

**PUBLICATIONS OF THE
AMERICAN
ETHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY;
VOLUME IV; MAIDU TEXTS**

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ROLAND B. DIXON

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MAIDU TEXTS

PUBLICATIONS
of the
American Ethnological Society
Edited by FRANZ BOAS

VOLUME IV

MAIDU TEXTS

BY

ROLAND B. DIXON



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CONTENTS.

| | Page |
|--|------|
| INTRODUCTION | I |
| 1. Creation Myth. — Part I | 4 |
| 2. Creation Myth. — Part II | 26 |
| 3. Coyote's Adventures | 68 |
| 4. Coyote and Muskrat | 104 |
| 5. Coyote, the Mountain-Tossing People, and the Wind-Man | 118 |
| 6. Thunder-Boy and Lizard-Man | 140 |
| 7. Thunder-Boy and Lizard-Man (variant) | 144 |
| 8. Thunder and Mosquito, and the Theft of Fire | 150 |
| 9. Sun-Man and Frog-Woman | 172 |
| 10. The Girls who married the Stars | 182 |
| 11. Rolling Skull | 188 |
| 12. Night-Hawk-Man | 192 |
| 13. The Serpent-Lover | 196 |
| 14. Bat-Man | 202 |
| 15. The Frightener | 214 |
| 16. Fisher-Man | 218 |
| 17. Mountain-Lion and his Children | 226 |
| 18. Mouse-Man | 238 |

INTRODUCTION.

THE texts here presented form a part of the linguistic material collected during the years 1902 and 1903 for the California Expedition of the American Museum of Natural History in New York, which was maintained through the liberality of the late Mr. C. P. Huntington. All of the texts were secured at Genesee, Plumas County, California, from Tom Young, a half Maidu, half Atsugewi man, who, although only about thirty years of age, possessed an extensive knowledge of the myths of the Maidu of this region. The dialect in which the myths are recorded is that of the Northeastern Maidu, of which a grammatical sketch has been published in the "Handbook of American Indian Languages."¹ English versions of many of these myths have already been published,² and also a discussion of the main features of Maidu mythology and its relation to that of the surrounding tribes.³

The order of arrangement followed, places first the Creation Myth, obtained in two parts in successive years. The various tales relating particularly to Coyote come next, after which the order is in general dependent on relative importance, or wideness of relationship. The nineteen myths given form but a small part of those known to the Maidu of this region, but are apparently

¹ Roland B. Dixon, Maidu, an Illustrative Sketch (Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 40, Part I, pp. 679-734). Washington, Government, 1911.

² Roland B. Dixon, Maidu Myths (American Museum of Natural History, Bulletin, Vol. XVII, pp. 33-118). New York, 1902.

³ Journal of American Folk-Lore, Vol. XVI (1903), pp. 32-36.

those most commonly told, and best known to the stock as a whole.

In the translation an attempt has been made to give a reasonably free rendering, redundant words or repetitions being occasionally omitted, and words needed to complete the sense being supplied.¹ To the first part of the Creation Myth a pretty close interlinear translation is given as well; and it is believed that, with this as an indication, there will be little difficulty in following the other translations. The paragraphs and sentences in text and translation correspond in all cases. Some forms are still obscure; and where a tentative translation is given, it is indicated by a query. It will be noticed that in the text the same word is often spelled in different ways, or given a varying accent. It has seemed best to record these different forms just as they were heard at the time, rather than to try to reduce them to a single, normal form. The accent has always been placed at the end of the stressed syllable.

In the preparation of these texts, the interest and helpful counsel of Dr. Franz Boas has been unflinching; but the author, and the author alone, is responsible for whatever sins of omission or commission the volume may contain.

ALPHABET. — The phonetic system of the Maidu is only moderately extensive. It possesses but one series of *k*-sounds, of which only the *k* is frequent, and is lacking in velars and lateral (*l*) sounds. The consonant system includes palatals, alveolars, dento-alveolars, labials, and laterals. The sonants and surds are as a rule not very clearly differentiated, and it is sometimes difficult to determine in a given case which is intended. Surds are more common than sonants in the pairs *g-k* and *d-t*, *g* in particular being quite uncommon. Although in most

¹ Words thus added to complete the sense are enclosed in parentheses.

groups of consonants there is a sonant, surd, and fortis, yet the fortis is often by no means strongly marked, and is difficult to separate from the surd. The glottal catch is but little used. A peculiar feature of the Maidu is the existence of two weak inspirational sonant stops *B* and *D*. The exact method of formation of these sounds is not clear. However, it is certain that inspiration proceeds no further than the soft palate; the peculiar quality of the sound being produced by a "smack" formed by a slight vacuum in the mouth. The *B* and *D* occur only as a rule before *ö*, and the difference between them and the ordinary *b* and *d* is, in the case of some speakers and in some words, very slight; in other words, or in the same words by other and generally older speakers, the difference is strongly marked. The consonant system of the Maidu may be shown in tabular form as follows:

| | <i>Sonant.</i> | <i>Surd.</i> | <i>Fortis.</i> | <i>Spirant.</i> | <i>Inspirant.</i> | <i>Nasal.</i> |
|-----------------------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------|
| <i>Palatal</i> | g | k | kʰ | x | — | ŋ |
| <i>Alveolar</i> | d | t | tʰ | — | D(ö) | n |
| <i>Dento-alveolar</i> . . . | — | ts | — | s, c | — | — |
| <i>Labial</i> | b | p | pʰ | — | B(ö) | m |
| <i>Lateral</i> | l | — | — | — | — | — |
| <i>Glottal catch</i> . . . | (ʔ) | | | | | |

h, y and w.

The vowels are quite variable. One of the most characteristic features of the use of vowels is the fondness for the *ö*, *ä*, and *ü* sounds. The vowels are as follows:

| | | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | | <i>ü</i> | | |
| | | <i>u</i> | | <i>ü</i> |
| | | <i>i</i> | | <i>ī</i> |
| | | <i>e</i> | | <i>ē</i> |
| | <i>ä</i> | <i>ɛ</i> | <i>ö</i> | |
| <i>a</i> | | | | <i>o</i> |
| <i>ä</i> | | <i>á</i> | | <i>ō</i> |

1. CREATION MYTH. — Part I.

When this world was filled with water, Earth-Maker floated upon it, kept floating about. Nowhere in the world could he see even a tiny bit of earth. No persons of any kind flew about. He went about in this world, the world itself being invisible, transparent like the sky.

He was troubled. "I wonder how, I wonder where, I wonder in what place, in what country, we shall find a world!" he said. "You are a very strong man, to be thinking of this world," said Coyote. "I am guessing in

Kō'doyapem kan ūniñ' kō'do momim' opit'mōni hin-
 Earth-Maker and this world water full-when
 tsetō'yetsōiam. Hin'tsetoyewē'bisim hōmōñ' kodoi'dimaat
 drifted about. Kept drifting about where world-in indeed
 nuk'tim kawim'maat tsemen'tsoia. Tsai'tsainom mai'dūm
 little earth indeed saw-not. Different kinds people
 hesi'kimaat hesim'maat kai'noyemen'tsoia. Amōn'ikan
 what-of indeed what indeed flew-not about. Then and
 5 ūniñ' kā'dom tsewu'suktipem kā'dom yōtson'otsoia. Ēpin'-
 this world one caused not to world he went about. Above-
 be seen (?)
 iñkoyō'di kō'do tschē'hetsonopem yak'hubōktsoia.
 valley in world one that looks through, it felt, seemed like.
 is transparent
 Adōñ'kan wasā' hubōk'notsoia. "Hesā'dom ai'tē hesā'-
 So and had he felt. "What I wonder what
 dom ai'tē hōmōñ' kodoi'di ai'tē hesā'pedi ai'tē hesā'peñ
 I wonder where world in I wonder what (place) I wonder what
 at
 kodoi'di kō'doi tsel'ukōāñkas," atsoi'am. "Mī kaañ'kano
 world in world we may see," he said. "You you are
 10 tetet' ep'tim mai'dūm amām' ūniñ' kō'do huhē'yedom." —
 very strong man that this world thinking of." —