

Stories of the Cahto Tribe

Coyotes Seen Fishing

(This is a line-by-line translation (within the limits of English readability))

They were spearing fish in winter, they say.

They made spear shafts, they say.

They fixed the prongs, they say.

They stuck the spear-points on with pitch, they say.

They had a fire.

They put stones in the fire (for heating the pitch), they say.

"Ok, let's go."

"Yes," he said, they say.

They crossed the Eel River and sat down, they say.

A person was seen under a tree, they say.

A person was seen under a tree, they say.

One said, "Who is it?," they say.

"Probably a Yuki."

"He is not Yuki.

They (Yuki) have white spear-shafts.

It (the stranger's spear-shaft) is well blackened.

Look at it," he said, they say.

Another one came out from the brush, they say.

"Who is it?" he said, they say.

"It seems like it's not a person!"

Look (at him) well!"

Again one came out, they say.

He brought out a spear-shaft, they say.

"It seems to be a war(-party)," he said, they say.

They had speared many fish, they say.

They were found, they say.

They drove the fish back, they say.

He speared it, they say.

He beat it, they say.

He killed it, they say.

He took the spear point back out (from the fish), they say.

"It is not a person!, it seems to be Coyote!"

Again two came out, they say.

Again three came out, they say.

They ran away, they say.

"Look at them!

They are coyotes!"

"I mistook you when I thought you were people," they said, they say.

They were coyotes.

"We will leave them."

"May I live, my uncle, even though I found you," he said, they say.

"I do that, too.

I eat in the forest.

I know that, I walk outside at night.

We (probably?) will not tell about it.

Let there not be anything bad due to our seeing you."

"Nothing is going to happen.

We (probably?) will not look towards the places where one may spear fish.

Hide it for him to eat it.

Let nobody see you.

"May I walk around (live) a long time.

Let me not be sick in spite of our seeing you.

Let my wife be well.

Let her not be sick in the house when I come back.

Soon you will find something a little bit close by.

We will put some food, cooked food, on the ground."

"For us to not get sick you must not tell about it in the village.

You must not go after fish in that stream ever again.

Let those ones spear in that stream.

Next time you must leave many fish on this side of this stream, Yellow Pine Hillside Stream."

They left food, they say.

"We put down this food, my uncle, because we found you.

We are giving him food.

He eats it alone."

That is all.

Professor Goddard's Translation

They were spearing fish in the winter-time. They made the spear shafts. They made the prongs and fastened the spearpoints with pitch. They had a fire in which they put the stones (for working the pitch).

"Well, let us go."

"Yes," he said.

They crossed the river and sat down. They saw a person alone under a tree. "Who is that I" he asked.

"A Yuki, probably."

"He is not a Yuki. Their spear-shafts are white. These are well blackened. Look at them."

Again one came out of the brush. "Who is it?"

"I don't think it is a person. Look at him well." Again one came out. He brought out a spear.

"I think there will be war," he said. They saw they had speared many fish. They were driving the fish back and spearing them. He speared one and beat it on the head. He killed it. He took the spear-point out of it.

"It is not a human being. It seems like Coyote." Again two came out. A third one came out. They (the men) ran away. "They are Coyotes."

"You frightened us. We thought you were people," they said. They were coyotes.

"I want to live, my uncle, if I did see you," he said. "I, too, I do that. I eat in the forest. I know that. I walk outside at night. I will not tell it. Let nothing happen because we saw you. "

"Nothing will happen. We will not look toward the spearing places. Hide it that he may eat it. Let no one see us."

"May I walk (live) for a long time yet. May I not be sick because I saw you. May it be well with my wife. May she not be sick when I come

again to my house. Soon you will find a little present of cooked food somewhere. We will leave it on the ground. "

"You must not tell it in the village lest we get sick. You must not go again to that stream for fish. Let them spear over there. Next time you must leave many fish on this side. "

At Yellow-pine-hill stream they left some food. "We put down this food, my uncle, because we found you."

"Give him food. Let him eat it alone. "

That is all.

(Based on Cahto oral traditions and beliefs)