things much like people do. On the other hand, they also had their more normal animal-like (or thing-like) characteristics: rabbits had long ears, coyotes had sharp teeth and howled, buffalo had horns and fur, cranes had long legs, and the sun had light and could burn you.

*Tatape Pekkappih* is a tale in the same tradition as the Coyote Trickster stories. The main character, *Tatapu(ppih)* "Cottontail," is a Culture Hero and Trickster like Coyote, although he is not as important or famous (or infamous) as Coyote. In fact, the motif of Cottontail and the Sun is only found in the Great Basin and Plateau region among Numic<sup>1</sup> speakers like the Shoshone, although the more general Sun Snare motif occurs elsewhere in North America, Polynesia, and Africa.<sup>2</sup>

Folktales in the Mythological Era are in many ways very different from our own Western literary tradition. This is not because animals and other things have human characteristics. We have animal tales too, e.g., Aesop's fables and Mickey Mouse cartoons. But, there are other reasons.

First, the tales don't necessarily build up to a climax or have a central point. They tend to relate a series of incidents, one not necessarily more important than another. Very often a particular incident may explain how or why things got to be the way they are today; e.g., why cottontails have brown blotches on certain parts of their bodies, or why woodticks are flat, or why the sun makes enough light and doesn't go too fast (although I sometimes wonder about the latter). There may also be a certain amount of subtle and indirect moralizing. For example, both Cottontail and Coyote are at once Tricksters and Culture Heroes. They deceive other beings, may injure or kill them, and may disrupt the status quo in the Mythological Era. But in doing these things, usually out of self-interest, greed, or lust, they bring the world into the form that we know it as human beings today. So, they create our world, and at the same time they display the more negative, as well as comical, aspects of human existence. People tend to empathize with them, despite the fact that they are not perfect, benevolent, omniscient Creators like our own Judeo-Christian God. They are very earthy Creators, full of the frailties that we all know so well.

Second, in some sense the tales are infinitely long, and no one ever relates a complete tale. What Mrs. Nevada narrated in 1968 was only a slice out of the *Tatape Pekkappih* myth. Without carrying the analogy too far, to a certain degree these kinds of stories are like T.V. series such as *Dallas*, where the main characters and general setting remain more or less constant but each weekly episode changes somewhat. Raconteurs, much like T.V. scriptwriters, have a great deal of freedom at least within certain limits. They only have to maintain the general form of the story, not the details, and they can improvise and innovate where they see fit. Also, storytellers, like scriptwriters of T.V. series, presume that the audience already knows a good deal about the setting, characters, and so on. That is why a Westerner hearing/reading a story like *Tatape Pekkappih* for the first time may come away with the feeling something is missing, all of the background details are not filled in. It is as if you had been banned to outer Siberia for twenty years and then came back and turned on *Dallas* for the first time. You wouldn't get half of what was going on.

Third, these mythological folktales are *not literature* per se. They are not out of a written narrative tradition. Rather, they are *oral narrative* out of a society

and culture where literature, written works, had no use nor place. They are more like the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* before Homer wrote them down, or like our own European folktales before they were put in books by people like the Grimm brothers. Oral narrative is very different from written narrative. In oral narrative there is no editing, no revising, no fixing up what didn't come out right the first time. Writers have the luxury of either editing themselves or having someone else do it. Raconteurs have no such luxury. Once they say something it is said and then is gone forever. The spoken word just comes out and then disappears; it is ephemeral and incorrigible at once. Oral narrative also tends to be repetitious and metrical or rhythmic in one way or another. The repetition is for the listener's benefit, since, unlike readers, listeners can not go back and "relisten" (cf. reread) what they didn't hear or understand the first time. The rhythm is both for aesthetics and to help the raconteur recall things. Oral narrative, then, is much more like drama than written literature. The raconteur is a one-man/woman cast acting out each character's part with voice changes, idiolectal differences, facial expressions, and gestures. And, since the audience is right there, the storyteller can point to things using this's and that's, here's and there's, and also get immediate feedback from the audience, varying the tale in response to the audience's reactions. When Mrs. Nevada told *Tatape Pekkappih*, she was not inert like printed words on paper, but living, making subtle voice changes for each character, moving her body mimicking characters' gestures, and giving facial expressions indicating pain, grief, delight and other feelings and emotions that the characters were experiencing.

Earlier I said that tales like *Tatape Pekkappih* have no central point. That was misleading. Their real point is entertainment. For thousands of years, for the vast majority of mankind's existence on the planet, there were no T.V.s, radios, movies, video-machines, or even written literature.<sup>3</sup> Most of mankind's (not just the Shoshone's) home entertainment in the past, and still in many areas of the world, has come through countless tales, not unlike *Tatape Pekkappih*.

Since Mrs. Nevada narrated *Tatape Pekkappih* in Shoshone, I think a few words should be said about the language. Shoshone is spoken by several thousand people in southern Idaho, western Wyoming, northern Utah, central Nevada, and extreme southeastern California. Shoshone belongs to a large family of languages called *Uto-Aztecan* comprising about thirty different languages stretching over a vast area from the Salmon River in Idaho south through the Great Basin and southwest into Mexico and as far south as El Salvador in Central America. The name Uto-Aztecan comes from combining Ute and Aztec, both of which are Uto-Aztecan languages, the latter being perhaps the most famous. Hopi, another well-known Native American language, is also Uto-Aztecan. Shoshone belongs to the subfamily or branch of Uto-Aztecan called *Numic*.<sup>4</sup> The Numic languages consist of three closely related groups all sharing the word *nimi* (or one similar to it) for "person, people":

Central Numic—Shoshone, Comanche, Panamint

Northern Numic—Northern Paiute - Bannock, Mono

Southern Numic—Ute - Southern Paiute, Kawaiisu

Grammatically, Shoshone is very different from English. Because its basic word order is Subject + Object + Verb (SOV), not Subject + Verb + Object (SVO) like English, it is much more like Japanese, Turkish, and about forty percent of the world's languages, which are also basically SOV. But even though the basic or most common word order is SOV, word order is much more flexible in Shoshone than in English because nouns and pronouns and other nominals are inflected for case (e.g., *sutin* "that (one)" subjective, *sukka* "that (one)" ob-

jective, *sukkan* "that one's" possessive). Since the case inflections on the nominals indicate directly whether the nominals are subjects or objects, etc., they don't have to be fixed in certain positions in the sentence for comprehension. So, other orders besides SOV are also possible. In this regard, Shoshone is more like Latin or Old English (and Japanese and Turkish).

Instead of prepositions, Shoshone has postpositions, e.g., *u pan* "it on" instead of "on it" (*u* = it, *pan* = on), and auxiliary or helping verbs follow main verbs instead of precede them as in English, e.g., the main verb *tike* "hunt" is followed by the auxiliary verb *mia* "go" in *tikemmia'eti* "always go hunting."

As the last example illustrates, Shoshone verbs may be quite complex, more so than English verbs. The verb stem may be preceded by one or two prefixes indicating voice (e.g., passive) and the kind of instrument used to do the activity, and the verb stem may be followed by a whole range of suffixes indicating direction, motion, adverbial notions, aspect, and tense. The previous example not only has *tike* followed by *mia* but also the suffix *-e* meaning "always" or "over and over again" and the general tense suffix *-ti*. Examples of even more complex verbs are:

*timawahyanki'enna* "to burn something by hand habitually":

*ti-* indefinite object, *ma-* "by hand," *wahya* "burn," *-nki* causative, *-e* habitual, *-nna* resultative;

*napuikkanto'i* "will be seen"

*na-* passive, *pui* "see," *-kan* stative, *-to'i* future;

*takkintsettaihkwā* "stomped on":

*ta'* "with the foot," *kintse* "smash," *-taih* "completely," *-kwa* past punctual.

The Shoshone sound system is much too complex to go into here. For more about Shoshone grammar, sounds, orthography, and vocabulary, the reader should consult Crapo (1976), Dayley (1970), and Miller (1972 & to appear).<sup>5</sup>

One final note about *Tatape Pekkapih*, as well as other Shoshone tales. If the reader scans the Shoshone text, he/she will note that there are several words repeated over and over again even within the same sentence, e.g. *usi* "thus, so," *wihnu* "(and) then," *suti(n)* "that (one)". The repetition of these words is typical of narrative style in Shoshone. They are part of the genre, and they are also used as space-fillers to give the raconteur time to think, much like "well," "you know," "uh . . ." in English. Another word, *me*, is also found throughout the text. It is a quotative particle meaning "they say" or "it is said" or "somebody said." In Shoshone, you have to use *me* after telling something that you heard but did not experience firsthand yourself. So, in mythological stories, *me* is quite common since the storyteller didn't actually experience the events in the tale.

For the reader interested in more Shoshone folktales, see Miller (1972) and Lowie (1909, 1924).<sup>6</sup>

## TATAPE PEKKAPĪH

*Usi suti sutin* Tatapuppīh *usi tikemmia'eti, suti keppe sutin* Tape *yaihkwā'eyu. U tikemmia'eku oyo sunni naha'eyu. Tikimmia'eti sutin ke hinna pekkatī pi-ti'eyu, usi sunni nahattsī. Usi suti wihnu simme yākwī, "Usi hākanneyuntī sutin keppe Tape miākkiyu? Nī ke hinna yaappitī'eyu. Nī usi wihnu ikittsi wihnu usi uttun timapitsia wihnu suttun u pekkato'i," me yākwitī.*

Uttun pakannaammi. Soontittsia pakannaipiti usi wihnu usi suti usi wihnu u timahekkwa. Mi'asi, suti sukku u waka pithonkwasi. Usi wihnu o tokkamasi, wihnu usi sotto wihnu o to'ikinku setim paa kusaakakakeppinni, me. Kusaakakakeppiiti. Wihnu usi om motso nakiakinku setim paa kusaakakakeppiiti. U iki to'ikinku wihnu suti suma wihnu u wittihuppiinni suman pi huup-pakam ma. U wittihuppiiti. Wihnu usi u mantu pakan tsumannu, sunni nahattsi. Wihnu sukka pim ma pin timawahyanki'enna, sukka pim ma tunuhinni sukka suti usi sumaihku pim pakam maihku o nookkanti usi pi hokona kuppa o no-otsti mi'asi, usi suma wihnu pinnaipi u pinnaihkanu suti suma wihnu usi haya tsaanti usi u kuttisi u pekkannu sukka tammin Tape, me. Suti sutin Tapuppah Tape.

U pekkasi, suti wihnu u namakuhnneki u pahekkikka, me. Namakuhnnekkitti wihnu pin timapoyappih sukku pin timpokoh ka suti u ya'impitisi. Usi suti wihnu u kimmankinna, sutin Tape u kimmankinna sukku un timpo'in kam-muyin ka tiyaimpiti, me.

Seti wihnu usi un kusuinna usi sekka sekka un nampe wawahyakkwanki hkwa, me. Ekka om mo'i ettu wawahyakkwanki epitti tiasi, un tsoppetton ka sepitti tia wahyankihkwanuku. Suti sukku wihnu sutin tiyaihkwa'eyu usi un kammuyin ka, me, sunni u nahakka.

Suti wihnu usi wihitta yaattsi, sama wihnu sekka u sappiha wippekoahkwan kia attu. U wippekoahkwattsi usi sukka um pu'iha, wihnu suti usin tsatto'isi usi u mantun tekwa sukku sakka Tatape um pu'iha tsatto'isi sukka wihnu usim, me. U mantun tekwa, "Ikittsi naakke ke suwaikku namasohi nukkimiati. Inni witsa upitaanku noo upitaanku noo mi'anooti, mi'anooti upitaanku mi'anooti. Usi sope wihnu usi ya'ihumpitihkwa naakke yiikka," me suti usi wihnu usi u niikwinna.

Sunni nahattsi tiasi sopetti wihnu un nimia kuppanti isi sukka yaattsi; setim pinna tammi sokopi ke napuikkanto'i usi noha ke sukka ke sunni ukka u miiku, me suti. Suti wihnu usi un nimia sepitti un nimia kuppanti hinna u hinna kia wihnu, usi sukku wihnu sekka tukumpanan kantu tahwi, me. Suti sattu yiyikwihkwa, usi wihnu me. Suti noo napui suakka supe. Usi wihnu tammin tatsiyimpi sukka tammin tatsiyimpa'i usi tukanni wihnu, me sunni nahattsi.

Suti wihnu usi sukka noom matinkasi, suti wihnu usi kimmannu. U kim-makka, wihnu sutin nimin tinitto'i nanankanna, wihnu me. Nikkaniminna wihnu, me. Sukka na'appunti huupita yaakkanti na'appuntin titsittiahweti, usi nikkaniminna, me. Suti wihnu sunni u nahaku u nankahekinti. Wihnu u mahointi u puinnu, me. "Hinna inni tiahweti, usi simme yikwinninna?" me suti wihnu usi sutin Tatapuppah u tipinni. "Ke! Usi sutin Tatape Pekkappih senai nimi kwasittaihkinna tsa'i nimi kwasikkinna, me ni tinankanti. Usinoo witsa innitti nahanni, ni ai u timaheppitihka, me yikwiti. Usi ni nikkaniminna," me suti wihnu u niikwi, me. "Mekku, simi taka simme tia yikwi noo, innin tsaan tinisuakkinna nakitsa," me u niikwi.

Suti usin nikkawinikki usi, me. Ti'iya nikkati. Usi wihnu suti u tinitto'ihma-hka, simme u niikwi, "Haa, haa, inni tsaan tinisua," me yikwiti u pan tattikki, me. U sukka mittaa wihnu usi mittaa sukku u takkintsetaihkwa, wihnu usi me. Suti wihnu usi ikittsi suti suwaih usin tahiipanna. U suti mittaa, me. Sunni nahattsi suti sukkuyunti sukka takkumpasi kimmasi.

Tiasi suwittisi nanankanna. Tia nikkaniti tia nanankappinni. Tiahan tinitto'i nananka. Na'appuntuttsi huuppita tsittsukeppiiti nikkati. Suti simme u niikwi, "Hinna hinna innin tiahweti? Usi nakitsa tsaan tinisuanniminninna. Mekku, tiasi iki takasi simme yikwiti. Ni tsaai in nankasuankinna," me suti u niikwi. "Hinna hinna inni hanniti simme yikwi?" me suti u niikwi. "Ke! Usin timmasi

sinai Tape nai sutin Tatape Pekkappih nimi kwasikkinna, me, ni tinankanti. Usin nikkaniminna. Inni witsa . . . Ni wihnu usi sukka nahankinti usin tinitto'inna," me suti yikwi. "Mekku, simi takan tinitto'ihka. Ni in nanka'ekkonto'i," me suti u niikwinnu. "Tsaa innin tinisua." Suti usi noon titsittiahweti noon nikkanimi noon nikkanimiti, usi wihnu sunni u nahaku. Usi wihnu sutin tia u pan tattiki. "Haa, tsaa innin tinisua," me u niikwinna. Usi wihnu suti noo u piittakintsehkwa, me. Usi sukka Sokoppiha um Pusia sukka takkintsehkwa. Suti wihnu usi ti'iyu'inniti ikittsi wihnu tammi soko pa'eyu. Usin kia noon ni-mihka'enniti suti Sokoppiham Pusia.

Usi wihnu su'apekanti. Wihnu usi u manti ni u nasuwatsihka. Su'apekanti noon tiahwennu.

## FREE TRANSLATION THE SUN KILLER (COTTONTAIL & THE SUN)

So it was that Cottontail used to go hunting, and the Sun always went down too fast. Whenever he went hunting, it always happened that way. He went hunting, and he always came back without killing anything. It happened that way. So Cottontail then said, "Why is it that the Sun always goes so fast? I don't ever get anything. So right now I'll get ready for the Sun to kill it," he said.

He made some arrows for the Sun. When he had finished making a bunch of arrows, he then went off angrily after the Sun. After going along, he came up on it there. So then he aimed at it there while the Sun was coming up from the water that was sizzling, so it is said. The water just sizzled and sizzled. While the Sun's whiskers started to appear, the water just sizzled and sizzled. Then when the Sun was newly coming up, Cottontail shot at it with his own stick-arrows. He just kept on shooting at it. Then he used up all his arrows on the Sun; it happened that way. Then with his own fire-starter, his own fire-drill, which he had packed with his arrows that he had packed in his quiver before leaving, then with that last thing remaining [i.e., the fire-drill], he shot it real good and killed it, that one, our Sun, so it is said. That one, that Cottontail, was the one who did it to the Sun.

After he killed it, he then ran away from it as it was falling down, it is said. After he ran away, he arrived at and entered the rock-mound that he had prepared. But then the Sun came to him, he came to him there at his rock-mound's door and died there, so it is said.

Then there was a heat wave from the Sun that burned Cottontail's feet, it is said. It burned his hands there too, and on the back of his head it must also have burned. Then the Sun died there at his doorway. It is said that it happened that way.

Then Cottontail grabbed his knife, and with it he cut out the Sun's stomach there. Then he cut out the Sun's gall bladder and took it and talked to it there after taking it out, so it is said. He spoke to it saying, "From now on it should be that you don't go running in such a hurry like that. You should go slowly, you must go slowly, go slowly. That is how it should be when you have finished going in in the evening," he said to it.

It also happened then that he grabbed the inside of the Sun's liver. Because of this our earth would be darker than it used to be if he hadn't done that like that, they say. Cottontail then threw the Sun's liver, or maybe something inside of its liver, up there towards the sky, so they say. Thus, those things are

sitting here and there, so it is said, and that allowed light to appear at that time. Those things are our stars, the stars that we have at night. It happened that way, so it is said.

Then when Cottontail had finished doing that, he came along. Then as he was coming along, a person singing could be heard, they say. He was dancing moving all around, they say. And he was pointing the stick that he was carrying in all directions, and he was dancing all around, it is said. Cottontail heard that going on. So then he sneaked up on him and saw him, it is said. "What are you talking about, what are you saying moving all around?" Cottontail asked him. "No! That Sun Killer is coming from hereabouts somewhere slaughtering people. He's coming killing all the people, I have heard. Thus, probably it's happening like that, and they say he's coming after me. So I'm dancing all around," he said to Cottontail, it is said. "O.K., just say that one more time, you sound good, really," Cottontail said to him.

So he danced around, it is said. But, then he became afraid to dance. Then when he stopped singing, Cottontail said to him, "Yes, yes, you sound good," he said and stepped on him, it is said. It was that Woodtick that he stomped on there, so it is said. So that's why that Woodtick is flattened out like that right now. It was that Woodtick, so they say. It happened like that that he killed him right there with his feet and then went on his way.

Again, Cottontail could hear the same kind of thing. Again, dancing could be heard. Again, singing could be heard. Someone was pointing a stick in all directions and dancing. Cottontail said to him, "What are you talking about? You really sound good moving all around. O.K., right now say that again. I really want to hear you," he said to him. "What are you doing saying that?" he said to him. "No! That Sun Killer is coming killing people from somewhere around here from the direction of the Sun, I have heard. So I'm dancing around. You should too . . . I am singing for that, to keep it from happening," he said. "O.K., just sing one more time. I will listen to you," Cottontail said to him. "You sound good." That one just kept on pointing and dancing around and dancing moving all around; that's the way it happened. Then like before, Cottontail stepped on him. "Yes, you sound good," he said to him. Then he smashed the blood out of him with his feet, they say. It was that Ground Louse that he smashed. It's the one that is tiny that right now is on our earth. That Ground Louse must be walking around all over now.

That's about it. I have forgotten part of it. That much is all I should tell now.

## LITERAL WORD FOR WORD TRANSLATION

### TATAPE PEKKAPPIH SUN KILLER

Usi	suti	sutin	Tatapuppih	usi	tikemmia'eti,	suti
so	that-one	that	Cottontail	thus	hunt-go-always	that-one
keppe	sutin	Tape	yaihkwa'eyu.	U	tikemmia'eku	oyo sunni
fast	that	Sun	go-in-always	him	hunt-go-when	always that-way
naha'eyu.		Tikemmia'eti	sutin	ke	hinna	pekkati
happened-always		hunt-go-always	that-one	not	anything	kill



piti'eyu,       usi sunni nahattsi. Usi suti       wihnu simme  
 return-always thus that-way happened thus that-one then that  
 yikwi, "Usi hakanniyunti sutin keppe Tape miakkiyu? Ni ke hinna  
 say       thus why-is       that fast Sun go-always I not anything  
 yaappiti'eyu.       Ni usi wihnu ikittsi       wihnu usi uttun  
 carry-return-always I       thus then right-now then       thus it-for  
 timapitsia wihnu sittun u pekkato'i," me       yikwiti.  
 prepare then that-for it kill-will       quote say

Uttun pakannaammi.       Soontittsia pakannaipiti  
 it-for arrow-made-repeatedly many       arrow-make-finished  
 usi wihnu usi suti       usi wihnu u timahekkwa. Mi'asi, suti  
 thus then       thus that-one thus then it go-off-mad-at went-first that-one  
 sukku u waka       pithonkwasi. Usi wihnu o tokkamasi wihnu  
 there it come-up-on arrived-there thus then it aimed-at then  
 usi sotto wihnu o to'ikinku       setim paa kusaakakakeppinni,  
 thus there then it come-up-when this water sizzling-be  
 me. Kusaakakakeppiiti. Wihnu usi om motso nakiakinku setim  
 quote sizzle-keep-on then thus its whiskers emerged-when this  
 paa kusaakakakeppiiti. U iki to'ikinku       wihnu suti  
 water sizzle-keep-on it newly come-up-when then that-one  
 suma wihnu u wittihupinni suman pi       huuppakam ma.  
 that-with then it shooting-be that-with his-own stick-arrow with  
 U wittihuppiiti. Wihnu usi u mantu pakan tsumannu, sunni  
 it shoot-keep-on then thus it on arrow used-up that-way  
 nahattsi. Wihnu sukka pim       ma pin timawahyanki'enna,  
 happened then that his-own with his-own fire-starter  
 sukka pim       ma tunuhinni sukka suti       usi sumaihku pim  
 that his-own with firedrill that that-one thus that-with his-own  
 pakam maihku o nookkanti usi pi       hokona kuppa o noottsi  
 arrow with it packed thus his-own quiver in it packed  
 mi'asi, usi suma wihnu pinnaipi u pinnaihkanu suti  
 went-first thus that-with then last-thing it remaining that-one  
 suma wihnu usi haya tsaanti usi u kuttisi u pekkannu sukka  
 that-with then thus real good thus it shot it killed that  
 tammin Tape, me. Suti       sutin Tapuppih Tape.  
 our Sun quote that-one that Cottontail Sun

U pekkasi, suti       wihnu u namakuhnekki u pahekkikka, me.  
 it killed-first that-one then it run-away-from it falling-down quote  
 Namakuhnekkittsi wihnu pin       timapoyappih sukku pin       timpokoh  
 ran-away then his-own prepared there his-own rock-mound  
 ka suti       u ya-impitisi. Usi suti       wihnu u kimmankinna,  
 at that-one it enter-returned thus that-one then him came-to  
 sutin Tape u       kimmankinna sukku un timpo'in       kammuyin ka  
 that Sun him came-to       there his rock-mound's door       at

tiyaimpiti, me.  
die-arrived quote

Seti wihnu usi un kusuainna usi sekka sekka un nampe  
this then thus its heat-wave thus this this his foot  
wawahyakkwankihkwa, me. Ekka om mo'i ettu wawahyakkwanki  
burned(2)-all-over quote this his hand here burned(2)-all-over  
epitti tiasi, un tsoppetton ka sepitti tia wahyankihkwan  
here-about also its back-of-head at here-about also burned  
tuku. Suti sukku wihnu sutin tiyaihkwa'eyu usi un kammuyin  
must that-one there then that-one die-went thus his door  
ka, me, sunni u nahakka.  
at quote that-way it happened

Suti wihnu usi wihitta yaatts, sama wihnu sekka u  
that-one then thus knife took-out that-with then this its  
sappiha wippekoahkwan kia attu. U wippekoahkwatts, usi  
stomach cut-out maybe there-through it cut-out thus  
sukka um pu'iha wihnu suti usin tsatto'isi usi u mantun  
that its gall-bladder then that-one thus took-out thus it to  
tekwa sukku sakka Tatape um pu'iha tsatto'isi sukka wihnu usim,  
talk there that Sun its gall-bladder took-out that then thus  
me. U mantun tekwa, "Ikittsi naakke ke suwaikku namosohi  
quote it to talk right-now be-should not that-like hurry  
nukkiimiati. Inni witsa upitaanku noo upitaanku noo mi'anooti,  
run-go you should slow must slow must go-move  
mi'anooti upitaanku mi'anooti. Usi sope wihnu usi ya'ihumpitihkwa  
go-move slow go-move thus there then so go-in-finish  
naakke yaiikka," me suti usi wihnu usi u niikwinna.  
be-should evening quote that-one thus then thus it said

Sunni nahatts, tiasi sopetti wihnu un nimia kuppanti isi  
that-way happened also there then its liver inside-of this-one  
sukka yaatts; setim pinna tammi sokopi ke napuikkanto'i usi noha  
that grabbed this latter our earth not light-be-would thus used-to  
ke sukka ke sunni ukka u niiku, me sudi. Suti wihnu usi  
not that not that-like if it do quote that that-one then thus  
un nimia sepitti un nimia kuppanti hinna u hinna kia  
its liver here its liver inside-of something its something maybe  
wihnu, usi sukku wihnu sekka tukumpanan kantu tahwi, me.  
then thus there then this sky towards threw quote  
Suti sattu yiyikwihkwa, usi wihnu me. Suti noo napui  
that there-through sit(3+) thus then quote that let light  
suakka supe. Usi wihnu tammin tatsiyimpi sukka tammin  
breathe that-time thus then our stars that we  
tatsiyimpa'i usi tukanni wihnu, me sunni nahatts.  
stars-have thus at-night then quote that-like happened

Suti wihnu usi sukka noom matinkasi suti wihnu  
 that-one then thus that must finished-when that-one then  
 usi kimmannu. U kimmakka, wihnu sutin nimin tinitto'i  
 thus came him coming then that person singing  
 nanankanna, wihnu me. Nikkaniminna wihnu, me. Sukka  
 be-heard then quote dance-move then quote that  
 na'appunti huuppita yaakkanti na'appuntin titsittiahweti, usi  
 in-all-directions stick carry in-all-directions point thus  
 nikkaniminna, me. Suti wihnu sunni u nahaku u  
 dance-move quote that-one then that-like it happen-while it  
 nankahekinti. Wihnu u mahointi u puinnu, me. "Hinna innin  
 heard then him sneak-up-on him saw quote what you  
 tiahweti, usi simme yikwinninna?" me suti wihnu usi sutin  
 talk-about thus that say-around quote that-one then thus that  
 Tatapuppih u tipinni. "Ke! Usi sutin Tatape Pekkappih  
 Cottontail him ask no thus that Sun Killer  
 senai namu kwasittaihkinna tsa'i nimi  
 here-about-from people kill(2+)-completely-come all people  
 kwasikkinna, me ni tinankanti. Usi noo witsa innittsi  
 kill (2+)-come quote I hear thus probably maybe this-like  
 nahanni, ni ai u timaheppitihka, me yikwiti. Usi ni  
 be-done me for him pursue-come-back quote say thus I  
 nikkaniminna," me suti wihnu u niikwi, me. "Mekku,  
 dance-move quote that-one then him say quote O.K.  
 simu taka simme tia yikwi noo, innin tsaan tinisuakkinna  
 one (time) just that again say should you good sound  
 nakitsa," me u niikwi.  
 really quote him say

Suti usin nikkawinikki usi, me. Ti'iya nikkati usi wihnu  
 that-one thus dance-around thus quote afraid dance thus then  
 suti u tinitto'ihmaahka, simme u niikwi, "Haa, haa, innin  
 that-one him sing-stopped that him say yes yes you  
 tsaan tinisua," me yikwiti u pan tattiki, me. U sukka mittaa  
 good sound quote say him on step quote it that woodtick  
 wihnu usi mittaa sukku u takkintsettaihkwa, wihnu usi  
 then thus woodtick there him by-foot-smashed-completely then thus  
 me. Suti wihnu usi ikittsi suti suwaih usin tahiipanna.  
 quote that-one then thus right-now that-one that-like thus flattened  
 U suti mittaa, me. Sunni nahattsi suti sukkuyunti  
 it that woodtick quote that-way happened that-one right-there-be  
 sukka takkumpasi kimmasi.  
 that-one by-foot-killed came

Tiasi suwittisi nankanna. Tia nikkaniti tia  
 again that-kind-of-thing heard again dancing-around again

nanankappinni. Tiahan tinitto'i nananka. Na'appuntuttsi huuppita  
 be-heard again singing be-heard in-all-directions stick

tsittsukeppiiti nikkati. Suti simme u niikwi, "Hinna hinna innin  
 point-keep-on dance that-one that him say what what you

tiahweti? Usi nakitsa tsaan tinisuanniminninna. Mekku, tiasi'iki  
 talk-about thus really good sound-move-around O.K. again now

takassi simme yikwiti. Ni tsaa in nankasuankinna," me suti  
 right that say I good you hear-want quote that-one

u niikwi. "Hinna hinna inni hanniti simme yikwi?" me suti  
 him say what what you do that saying quote that-one

u niikwi. "Ke! Usin timmasi sinai Tape nai sutin  
 him say no thus emphatically here-about-from Sun from that

Tatape Pekkappih nimi kwasikkinna, me, ni tinankanti. Usin  
 Sun Killer people kill(2+)-come quote I hear thus

nikkaniminnna. Inni witsa . . . Ni wihnu usi sukka nahankinti usin  
 dance-move you should I then thus that make-happen-for thus

tinitto'inna," me suti yikwi. "Mekku, simi takan tinitto'ihka.  
 sing quote that-one say O.K. one (time) just sing

Ni in nanka'ekkonto'i," me suti u niikwinnu. "Tsaa innin  
 I you listen-will quote that-one him said good you

tinisua." Suti usi noon titsittiahweti noon nikkanimi  
 sound that-one thus keep-on point keep-on dance-move

noon nikkanimiti, usi wihnu sunni u nahaku. Usi wihnu  
 keep-on dance-move thus which that-way it happen thus then

sutin tia u pan tattiki. "Haa, tsaa innin tinisua," me u  
 that-one again him on stepped yes good you sound quote him

niikwinna. Usi wihnu suti noo u piittakintsehkwa, me.  
 said thus then that-one just him blood-with-feet-smashed quote

Usi sukka Sokoppiha um Pusia sukka takkintsehkwa. Suti  
 thus that Ground its Louse that with-feet-smashed that-one

wihnu usi ti'iyu'inniti ikittsi wihnu tammi soko pa'eyu. Usin  
 then thus tiny-be right-now then our earth on-be thus

kia noon nimihka'enniti suti Sokoppiham Pusia.  
 might should walk-around that Ground's Louse

Usi wihnu su'apekanti. Wihnu usi u manti ni u nasuwatsihka.  
 thus then about-that-much then thus it part-of I it forget

Su'apekanti noon tiahwennu.  
 about-that-much should told

## NOTES

1. See below for Numic languages.
2. See tale type Aa.-Th. A728.1 or motif A728 in Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*, Indiana University Studies, Bloomington: Indiana University Library (1932); Katherine Luomala, *Oceanic, American Indian, and African Myths of Snaring the Sun*, Bernice P. Bishop Museum Bulletin, No. 168:ii, Honolulu (1940); Jon P. Dayley, "Cottontail and the Sun," Ms. Idaho State University (1968).

3. N.B. Relative to the total span of mankind's existence, writing is not very old, dating back only about 5,000 years, at the most. And, of the thousands of languages that have existed, only 107 are known to have been written with any literature, and only 78 of the 4,000 to 6,000 languages extant today are written and have a literature. See I.J. Gelb, *A Study of Writing*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1952), and Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, New York: Methuen (1982).
4. Shoshone belongs to the Numic branch of the Uto-Aztecan family just as English belongs to the Germanic branch of the Indo-European family.
5. Richley H. Crapo, *Big Smokey Valley Shoshoni*, Desert Research Institute Publications in the Social Sciences, No. 10, Reno (1976); Jon P. Dayley, *Shoshone Phonology and Morphological Sketch*, M.A. thesis, Idaho State University (1970); Wick R. Miller, *Neuwe Natekwinnapneh: Shoshoni Stories and Dictionary*, University of Utah Anthropological Papers No. 94 (1972) and *A Sketch of Shoshoni Grammar (Gosiute Dialect)* to appear in *Handbook of American Indians*, Vol. XV: *Language*, Ives Goddard, ed.
6. Miller (1972) op. cit.; Robert H. Lowie, *The Northern Shoshone*, Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History, Vol. II, Part II (1909) and "Shoshonean Tales," *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 37 (1924).

## KUTENAI

Although archaeologists, anthropologists, and linguists have traced the origins of the Shoshone and Nez Perce, scholars remain uncertain about the origins of the Kutenai and their language. Perhaps they are descended from an ancient Blackfoot group, and the Kutenai language may be related to the Algonquian family. What heightens the mystery is that their skillfully made canoes are said to be like those used in Amur, Siberia. Most of the Lower Kutenai live near Bonners Ferry, Idaho; the Upper Kutenai in British Columbia. Although forest dwellers, they followed some of the practices of Plains Indians. The Kutenai lived by hunting buffalo and other big game, by fishing, and by gathering wild plants, including a black moss which they pounded and made into a bread.

Among Euro-Americans the Kutenai earned a reputation as a very upright people. Father Pierre De Smet, a Jesuit missionary who came to the area in the 1840s, praised them for "their hospitality and love of justice." De Smet and other Jesuits converted some of the Kutenai to Catholicism. In 1855, when the federal government tried to persuade the tribe to move to a reser-

vation in Montana, only a few families went. Most of the Lower Kutenai remained near Bonners Ferry, suffering alternating government interference and neglect for the next century. A sympathetic observer of the 1950s called them "the forgotten Kutenai." Although the Kutenai may or may not still be forgotten, we still have much to learn about their oral narratives.

Like the Nez Perce tale discussed in a previous selection, the following Kutenai tale contains unexplained mysteries. The battle for the wives reminds one of ancient Greek legends, as do the violence and the mysterious resurrection. As long as readers are intrigued by such mysteries, tales like "Lame Knee" can give much enjoyment through their surprises and novelties.

**FURTHER READING:** A selected list of titles is included in the bibliography at the end of this section of the anthology.

**TEXT:** Alexander F. Chamberlain heard and transcribed the tale "Lame Knee" in 1891, the storyteller being a man named Paul; the text used here is from Franz Boas, *Kutenai Tales*, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 59 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1918), pp. 26-28.



*Kutenai Indians.*

*(Courtesy, Idaho State Historical Society.)*

## LAME KNEE

There was a town. The chief said they would break camp in order to plant. [The planting of tobacco is meant.] They broke camp. The chief's wives went to draw water. There were the friends of Lame Knee. His friends said: "You ought to steal the chief's wife." Lame Knee started. He went there limping. The chief's wife came back carrying water. He seized her. She said to him: "Let me go; the chief wants to drink." Lame Knee said: "I will not let you go." The woman said: "Let me go; the chief might be angry; the chief wants to drink." Then they broke camp. They went to the chief. The chief was told: "Lame Knee is holding your wife." The chief said: "Go to him. Tell him to let her go because I am thirsty." They went to him. He was told: "The chief says he wants you