

YAKMU- L AMAMI WATIT YAKIMA INDIAN LEGENDS

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This story is from the McWhorter collections at Washington State University, Pullman, WA. I was fortunate to find some stories from my own family. Sawyalix was my mother's grandfather, my great-great grandfather. According to information from my mother Ellen Saluskin, who died three years ago at the age of 103, she quoted her grandfather telling this story. It does not have the author recorded here, but I know this is the story Sawyalix told McWhorter. My father, Henry Beavert, video-taped this story for a TV station in Portland, Oregon, when he was my Cultural Informant while working at Gifford Pinchot National Forest, 1975. I was never able to get a copy. It was shown all over Oregon, but not in Washington State. We had wonderful feedback from the Indian people in Oregon. I wish I had a copy of that Video tape. VB

ORIGIN: PATU AND THE WHITE EAGLE

I will tell you this Indian story. It is about one mountain the Shuyapu's call Mount Adams, a nonsense name. The old name is of the Txapnish people. The mountain belonged to them and was called "Txapnish- I aami Patu." But now this name can be heeded for all the Yakima, made up of many different tribes and bands. Wasco is a mountain in Oregon, now called Mount Hood. There was another (volcano) mountain, Wa'xsham, one time the summit of the Cascades. Patu stands beyond Wa'xsham, and towards the sunset of the present summit.

These three mountains had one husband, Past'wa'nit, the Sun. Every time the Sun came driving the darkness, he would strike Wa'xsham first, greet her first. Patu saw all of this and became jealous. She made up her mind to destroy Wa'xsham. So Patu came over in the night and killed her, beat her down. Then she took all the game—the deer, the elk, the bear and salmon — belonging to the dead wife. She took the berries and best roots and left Wa'xsham dead and of little concern.

After that time, Sun, coming with the morning, struck Patu the first thing. This was good! It was what Patu liked of her husband. Seeing this, Wasco became jealous. She made up her mind to kill Patu. It was just before daylight and Wasco came with a great war club and other weapons of fighting, and there was a big battle(eruptions). When the Sun came up from the far away, Patu was dead, all torn to pieces. I don't know how it happened, but Patu's head was broken off and scattered from there to Fish Lake. To this day that is a hard country to travel. Wasco took everything from Patu—game, fish, berries, and roots. She left Patu sitting there headless, with no sort of life. Like Wa'xsham, Patu was now no longer a producer of life. Not growing foods, Patu had lost her usefulness to the world, was no longer of any importance.

The Great Maker, Tamanwi I a, was a witness to all this, saw what Patu had suffered. He knew that which was coming. He beheld the new people who, yet unborn, were awaiting the final preparation of the land for their reception, and took pity on them. He restored Patu to life and brought back to her all the game, salmon, berries and roots. These are all found there to this day.* He gave to

Patu a head to replace those she lost. This head was Kuyx Xwayama, the great White Eagle sent down from the Land Above.

Patu was now a powerful Law standing up towards the sky and was for the whole world. Once dead but returned to life, that Law was divine. Coming from the great Giver, that Law was immortal. ** The wisdom was that of the White Eagle, to watch and guard the entire world. Life was in the white bosom, growing life for all foods that the people to come might eat and have strength. The White Eagle said, "I want two children to sit by me, to watch towards the sunrise. I will send them to every part of the world, to observe how everything is going on. They will bring me word of what they see, of what is being done. I will regulate of what they see, of what is being done. I will regulate and control everything in the whole world."

So this was the way that the Great Maker sent White Eagle to be the head of Patu, a Law standing high for all the world. The two children given, and White Eagle declared, "Whatever the Great Maker has done, I know. Women will bear children. There shall be death; there shall be sorrow everywhere. When the children grow up, there shall be chiefs and rulers in the land. But Kuyx Xwayama will care for them all. The center of the power, the head of the Law is in me. I will send my children all over the world to take up and report to me what is going on. My power, my Law is stronger than all the people who shall ever live.

Thus it was that Txapnish I aami Patu was killed and restored to life again. The White Eagle-head, coming down from Above holds a great spirit power. Life dwells there. Life is in the water flowing down from many-caverned ice banks. Facing the sunrise, the two young eagles sit at either side of White Eagle's topmost crown. S i nwi- I a, the Speaker, is on the right, towards the Northland. K'inu- I a, the Overseer or Manager, is at the left, towards the Southland. They are watching everywhere, going everywhere. Flying over all the world, they bring back news of what is being done. Nothing can happen without their seeing. Nothing escapes their sharp vision.

This is why we want Patu within our own reservation boundary. That mountain belongs to us. A witness to our treaty with Governor Stevens, White Eagle points upward to the Great Maker who heard the promises of that treaty. Standing high above the clouds, White Eagle is always first to be greeted by the Sun. The berries, the game, the fish of the mountains and streams, were created for us, who were the first real people of this country.

This is why I do not like to see the Shuyapu climb Patu. Young Indians used to go to the top, but they made no wrong. All that Patu has, all her foods are free. This is why I always give freely, why I feed the hungry without pay. It is the Law, the Plash (White) Law, lifted high where it is painted by the Aan (Sun) and blanketed by the shwat'ash (clouds). A gift from the Tamanwi I a (Great Maker), the foods planted for His children must all be free.

* Tamanwi I a restored Wa'xsham's roots, medicines and deer. Not the berries.

** Revival from the dead Law pertained to the New People until Christianity .