

Stories of the Cahto Tribe

The Supernatural Child

Line-by-line Translation (within the limits of English readability)
by Bill Ray (Daatcaahaal-kwaatc'ileeh) - 1909

The baby cried, they say.

All day long, all night long, and when it got light the child cried, they say.

They carried it around again, they say.

"What is the matter with the child?" they said, they say.

"Take it back!"

They bathed it, they say.

The examined it all over, they say.

They examined the palms of its hands and the soles of its feet, they say.

They examined all over its head, they say.

They examined in its ears, they say.

"I'm sleepy.

You take the child.

It does not seem like a child.

You hold it.

I'm sleepy.

I have not slept for so many days.

You look at it.

Something is wrong with my child," she said, they say.

"This is 'some kind' of child.

It may be damaged.

Carry it around.

I guess something might have stung it," they said, they say.

"I don't know.

Doctor it!

I have seen many dawns because of the child.

It is 'some kind' of child.

It is not a child.

I have not slept for so many nights.

Make it nurse.

I will sleep.

Bathe it.

It's crying because something is wrong, I guess.

"This baby of mine is 'some kind' of thing.

You carry it!

I'm sick now.

Let's move north.

Hang up the baby, basket-cradle and all!"

"Yes, I will hang it up."

"You can cry here."

"Come on."

They moved toward the north.

Go back!

Look at the baby!"

I suppose it is dead.

We're going to bury it."

He went back.

The child was nearby, he had come out from in the basket-cradle, they say.

He had been playing there, they say.

He had been playing in the spring, they say.

He had cut off some grass, they say.

He had spread it out, they say.

He had sat in the water, they say.

He had gone, they say.

He had made a weir in a little creek, they say.

He had put down pine cones (as pretend fish), they say.

He had put two net-poles in, they say.

He had woven a net with grass, they say.

He had gone downhill, they say.

He had made a brush fence, they say.

He had put ropes (on it), they say.

He had made a brush fence, they say.

He had gone, they say.

He had built a fire, they say.

He had made a weir, they say.

He had built a fire, they say.

His foot had grown a little, they say.

His foot had gotten big, they say.

He had come down to a large stream, they say.

He had built a weir, they say.

He stood up a stick, and had put a net on it, they say.

He had laid with his head downhill, they say.

His foot had gotten big, they say.

He had built a small fire, they say.

He went north.

He had put down two small sticks, they say.

He had woven a net with iris fiber, they say.

He had woven a small 'sucker net,' they say.

He left there when he had feathered arrows, they say.

He put down a bow where he had walked in the road, they say.

He had gone on, they say.

He had put down a knife, they say.

He had stood up firesticks where he had walked, they say.

"Now you must catch for me my baby that went north," she said, they say.

"We didn't see him."

"You must track him."

"We are tired"

"We tracked over a large are of land."

"You must bring him back," she said, they say.

"We didn't see your baby."

"What is the matter?"

"Nothing. She cries until dawn.

She has cried about it for ten nights.

Because of what that child did.

She wants her child."

"The child was like good and white.

Because it was not my child.

It was 'some kind' of child," she said, they say.

"Do not cry it; it's not a child."

"I love my baby.

He did not stop crying.

He nearly killed us with his crying.

We did not sleep.

We watched over it for many nights.

The child is 'some kind' of child."

"Don't cry for it, my wife."

"I won't cry."

He had built a small fire, they say.

He had put down small sticks, they say.

He had tied an eel-pot in the bottom of it, they say.

He had woven it, they say.

It is long, he had put it in the water, they say.

He caught pine-cones when he had called them 'fish', they say.

He had made Iris-fiber net strings, they say.

He had twisted the net rope, they say.

He went north.

In Eel River he had made a weir, they say.

"I hung up my child because it cried for many nights," she said, they say.

"You must track it," they said, they say.

"I will leave it because I'm tired.

I will go back.

You must bring it back when you come back," he said, they say.

"When you have tracked him a long way you can let my child go," he said, they say.

Another one came.

"I let that one go because he went far away," he said, they say.

"That's enough, we'll let him go," he said, they say.

"We will go back to the house.

I'm tired.

I'm thirsty for some water.

I'm tired because I went a long way.

I will sleep."

He had gone down to a creek, they say.

He had made a weir, they say.

He had put in a net, they say.

He had built a fire, they say.

He had gone, they say, north, way up north.

He had crossed a large creek far over there, they say.

He did not make a weir, they say.

He took a canoe north, they say.

He stole it, they say.

He went far, way up north, they say.

His tracks were not found, they say.

He went somewhere, they say.

They looked in vain for his tracks, they say.

They did not find them, they say.

"He climbed up on the bank, I guess," they said, they say.

"You go north in the water," they told him, they say.

"Otter, you go north," they told him, they say.

To Mink and Canvasback Duck, "Well, you swim north.

You must find him."

"No, I swam far in vain."

"He is somewhere, I guess," he said, they say.

"Burn (a signal fire) for him.

He's somewhere, I guess," he said, they say.

He was seen way far up north, they say.

"In the evening the child was walking way up north," a person from the north said, they say.

"In the evening the child was walking way up north," a person from the north said, they say.

When he arrived he had taken it (canoe) from the water, they say.

He had built a fire in it, in the canoe, they say.

He had gone north, they say.

He had burned the ground over, they say.

"Who is burning the ground over?" they said, they say.

"A boy was walking in the north.

He was going north carrying arrows and a bow," he said, they say.

"We did not know him.

He was a stranger.

We did not speak to him.

He was walking way far up north, they say.

He had come down to Eel River, they say.

He had made a weir, they say.

He had built a small fire, they say.

He had put down two small sticks, they say.

He had netted suckers.

He ate them up.

Their heads lay in the fire, they say.

He had gone further north, they say.

He had come down to a creek, they say.

He had made a weir, they say.

He had fished with a net, they say.

He had caught a salmon.

Its head lay in front of the fire, they say.

He had gone north, they say.

He had come down to a creek, they say.

He made a weir.

When he had made a net pole he had put it in the net, they say.

He had caught a black salmon.

Its head lay before the fire, they say, a large black salmon head.

He had caught a night eel, they say.

It lay in front of the fire, they say.

He had caught two day eels, they say.

They were in front of the fire in the net.

It is close now, they say.

They saw his tracks, they say.

He was seen by two people where they were picking acorns, they say.

"There is someone walking from the south.

Speak to him."

"Yes, I'll talk to him."

"Where are you going?

They say you ran off way to the south."

"Where are you going?

Go back to your mother."

"I will not go back.

My mother is in the north.

I am going to my mother.

I am going a long way."

"Your father is crying.

Go back."

No, my father is not in the south.

My father is in the north."

"When are you going home?"

"I am not going back.

I will not stay anywhere.

My country is in the north.

Much land here in the north is who else's but my mother's," he said, they say.

"Why did you take me back?

I don't want to stay alone.

I went north.

Because I'm going to make the fish come, they will come from the north.

Black salmon will come from here in the north.

Hook-bill salmon will come from here in the north

Spring salmon will come from here in the north.

Suckers will come.

Night eels will come.

White trout will come from here in the north.

Turtles will walk from here in the north.

From the north here, crawfish will walk from here in the north.

Let the water recede in the summertime.

Let the creek water be cold.

Let the spring water be cold.

Let the river water be warm.

It will not entirely vanish.

There will be water standing in some places.

Water will flow in short riffles in some places.

Far away to the north the water falls.

Rocks are standing under it.

Wherever it is it is foggy, they say, and cold.

When it will rain, when the fish will come, the water rises, they say.

He came in winter-time when it becomes fall, Buckeyes White, Salmon Eye, Big Long Month, Entrance Slippery, Red Stick, Burst Leaf, Dry Grass, long after it was spring, in the middle of summer, when it is burned over.

Under the great water-fall he went in.

Two women saw him in the foam at 'Bad Ground Place' that nobody can go into, they say.

That is all.

Translation Summary

from Professor Pliny Earle Goddard's original translation - 1909

The baby cried night and day. "What is the matter with it?" they asked. They bathed it. They looked it all over. They looked at the palms of its hands, at its feet, on its head, and in its ears.

"I am sleepy," said the mother, "you take the baby. I have not slept a single night. Something is wrong with it. Maybe something is broken. I have stayed awake many nights on its account, I am sick now. Take it north. Hang up the baby in a tree, basket and all." It was done.

"Go back and look at the baby. I guess it is dead. We will bury it," said the mother later. But when her husband went back to the child, he found it had crawled out of the basket and had been playing about. It had played in the spring. It had made a weir (fish trap) in a small stream. He had put pine cones in the water for fish. He had made two net poles and woven a net of grass. He had set ropes for snares and built a fence of brush leading to them. Then he had then gone on to the north. His small foot had become larger. He had gone down where the streams are large. He had made a net of iris fiber. He made a bow and feathered arrows. The husband returned to his wife with the news.

"Now I know my baby has gone north. You must catch him for me," she said. The husband and several men of the tribe went north again to track the child and when they returned they said. "We did not see him, we are tired. We tracked him over much country." "You must bring him back," she insisted. She cried all night. Ten nights she has cried for her baby.

"Do not cry," they told her, "he was some kind of a magic child." He had built a small fire. He had put down short sticks. He had made long eel-pots and fastened them by the bottom. He had caught the pine-cones which he had put in the water and called fish. He had made strings for the net of iris. The rope that passes around the net he made by twisting. He went on toward the north. In Eel river he had made a weir.

"I hung my baby up in a tree because it cried so many nights," the mother said to them, "You must track him, and when you come back you must bring him with you. Eventually the men went out

again to find the boy had gone further down to a stream. His feet became larger. He had built a weir and put in a net. He had built a fire. He continued to travel north. Far to the north he crossed a large creek. He did not build a weir, but took a canoe instead. He used it to travel north. His track was not found. They looked for it in vain. They did not find his tracks. "He must have climbed up somewhere," they said. "You go north through the water," they told Otter. "You go north," they told Mink. "You swim north," they told White Duck. "You must find him."

Far away to the north he was seen. "Far to the north the child was walking in the evening," said a person who came from there. He had taken his canoe from the water and had built a fire in it. He had gone north. He had burned the ground over. "Who is burning the ground over?" they asked. "A boy is walking north carrying bow and arrows," he said. "We did not know him. He was a stranger. We did not speak to him."

He had walked far to the north. He had come down to a large river. He had built a weir. He had made a small fire there. He had put down two small sticks. When they had turned to suckers he had caught them in a net and eaten them. The heads lay in the fire. He had gone further north. He had come down to a stream where he had built a weir. He had fished with a net and caught a salmon. Its head lay before the fire. He had gone on toward the north. He had come down to a stream. He had built there a weir. When he had made a pole for the net he had put it into the net and caught a black salmon. There lay before the fire a large black salmon's head. He had caught eels in a net. They lay before the fire. He had caught two day-eels. They lay in the net before the fire. Those following were near him now. They saw his tracks.

Two persons gathering acorns saw him and asked "Where are you going? They say you ran off from way south of here. Where are you going? Will you return to the south?"

"I am not going back. This northern country is my new mother. I will make the fish come. Black salmon shall come from the north. Hookbills will come from the north. Spring salmon will come from the north. Suckers will come from the north. Eels will come. Trout

will come from the north. Turtles will walk from the north. Crabs will crawl from the north. Although the water of the creeks will dry up in the summer-time. The water of springs will be cold. The water of large rivers will be warm. The water shall not entirely vanish. It shall stand in some places. Short riffles shall still flow." In winter when it is cold. It will rain. The fish will come. The water rise. After Winter-time, when fall has come, after the month of buckeyeswhite, of salmon-eye, of long moon, of entrance-slippery, of brush-red (tunLtuk), of grass-brown, long after it was spring, in the middle of summer, when the ground had been burned he came. Under the great water-fall two women saw him go in amidst the foam where no one is able to enter.