

# **The stories hold water: Learning and burning in North Fork Mono homelands**

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## **Abstract**

This essay describes aspects of an eco-cultural restoration program and closely associated educational initiatives and negotiations between the North Fork Mono Tribe and United States governmental agencies. We base our educational approach in Indigenous narrative and land-based experience. We seek not to *explain* land and water but to help guide students, policymakers, and other learners to come to *understand* land and water. We consider land, water, plants, and animals as narrators and as sources of knowledge – as primary historical sources, texts that narrate settler colonial and Indigenous history and the physical and cultural changes that colonialism has wrought. As we argue, approaches that combine narratives with visits to the land are key methods in land based education. In addition to describing the theoretical foundations of our curriculum, the essay provides accounts of obstacles presented to us by state education authorities and of successful negotiations to appropriately include tribal knowledge in updates to the California State Water Plan and in agreements with the U.S. Forest Service regarding tribal jurisdiction.

**Keywords:** *Land-based education; water; Indigenous narrative; Indigenous jurisdiction; forestry*

## Introduction

Here in the homelands of the North Fork Mono (or Nium, the people), near the geographical center of what is now called the state of California, we practice land-based education to increase people's understanding of their complex interrelationships with land and water. We wish to restore those interrelationships along with the ecological, economic, and spiritual dynamics of the entire cultural landscape that existed from time immemorial until European invasion and the advent of settler colonialism in the late eighteenth century. A significant part of the restoration of these dynamics is the reestablishment of the Indigenous cultural fire regime: the spatial patterns, frequency, seasonality, and intensity of anthropogenic burns that sustain the North Fork Mono Tribe's spiritual relatives on the land, in the waters, and in the sky. The design of our eco-cultural restoration program requires us to decolonize our educational approach, to resist the invasion and settlement that many assume is a 'mission accomplished' but which we see as an ongoing but subvertible and reversible process. A key part of our approach is to get people out onto the land, where they can hear tribal narratives and best appreciate the extent of the tribe's jurisdiction.<sup>1</sup>

Narrative and experience form the basis of Nium epistemology and pedagogy. Members of the North Fork Mono Tribe build knowledge by combining lessons learned from time-tested narratives and traditional practices with direct observations. As a tribal chair (Ron) and a collaborating, non-Indigenous scholar-activist (Jared), the authors of this essay are also educators and watershed restorationists who have drawn on traditional narratives to impart knowledge in various educational forums such as a web-based curriculum (Aldern and Goode, 2013), in water planning forums such as the California Tribal Water Summit, and in collaborative forest planning forums in the Sierra National Forest.

As we employ narratives in these various educational forums, our primary goal is not to *explain* land and water in the sense of analyzing the landscape. We do not wish to construct a schematic diagram of the forest's circuitry or a blueprint of its mechanisms. We do not wish to map the land or to flatten and smooth its undulations and meandering contours. Instead, our goal is to bring students, natural resource agency staff, policymakers, and other learners to come to *understand* North Fork Mono land and water as they are, to understand how land and water occur in particular locations. We aim to bring people to stand among the landforms, to immerse themselves in the waters - sometimes literally, in the sense of leading field trips to important places and, at other times, figuratively in that storytelling can prompt a listener to envision places in great detail.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that, etymologically, *juris-diction* equates to *law-speak*. To the extent that Indigenous stories give voice to environmental law (in the social sense) and ecological law (in the scientific sense), that is, to the extent that they articulate the nature of relationships among human and other members of the community of land, these stories constitute environmental and ecological jurisdiction.

## Why narrative?

Narrative is a primary educational medium for North Fork Mono land-based education, and storytellers employ narrative content, themes, style, and form to deliver their lessons. As educational media, stories can fulfill various functions within a community. Kwachka (1992) identifies three categories of Koyukon stories, for instance, as 1) traditional tales, 2) historical narratives, and 3) topical narratives “created out of daily life and honed by repetition until, if of sufficiently general interest they enter the historical repertoire” (1992, p. 71). In North Fork Mono homelands, a topical narrative of daily life (e.g., “my uncle took us fishing”) may, over the course of many years, enter the Nium historical repertoire (e.g., “we used to go fishing up there”). In turn, if historical narratives have been honed and repeated sufficiently then they may enter a community’s paradigmatic narrative canon (e.g., “that’s where the fish came from, where Rainbow Trout emerged from a rock”).

In our educational ventures, we have drawn on North Fork Mono stories told in 1918 by Nium elders Chepo, Singing Jack, and Mollie Kinsman Pimona and published in 1923 by the Berkeley anthropologist Edward Winslow Gifford. Just as we use stories as educational lessons today, it is useful to think of the stories told by these three elders in 1918 as lessons. Some of the stories were told in English, others in Mono (thus we must include translators Daniel Harris and Mary Sharpton Teaford among the narrators). The stories comprise tribal ecological knowledge, though translation and transcription have distorted them from the original oral tellings; the stories as published by Gifford are cultural hybrids. Yet the distortion, the hybridity, becomes necessary for the narratives to function as education for non-Mono-speaking people.

Gifford recorded these narratives in North Fork in 1918, a year that marked the height of a time of great change for the Nium. By then a number of forces had converged on the tribe, including the wholesale expropriation and fragmentation of their traditional lands, waters, and trails by various plunderers, including the U.S. government, private landowners, corporations, and churches. Other dramatic transformations in Nium lands were wrought by the U.S. Forest Service’s official suppression of the traditional Nium fire regime; the overgrazing of montane meadows by cattle, sheep, horses, and pack animals; the development of hydroelectric power, with its dams, tunnels, penstocks, and reservoirs; and the increasing recreational use of the Sierra National Forest. The combined pressures of these developments forced Nium out of the higher elevations of their homelands to remain near their homes in and around the town of North Fork and nearby schools, Protestant church missions, and individual Indian homesteads and allotments (Lee, 1998; Snyder, 2001). Along with this disruption of traditional land tenure came such social effects and economic adjustments as increased consumption of alcohol and engagement in wage labor.<sup>2</sup> Over the years, Nium responses to these pressures and upheavals have included the telling of stories that represented an alternative to the education delivered to North Fork Mono children

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<sup>2</sup> These two dependencies are mutually reinforcing. Physical dependency on alcohol fosters a dependency on the wages needed to purchase the alcohol, and both dependencies detract from sovereign Indigenous economic activities and interrelationships.

at public and mission schools, and an alternative to historical narratives by U.S. scientists, historians, land managers, and landowners.

## THE MAKING OF THE WORLD

The world was made by Prairie Falcon (yayu), Crow, and Coyote impounding the waters in the east and allowing this world to appear. The valleys were washed out by the water. Prairie Falcon, Crow, and Coyote made the creeks. These three are in the east now, watching the dam that they made, to see that it does not break and the impounded waters destroy the world. **Told in English by Mrs. Molly Kinsman Pimona.** (Gifford, 1923, p. 305)

The stories that Molly Kinsman Pimona told Gifford are particularly rich in animal and plant characters (see, for example, “Measuring Worm Saves Prairie Falcon,” in Appendix I) but all of the narrators’ tales include other-than-human persons – often to the exclusion of humans – and water frequently appears as a powerful agent of transformation. The creation stories and other stories told to Gifford date from the time of the transition, when all beings, including animals, could speak. The Nium still consider these animals, plants, water, and wind to be relatives and full citizens in their community. As Gayton (1946) wrote, “a most characteristic circumstance of Yokuts and Western Mono culture [is] that men [sic] and animals are peers” (p. 262). Gayton further explained that Mono attitudes toward animals were most clearly expressed in recounting of daily events: “So often has this intangible appeared when Yokuts or Western Mono speak of the activities of birds and animals that it is clearly an unconscious or unvoiced attitude of equivalence as living creatures in one small world” (1946, p. 262). Regarding the sacred spirit and power of water, Gayton wrote, “Water was venerated and regarded as immortal” (1930, p. 76). Gayton later cited a Yokuts-Western Mono man, Sam Osborne: “According to S.O., water is a powerful curing medium. He considers it immortal ‘because it is everywhere and never dies’” (1948, p. 242).

Water and its associated animals are still sacred and powerful. Ron’s Uncle John and Aunt Daisy used to tell a story about fishing down in the hole (canyon) of the San Joaquin River where the confluence of the stream’s forks come to a head on the river. The trail to the fishing spot was steep, treacherous, and full of hazards. The bear-man had his cave shelter along the canyon wall. Eight- and ten-foot-long rattlers were commonly seen and encountered. But fishing down in the hole meant lots and lots of large tasty native trout. Uncle John’s elders told him that when you go there, you have to give fish to the black snakes. They come up out of the water and if you don’t make an offering, they will eat you; there is no escape. If you want a successful fishing trip and to get out safely, you had better make your offering. So Uncle John and Aunt Daisy made their offering. Out came the black snakes for the offering. Uncle John said it was the best fishing he ever did. He told this story throughout the ninety years of his life.

Today, in the midst of a historic period of little rain or snow, our water and waterways are in trouble. What offerings do settlers who use water and its resources make to the river? They

take water and they cry about their lack of water, but what do they give back, what are they doing about the mismanagement of our collective watersheds (Goode, 2009)?

## Nium trails

In addition to water, animals, and plants, Nium stories emphasize movement, a constant coming and going, as indicated by the relative frequencies of the verb forms as represented in the word cloud in figure 1.

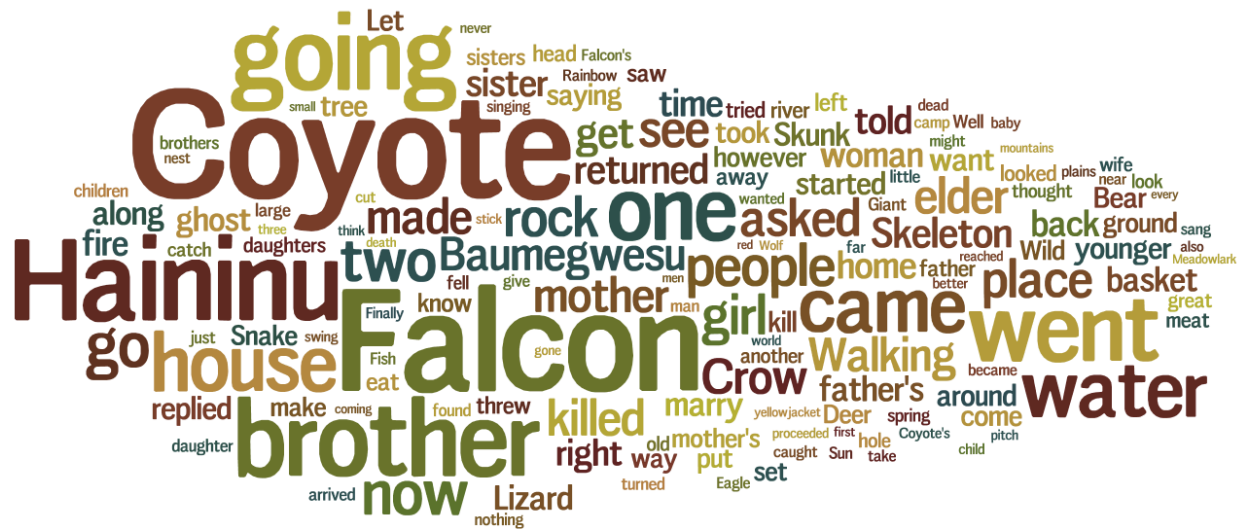


Fig. 1. A word cloud generated from the Nium stories published by Gifford in 1923. In this image, the words that appear with greatest frequency in the stories appear with the largest font sizes.

Descriptions of the aboriginal territory of the Nium have differed depending on whether the author is Nium or non-Native. In the 1790s, when Spaniards established missions along the Central California coast, the Nium lived where the stories tell us the people have always lived: along trails that interlace across the western slope of the Sierra Nevada, from the mountains' crest to the Central Valley floor, in the extensive, hydrologically intricate, granitic watershed of the San Joaquin River. One of the primary differences in various authors' descriptions of this territory lies in their degree of emphasis on the trails that interwove throughout the area, making multiple connections among places and peoples. Gifford (1932), for instance, made no mention of trails in his ethnography's overview of North Fork Mono lands. Instead, his text, along with a map he published, portrayed the Nium as residing within borders defined as those dividing European nations.

[The North Fork Mono] occupied the most northerly portion of Western Mono territory. North and west of them were the Southern Miwok; also west were the Chukchansi and related Yokuts groups; east, but separated by the high Sierra Nevada, were the “Eastern Mono” of Mono and Owens valleys; and to the south, other divisions of Western Mono, those of the south drainage of the San Joaquin river, of the Kings, and of the Kaweah river drainages. (p. 15)

In contrast, Nium descriptions of the territory emphasize the connections that trails have provided among places and peoples. For instance, the North Fork Mono Tribe’s petition for federal recognition stresses the importance of the trails and the dynamic economies, cultural exchanges, and travels their existence implies:

Another aspect of the Tribe’s traditional territory is the massive network of trails leading to and from Mono villages, hamlets, campsites, sacred grounds, gathering, and trading areas. These trails extend to the coast of the Pacific Ocean in the west, over the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range in the east, and both northerly and southerly along the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range. (Goode, 2007a)

The reticulate Nium trails, perhaps better envisioned as intertwining corridors than as the well-defined roads and hiking trails of today’s National Forest, undulated up, down, and across the foothills and higher elevations of the Sierra, interconnecting specific areas mentioned by Lee (1998) and Goode (2007a) and crossing the San Joaquin River at several points – notably at Horseshoe Bend or Tsobotebau (Nium for “San Joaquin River Crossing”), just west of where a bridge crosses the river today. Thus, the Nium had regular contact with other Western Mono people in the Jose Basin and within a complex network of routes comprising Shaver Lake, Chawanakee Flats, Huntington Lake, Kaiser Pass, Florence Lake, the Vermilion Valley, and Mono Pass (Gifford, 1932; Hindes, 1959; Lee, 1998; Snyder, 2001).

As Snyder (2001) has documented, the Nium engaged in a complex set of movements of people along these trails. This complexity stands in contrast to the erroneous concept that the Nium were nomadic and moved from the lower lands to the higher ground depending on the time of year or so-called season. Some members of families did this. But a close study of the edible herbage and the movement of the animals reveals that it was not feasible for all to move in any one direction.

Not that all families or family members gathered all food products. They didn’t. That’s why tribes created the barter system. Different families, different members of the family indulged in various subsistence activities. Some were hunters, others gatherers and yet others fished or practiced medicine. All Nium had permanent homes, from which some family members traveled at various times for various purposes. These travels and the labor (hunting, gathering, burning), performed all along the trails, led to a deep knowledge of life in the intricately folded ridges, basins, streamcourses, hillslopes, and peaks of Nium homelands. As we discuss in more detail below, the labor performed by the Nium along these trails included conducting burns to sustain cultural resources such as water, plants, and animals. White (1995), in discussing the

labor performed in and around the Columbia River in times past, laments, “We no longer understand the world through labor. Once the energy of the Columbia River was felt in human bones and sinews” (p. 4). White argues that engaging in labor, “rather than ‘conquering’ nature involves human beings so thoroughly that they can never be disentangled” (p. 7). In the Sierra Nevada, Nium bones and sinews have felt not only the energy of San Joaquin River but the energy of its entire watershed, as they have understood and entangled themselves in their homeland through traveling, hunting, gathering, trading, and burning. Today, it is true that Forest Service employees perform labor in the forest, but they tend to go to work, do their jobs, and then go home. The Nium, however, *live* in the forest. They are out from April to December. That is eight months of traveling around, camping, harvesting, tending, hiking, holding ceremonies, observing, monitoring, and restoring. These Indigenous people will never be disentangled from their homeland.

## **How stories work**

As guides to understanding the tribe’s homelands, North Fork Mono stories “hold water” in two figurative senses: 1) taken together, the stories’ descriptions of the interrelationships of water, humans, and other beings holds up as true and accurate the experiences of Mono people, and 2) water appears in nearly every story, permeating them as a supremely powerful physical force and spirit (Fig. 1). Take the story that Gifford called “Girl Ghost”, for instance (see Appendix II). Chepo, the elder who narrated the story for Gifford, immediately established that the ghost came from the river.

The people in the camp were singing. The girl ghost heard them and set out for their camp. She came from Tübau (the San Joaquin River) and carried a large burden basket.

The stories often start by establishing the setting with places and place names. The storytellers invite the listener to be present in these places, among these streams, springs, plants, and animals. The stories are oral maps of a setting within the tribe’s homeland, but they are more dynamic than a two-dimensional, static map. The next sentence of “Girl Ghost” establishes a movement in a particular direction:

From her home down on the river she started towards the mountains, intending to cross them.

This story goes on to mention water – in the form of rivers, creeks, lakes, headwaters, floodwaters, and springs – more than two dozen times.

Beyond the omnipresent theme of water, the story operates on several levels. There are, for instance, the lessons that the basic plot of the story conveys. When children listen to the

story, for instance, they are warned: the ghost kidnaps boys. Men agree not to sing, not to attract the ghost's attention, and boys agree that it is not a good idea to hang around outside after dark.

Other narrative levels of "Girl Ghost" include historical narrative and the expression of long-term, sustained relationship with land and water. Today, Nium and even local settlers who listen to the story hear of places and camps with which the Nium associate life experiences, sights, sounds, the fragrance of certain plants. The mention of ponowi, or "Indian potato," may bring to mind the setting of a meadow, where the nutritious bulbs are cultivated by the periodic burning of the meadow. Audience members' own experiences and the stories' descriptions and mentions of places may remind the listeners of how to behave in those places, how to pay them proper respect – perhaps, for example, with an offering of tobacco. Gestures and verb forms in a live Mono-language storytelling would enhance the narrative in ways that can never be duplicated in a transcribed English translation: voice or posture may evoke an image of a certain animal and from the presence of that animal in a certain place listeners may infer even more about the setting – perhaps the time of year at which the story events are taking place. But hybrids – translations and transcriptions – can still impart ecological knowledge to both Nium and people from outside the tribe, especially if they supplement their listening or reading with walking and working the land, putting all of their mind, bone, and sinew to the task of understanding. When Jared mentioned one of the stories published by Gifford to North Fork Mono elder Melvin Carmen in 2009, Melvin threw up his arms in surprise and launched into his own enthusiastic recounting of the tale, supplementing the Gifford account.

Gifford wrote that only two of the stories he published were cosmogonical (1923, p. 302) but they all have to do with the transition period, the time when animals emerged into people. The stories describe spirits, spirits that are still present in the story settings. The spirits of a place may influence listeners differently at different stages in their life. In the narratives – as in experience – the trails and the constantly moving creeks and rivers are bloodlines, transporting the material and spiritual sustenance from one location in the watershed to another.

Within particular stories, parallelism, parataxis, and repetition are narrative devices for alluding to other tales in the tribe's repertoire and for rewarding repeated readings and tellings (Aldern, 2010; 2013). Stories in the Nium repertoire operate together – there is no one prime narrative, but instead a gathering of stories that refer to each other through the mechanisms of parallelism and parataxis, in much the same way as hypertext can link words, sentences, and paragraphs from various documents, or the way that trails, groundwater, and creeks can link meadows and their cultural resources in a watershed. As Akan (1992) wrote, "Repetition in text is made for refocusing in (an)other context(s). A 'good talk' has lots of repetition to help us draw verbal circles of existence" (p. 17). Repetition makes Nium educational narratives into repeated, ceremonial rituals, and specific stories may play ceremonial roles at certain times of the year or in certain places. For those who encounter Native stories in written form, the educational value of the devices of repetition, parallelism, and parataxis becomes most apparent with repeated readings of the stories. Reading the stories again and again, we commune with the storytellers of the past.



As an example of repetition and themes that emerge between stories, in both Chepo's rendition of "Girl Ghost" and Singing Jack's telling of "The Adventures of Haininu and Baumegwesu" water rises up to surround people. North Fork Mono people today know that they can still call forth water's power, even in a drought. The sky and earth will respond to a song for rain as long as it is sung with care and respect, and not so often that its listeners (the sky and earth) will tire of it.

Nium stories describe the three-dimensional contours of the land and the dynamic movements and flows of sky and waters. The conduct of animals in the narratives, as Karl Kroeber pointed out in his discussion of Native stories, is rooted in the real-world observation that animals display intelligent capacity, but they also liberate our imaginations and "make all things possible" (2004, p. 76). The world comprises animistic power, power that is available to and exchanged among all, in a manner analogous to the continually balancing and re-balancing exchanges of energy in an ecosystem. While such a dynamic view of community falls far from that of an idealized democratic citizenship, taken together the stories tell of humans and non-humans sustaining one another both materially and spiritually: "The divinity of the cosmos is constituted by multifarious forces constantly influencing each other and self-transforming – to no purpose beyond that of sustaining the vitality of the whole" (Kroeber, 2004, p. 110).

Indeed, within the stories that Gifford collected in 1918, multifarious forces and transformations sustain an image of an entire community that includes humans and other persons. Gifford wrote, "As is usual in central California, many of the characters are animal in name and largely in attributes; although frequently both the human and animal aspects of a single character make their appearance in one and the same story" (Gifford, 1923, p. 302).

Narrative, not exposition, is the most rigorous, efficacious educational mode for understanding land as consisting of intricate interrelationships (Allen, Tainter & Hoekstra, 2003). The rigor of narrative in land education lies in its deep immersion in the subject in real-world settings (Washor & Mojkowski, 2006), its attention to accuracy and detail (Beane, 2001), and its complex, intertwining, provocative threads of logic (Strong, Silver & Perrini, 2001). With close listening and reading, Nium stories function as founding documents and they can guide vision, policy, and practice as surely as do the founding documents of a nation-state, such as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States.

## **Cultural burning in the homeland**

In addition to their importance in trade, the trails, discussed earlier in this essay as markers of Nium homelands, played a key role in the Indigenous fire regime in the central Sierra Nevada – that is, in the area's particular patterns of frequency, intensity, severity, and spatial extent of fires. Nium travelers set fires along the trails to encourage the growth of favored plants in meadows and forests. As Lightfoot and Parrish have noted, for California generally: "Anthropogenic fires tend to be set along corridors of movement and occupation... indicating that the pathways of logistical travel provided an excellent opportunity for spreading fires into

more distant corners of [Indigenous homelands]” (2009, pp. 134-135). Lightfoot and Parrish also note that, “a relatively modest-sized [Indigenous group] could have managed [a] region using fire ecology,” in part by “employing multiyear rotational cycles for burning resource patches, [and] a relatively small population could have maintained a sequence of prescribed burns that would have kept resource diversity and productivity high.” Indigenous people in California, including the Nium, encouraged a fire regime with a high frequency of fires of varying intensity (some of which do not appear in the fire-scar records of tree rings), producing “a dynamic mosaic of ever-changing plant successions and communities even within the same basic vegetation type” (pp. 99-100).

Although the North Fork Mono Tribe continues to advocate for a similar fire regime today, physical conditions and official attitudes that have developed over the last one hundred fifty years in the colonizing nation-state of the United States of America make the task a formidable one. The Nium cared for the land from time immemorial, and food was plentiful, but when the United States Forest Service took control of the land in the early twentieth century, it suppressed fire, allowing a dense growth of trees that burn completely in wildfires (Pyne, 1982). The North Fork Mono Tribe is now engaged in teaching federal and state agencies how to use fire. Rather than fearing fire, the Nium believe that fire is good and if something bad happens then there must be a reason; the land needed to be cleansed. One or two years after a fire, the beneficial results are apparent. The animals return because they can move about and food is plentiful. The problem is that most agencies do not plan for the next fire; they do not maintain an area that has been cleansed by a large, severe wildfire by subsequently prescribing cultural fires, as would the Nium if they could exert their narratives’ jurisdiction.

Lightfoot and Parrish describe a sophisticated system of interaction with the land that existed throughout pre-contact California, a system based upon a varied, adaptable rotation of fire frequency and intensity:

Multiyear rotational cycles would have enhanced biological diversity and productivity through the creation and enhancement of environmental mosaics – complex quiltlike environments with multifaceted habitats – teeming with varied kinds of food, medicinal, and basketry resources. (2009, pp. 117-118)

In the Sierra Nevada, the interaction of fire, topography, and floods produced a complex, patchy pattern of vegetation in riparian areas. Wet meadows, with their finely structured, moist fuels such as sedges, may have acted as firebreaks until late in the season (Dwire & Kauffman, 2003), allowing the Nium to steer and diminish fires by using slope, prevailing winds, and fuel characteristics. These prescribed fires would have helped to prevent invasion of meadows by conifers, deciduous trees, and shrubs that desiccate meadow soils by intercepting rainfall and through evapotranspiration.

Anderson (2009) interviewed Dan McSwain, a Nium elder whose historical narrative confirmed that his people’s traditional practices included such carefully designed cycles of burning:

The Indians used to burn in the fall. They burned in the oaks, chaparral, ponderosa pines, and fir. They burned around the Chiquita Rock Creek area at about 4,000 ft. Different areas were set on fire in the fall, brushy areas, not the same spots every year. Now the fires burn everything. When they'd start a fire they'd burn from the bottom of the slope. It would burn too slow from the top. In those times it would seldom get in the crown of trees. It would just burn the grass. The biggest mistake the Forestry people made is to try and prevent fire. [The Indians] burned every two or three years. You could ride a horse anywhere without running into the brush. Now you can't even get off the road. The same is true in the higher mountains. (Anderson, 2009, p. 153)

Historically, Nium-set, prescribed cultural fires enhanced the growth of desired plants and, by eliminating competition for water and reducing the interception of rainfall by trees and shrubs, raised the water table and increased streamflow. In the story reproduced here in Appendix I, Measuring Worm knows that water rises after a fire, and he uses that knowledge to rescue Falcon from a precipitous rock. Fire and smoke reduce pests such as insects and pathogens (Anderson, 2009, p. 168; Melvin Carmen, personal communication). The Nium prized the green shoots and straight stems of grasses and other plants that resulted from frequent burning of the land. Fire was an indispensable tool in the maintenance of fertile montane meadows (Lee, 1998; Goode, 2007b; Lightfoot & Parrish, 2009; Aldern, 2013).

For the past thirty years Ron has been conducting cultural burns and an archaeological survey on private property near Mariposa in the central Sierra, recently assisted by family members, tribal members, and other practitioners, including Jared. The property is on the site of an ancient village, and the burning and surface excavations we have completed have revealed that the ancient inhabitants burned frequently in and around the village, to clear the underbrush away. They also burned some distance from their village site to enhance the resources they used for cultural purposes. The Mono, Miwok, and Yokotch people of the region regularly drew on some two hundred different resources, including at least ninety-five food sources. They also traded for resources generated a long distance away, which meant they had to travel long distances or possibly to a trade center located strategically nearby, between several tribal nations.

At the Mariposa site, abundant sourberry is growing in the rich soil, soil that is the product of centuries of burns. Other cultural resources identified include redbud, elderberry, rosebud, wormwood, sedgeroot, deergrass, bracken fern, willows, black oaks, water oaks, cedars, bull pine, medicines, teas, seeds, bulbs, rare flowers (e.g., Mariposa pussy paws), buckeye, live oaks, golden oaks, California grape, miner's lettuce, clovers, Yerba Santa, milkweed and coffee berry.

Several other plants have appeared since we started our burns, including miniature ferns, bulbs of various sorts, and native tobacco, which, previously, had been located up the road about a half mile but was not found anywhere on the property. With two of the seven burns conducted over the past two years, tobacco has sprouted up amongst the new sourberry shoots. In one of the burns, tobacco plants are perhaps the dominant resource, embedded in a carpet of flowers such as lupine and owl's clover.

Burning down to the village has resulted in at least a half dozen great benefits. One, an archaeological time-line has surfaced; two, a prehistoric village has been exposed in a more definitive manner; three, parasites infecting trees and shrubs have been effectively eliminated by the burning; four, the effects of smoke from the burns on oaks is apparent in increased leaf density and a reduction of mistletoe; five, the wildlife has been enhanced as evidenced by the number of tracks in the burns, the nibbling of the young shoots and a variety of wildlife species continually associating themselves with the site area; and six, the vision of restoring, rejuvenating and regenerating the cultural resources has been established. Fruition of this project will take place in the next three to five years. The quality and quantity of the berries and shoots will be the indicators of a successful restoration. Yet, reincorporating the ancient burning practice has already successfully divulged the reincarnation of the spirits of the land, the history of our ancestors, and the tribal-traditional ecological knowledge that laid waiting for the descendants to pick up the book and open to pages full of endless data that bridges the centuries of livelihood upon this sacred land.

## **Burning and learning**

Like narrative, then, cultural burning by Indigenous people fosters interconnection and interrelationship. Burning connects the earth to the sky, for example, by opening the forest canopy and allowing more precipitation to reach the soil. Burning also interconnects the Nium to their mammal, reptile, bird, and plant spiritual relatives by opening the forest and allowing these relatives to see one another. Burning rejuvenates oaks and other food-producing plants and thus sustains the food web and the whole forest (Anderson, 2009; Coddington et al., 2014). The acorn production of the Sierra National Forest's thousands of oaks and dozens of oak orchards (groups of thirty to fifty trees), is one of the best indicators of overall forest function. The designation of critical habitat for sensitive and endangered species often emphasizes physical factors such as the physical arrangement and density of large trees, to the neglect of such biotic factors as the availability of food.

By sharing narratives in policymaking and education forums, tribal members assert the tribe's environmental jurisdiction in the watershed of the San Joaquin River. The stories constitute a form of civic education and guiding texts that provide instructions for putting values and principles into action, and policymakers and agency staff are proving, at least in some cases, to be receptive learners. For example, in 2009 California tribal water stories were incorporated into the state's Water Plan Update, and Indigenous narrative deeply influenced the 2013 Tribal Water Summit's "Guiding Principles and Statement of Goals for Implementation," composed and supported by both tribes and state natural resource agencies (California Department of Water Resources, 2013).

North Fork Mono stories and the narrative knowledge they express are also starting to influence Sierra National Forest policy and practice, thus bringing the Tribe and Forest closer to achieving environmental justice, closer to meaningful collaboration on forest policy and practice.

During a recent visit to one of the North Fork Mono Tribe's meadow restoration sites in the Sierra National Forest, where a series of burns has helped to clear encroaching vegetation and allow more precipitation to infiltrate the soil, thus increasing the flow from the meadow's spring, a Forest Service geologist who had heard the story from Ron exclaimed, "It's just like Measuring Worm said! It's just like the Measuring Worm story."

Nium stories tell of the relationships between fire and water, and historical documents concur. O'Neal (1953) recalls a clean forest floor that ultimately meant a valuable source of water for the Valley below. Kinsman speaks of the constant fires of the North Fork Mono that kept their trails and homeland open (Kinsman, 1849-1875). The homeland was open and the Nium were able to see through the forest, see through the trees. This is the vision offered to Mono infants from the moment of their birth, when they are placed in a hooded basket, a basket made of sustainably harvested cultural resources, a basket with designs and an image of being able to see through to the outer world (see Figures 2 and 3). The baby basket's design evokes a lifelong relationship to the land, water, and fire, to sustaining Nium spirituality, philosophy, responsibility and stewardship to all the relatives of the Nium.



Fig. 2. Baby basket made by Ulysses Goode (North Fork Mono). Private Collection, Fresno, California.  
Photo by J. Aldern.





Fig. 3. The baby's-eye view from under the shade of the basket in figure 2. Photo by J. Aldern.

The importance of the water supply that could potentially be sustained through Nium practices cannot be overstated, neither for the North Fork Mono Tribe nor for the settler colonial state of California. According to a 2005 California State Department of Water Resources report, the Sierra Nevada receives 27% of the California's annual precipitation and provides more than 60% of the state's consumptive use of water. Bales and others (2011) concluded that the Sierra Nevada canopy cover – the proportion of the forest floor covered by the vertical projection of the tree crowns – must be reduced by 40% in order to ensure adequate runoff and infiltration of water into streams and aquifers. Currently the Sierra's canopy cover is 80% to 90% closed. Some of our progressive forest districts are attempting to drop that proportion to 60%, but they encounter intense resistance from environmental organizations. On the other hand, prior to 1850, before mass settlement, the forest was open - 40% or less in canopy cover.

The canopy was open because that is where the First People lived and where they were burning, out in the forest, in the foothills, and the valleys. Some ten thousand archaeological sites exist in the Sierra National Forest. Not all are recorded yet, but there isn't a rural, hidden, or pristine spot where people did not live for centuries before the arrival of Europeans.

With a basis in story, one is conditioned well to go out onto the land and listen to or experience its own stories. As we go out onto the land, we consider specific lands and waters themselves as narrators and as sources of knowledge – as primary historical sources, texts that narrate settler colonial and Indigenous history and the physical and cultural changes that colonialism has wrought. The land itself is a storyteller, a narrator.

Jared has contributed to a workbook for Sierra National Forest ecological restoration workshop participants (USFS staff, tribal members, research scientists, legislators). Questions in

the workbook, such as the following, focus attention on the forest's history as a cultural landscape, on the forest itself as historical source:

- Describe what you see or hear on the land. What kinds of plants, animals, people, water, roads, or trails are on the landscape, or have been recently? How is the landscape different on opposite sides of the road?
- How are the various plants spaced or ordered? How much sunlight reaches the forest floor? Where does surface water flow?
- Where else do you see differences or transitions? What caused them (e.g. wildfire, thinning, storms, etc.)?
- What is the historical or contemporary context of the place? Compare the structure of the forest in this place to its structure in past times, or to another place today: to another part of the forest, a meadow, a riparian area, etc.

An observer who has been steeped in Nium narrative is primed to look for an open forest and dynamic connections among places and animals. Ron often sums it up on forest project scoping trips with one question, as the participants look out into the forest: "Could you live here?" The point is to encourage the USFS and others to look for cultural resources and the relationships among them. In many cases, the answer to Ron's question comes down to following the food, to looking for food sources and the means and access to procure food, not only for humans but also for all forest creatures.

## **Challenges, obstacles and successes**

It's not entirely smooth sailing with narrative-based and land-based education. A few years ago, for example, state education authorities presented insurmountable obstacles to our efforts to base lessons in Nium narratives. Our first collaboration was on a contract to write public school curriculum about Indigenous land for the State of California's Education and the Environment Initiative (EEI). With EEI, our idea was to build the curriculum around representative Native stories from each of the seven regions of California. As a first step, we proposed focusing one of the fourth-grade lessons on Singing Jack's 1918 telling of a story of Coyote attempting to fly (Gifford, 1923, p. 355). The reception from our EEI editors was not positive. One of them responded to us impatiently in an email:

By the end of this story, I have learned about many animals, that coyote went to get water in a basket and can climb trees. I haven't learned about goods and services in the environment that humans relied upon to live... The story needs to

paint a clearer picture of the natural system. It would also be ideal to have the story tell of ways that animals (or, even better, humans) use parts of the natural system that the story describes to survive.

It is precisely the attitude that land and water only provide commodities – consumable goods and services - that we counter with our narration of land.

For the editors at EEI, Singing Jack's story did not align well enough with California's state academic content standards. Their view was that, if we were to integrate Native stories into the EEI curriculum at all, the stories "needed" to paint a scientifically "clear" picture of the ecosystem. It became apparent to us that our editors wanted to selectively draw on portions of Native narratives that they saw as well aligned with academic content standards and, specifically, with scientific views of the land.

The EEI editors were not willing (nor able, it seemed) to approach the stories as primary historical sources, as rich narratives that could help students make connections, or as texts that could provide insight into Native views of human interactions with other members of the natural community at particular times in history. Jared was struck by the disrespect shown by the editors toward the story – but it was a disrespect that Ron and nearly all Native peoples have experienced in schooling: "the lack of respect that has been attached to [Natives'] historical understanding, and the consequent and concomitant misinterpretation of their cultural knowledge" (Akan, 1992, p. 34). Ron has shared stories in elementary, high school, and university classrooms, and has experienced that lack of respect at every educational level.

Nevertheless, a few doors are opening. For example, at the time of this writing, negotiations are in the final stages to appropriately include tribal knowledge and acknowledge tribal jurisdiction in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the North Fork Mono Tribe and the Sierra National Forest. To be sure, the U.S. Forest Service is a colonial, capitalistic enterprise, inextricably entangled in and focused on profit, on ecosystem goods and services. Still, this draft MOA takes steps toward honoring Indigenous relationships to land, site-specific relationships that members sustain in the forest, and the document acknowledges the historical reasons for disruptions in those relationships. The MOA opens with "philosophical agreement guidelines" that read, in part:

We now know that many of California's terrestrial ecosystems require periodic fire to maintain species composition, stand structure, and ecosystem function. We also acknowledge that for several thousand years prior to the European colonization of California, that the indigenous people of the Sierra Nevada fashioned, maintained and adapted land management practices that created and fostered the structure and function of the historical terrestrial ecosystems. Consequently, the inhumane and illegal removal of the indigenous peoples from their homes... excluded the thousands of people from the land that are required to maintain a large and complex ecosystem in a sustainable condition. Subsequently, nearly a century and a half of suppressing and excluding fire from grasslands, woodlands and forests has had devastating consequences on the ecosystem, not only with dramatic



landscape homogenization, but vastly altered fuels that will continue to cause catastrophic wildfires well into the future.

The MOA goes on to acknowledge the validity and reliability of the tribe's ecological knowledge:

Therefore, we, the Tribe and Forest, acknowledge that tribal traditional ecological knowledge is based upon approximately 15,000 years of empirical observation, data collection, testing, and is not myth or conjecture. The incorporation of traditional ecological knowledge into Sierra National Forest practices and vegetation management objectives is essential to accomplishing our mutual goals of ecological restoration of the ecosystem.

In a section related to plant gathering, the MOA partially restores tribal jurisdiction within the national forest:

The North Fork Mono Tribe and the Sierra National Forest will address areas where trees and brush have encroached within historic resources and cultural places of importance, including meadows, existing oak orchards, water sources, and have grown substantially contributing to an altered setting and in some places have affected the integrity of the sites. Plant gathering locations have also been affected and choked by increased brush and forest density. Should gathering areas be identified, this MOA proposes to restore production and improve plant material through hand thinning and under burning of species (cultural burning) enhanced by fire and smoke, thereby providing a viable gathering location.

Note that, within the North Fork Mono Tribe, such gathering areas are under the jurisdiction of certain families and individuals. In former times, families burned for their relatives within these local micro-ecologies. Each locality was then connected to others and to wider ecological networks through trade and ceremonial exchanges. The relationships were complex, and it is only the tribe that holds legitimate jurisdiction, through its narratives.

On a precedent-setting May 2014 trip within the Sierra National Forest to identify sites for cultural burns, members of two tribes (the North Fork Mono Tribe and Big Sandy Rancheria) and USFS staff visited three sites in the forest. At the first stop, the area had been burned three times in fifteen years, and the forest floor was filled with wildflowers, herbaceous plants, and black oak seedlings.

One of the challenges of re-introducing cultural burns is the question of how the fires would impact the habitat of sensitive populations of the Pacific fisher, a species in the weasel family that will most likely soon be listed as a federally endangered species. On the field trip, Ron pointed out that, to sustain the fisher, we need to sustain its food supply. A USFS biologist responded that he did not know a lot about the fisher's food requirements. Another federal scientist later confirmed that most of the fisher research and monitoring in the Sierra National Forest has focused on physical requirements of fisher habitat: fisher dens and resting sites require

dense groupings of trees with deep shade to cool the fisher on a blistering Sierra summer day. These dense tree clumps would seem to be threatened by the addition of fire to the landscape.

Yet, the Center for Biological Diversity's (2008) petition to list the fisher as a threatened or endangered species, states that productive oak ecosystems – open orchards of mature, acorn-bearing black oaks – “provide high-quality food for fisher prey” (p. 8). Fisher prey includes birds such as jays, woodpeckers, grouse, quail, turkey, and owls. The fisher's mammal prey may include skunks, opossum, squirrels, rabbits, bobcats, and deer carrion. Other prey includes snakes, lizards, and insects such as wasps and butterfly larvae. Plants and fungal foods consumed by fishers include blackberries, acorns, and various species of mushrooms (Aubry & Raley, 2006; Zielinski et al., 1999). In short, the Pacific fisher seems to be an enthusiastic participant in what Kroeber (2004) called the divinity of the cosmos. The fisher is one of the “multifarious forces” that would benefit greatly if we could, to paraphrase Kroeber, sustain the vitality of the whole forest, just as Nium narrative guides and encourages us to do.

The federal biologists on the May field trip expressed new enthusiasm for restoring oak orchards with cultural burns near fisher denning and resting sites. One remarked that he saw the forest in a new way after visiting the potential cultural burn sites with Ron, that he now sees cultural fire as compatible with fisher conservation, something that was not as easy to imagine without getting out onto the land to listen to Ron narrate what a healthy food web might look like.

## **Conclusion: prospects for the future**

As noted above, in the case of the Pacific fisher, most science has focused on the physical characteristics of its current resting and denning habitats. Fishers tend to rest and den in oak trees that are packed in close proximity to firs and cedars, and it is this forest micro-condition that must protected and preserved by controlling and suppressing fire, or so goes the reasoning of many federal scientists and environmental advocates. Attention to narrative, history, experience, and direct observation leads Indigenous practitioners in a different direction, toward the realization that it is fire that can restore the biological infrastructure - a healthy food web - throughout the whole forest that will allow the fisher to live.

More broadly, Nium and other Indigenous storytellers foster human connection with land and water, as well as a concatenation among places, while narrators working within Western cultural traditions have tended to reflect a mentality of power, causality, management, and control over people and natural resources. “The first duty of the human race is to control the earth it lives upon,” wrote U.S. Chief Forester Gifford Pinchot in 1910 (p. 45), and the sentiment he expressed has not completely faded from the Forest Service today.

Narrative expresses legal jurisdiction and Nium stories are tools of ecological restoration – tools as surely as are fire, maps, and shovels – and ecological restoration is, in turn, an expression of water rights. Forest restoration as guided by Nium stories differs in fundamental

ways from the scientific planning and management regimes of the Sierra National Forest. Deloria once succinctly contrasted scientific and Indigenous worldviews:

Although western science gives us a sophisticated technology to approach land management, its premises rest on the belief that the works is a gigantic machine, that science discovers internal mechanisms, and that technology adjusts them accordingly. There is ...a rejection of the [Indigenous] idea that the natural world might have knowledge, feelings and intelligence in and of itself (1992, p. 49).

Deloria emphasized that in the Native view, “everything was related to everything else in personal and functional ways.” Focusing on this idea of personal kinship, Dennis Rogers Martinez coined the term *kincentric ecology*, an approach to understanding the land that focuses on the study and appreciation of relationship and reciprocity. Martinez contrasts kincentrism with both the pervasive anthropocentrism of much Western thought and also with the biocentrism of deep ecology, and he identifies a “living and sacred relationship between the people and the earth” as the object of restoration (1992, p. 67).

This sacred bond is not merely theoretical, nor is it a relic of a romanticized past. Native sustainment of land and water flows not from a desire to control the environment, as with Pinchot’s conception of conservation, but from a desire to maintain and nourish kinship. An engagement with stories such as the Nium stories recorded by Gifford (1923) can begin to restore lands and waterways by *re-storying* them, by educating students, scientists, and land managers with Nium narrative. Re-storying the central Sierra Nevada with Nium narratives helps to restore interdependent relationships among living beings within the landscape. Restoring these relationships means restoring North Fork Mono land tenure, the Nium hold on the land. That is the goal of our narrative- and land-based education initiatives.

## **Appendix 1**

### MEASURING WORM SAVES PRAIRIE FALCON

Prairie Falcon went hunting. He and Coyote went together.

They camped. Prairie Falcon picked up a small smooth stone, which he put under his head for a pillow. Next morning he found himself on top of a great, precipitous rock, as tall as a large tree. Coyote became much excited. He bit the rock in his attempt to climb it. He tried every means to reach Prairie Falcon, but in vain.

Then he enlisted the aid of Mockingbird, a great chief. Mocking-bird told him to send the Mice up for Prairie Falcon. The Mice tried, but failed. Then they had Flicker try, for they thought he might reach Prairie Falcon with his long tongue. He attempted to climb to where Prairie Falcon lay on his back, but failed. California Woodpecker then made the attempt with similar result. Nuthatch (kabikabina) scaled the rock, but he was too small to bring Prairie Falcon down.

They went after Measuring Worm who lived in the foothills. Coyote went for him first, but he paid no attention to Coyote. Dove went down for him. Dove was a Chukchansi and talked to Measuring Worm in Chukchansi, which was also his native tongue. "All right," said Measuring Worm. "Take your fires off the ground, for I am going up there with the water. I'll go up in the water." He came up into the mountains. He asked where Prairie Falcon was. All the people were dancing around the great rock, making the dust fly.

Measuring Worm wrapped himself about with a milkweed-fiber carrying net, in which he intended to place Prairie Falcon. He scaled the rock in two steps and brought Prairie Falcon down.

Chief Mockingbird said, "Let us all assemble and go out to hunt deer." They hunted and killed some deer and had a great feast. Then all flew, including Coyote.

They sent Coyote down to get a bucket of water. Coyote slid up and down the great smooth rock, when he went for water. All of the people flew over him and made fun of him. Then he thought to himself, "I shall fly." He tried, but he fell, striking the ground hard. He climbed a pine tree. "I am going to be an eagle," he said. He again tried to fly, but fell to the ground.

Then he saw a gopher poking his head out of the ground. He caught the gopher and ate it. "I am going to be a coyote," he said.

*Told in English by Mrs. Molly Kinsman Pimona. (Gifford, 1923, pp. 355-356)*

## Appendix 2

### THE STORY OF A GIRL GHOST

The people in the camp were singing. The girl ghost heard them and set out for their camp. She came from Tūbau (the San Joaquin River) and carried a large burden basket. From her home down on the river she started towards the mountains, intending to cross them. She visited various camps during the night, carrying her burden basket, in which she put victims whom she collected. She was in the habit of picking up children who played out of doors after dark, and throwing them into her basket. Having kidnapped the children of one camp, she proceeded to neighboring camps. She would keep visiting camps until her basket was full of small boys. Then she would start for home with her load.

One evening a boy who was thrown into the basket laid hold of the limb of a tree under which the girl ghost was passing. The girl ghost stopped abruptly, saying, "What is the matter with my load?" She shook the basket and took it off of her back, leaning it against a rock. Then she sang,

"I have lost one of my boys. I have lost one of my boys."

After the girl ghost had visited the camp where the people were singing and had kidnapped the small boys, the people remonstrated with one another in the following fashion. "I told you never to sing. I told you not to sing. Your singing is the cause of the coming of the girl ghost to our village. You see we have lost all of our boys. I told you that there were sharp bone awls in that big basket. That girl ghost is dangerous, with that basket full of sharp bone awls. The boys thrown into the basket were usually impaled on the awls.

The girl ghost, seeking the escaped boy, came to a camp in the night and said, "Give me that boy who escaped, for I know he came to this camp." "We do not know anything about him," protested the people. "This is the way I sing for you people," said the ghost, as she sang:

"That is the way I captured your boys. I have them all impaled."

"Ghost, you are never going to come here again," declared the Tcipo Bird, "for we are going to put our children in the house before sun-down hereafter."-" I advise you people to take care of your children henceforth," retorted the ghost. Then the Tcipo Bird sang, "I am starting to cross the mountains to Sākwadu." [There the bird became Battle Mountain, a place in Inyo County.

Upon arriving at Sākwadu, the Tcipo Bird said, "Ghost, you shall never come this far. You may travel over the plains and sneak around at night, but you shall never come to this locality. When I sleep, do not throw any dreams into my house." Then to the people, Tcipo Bird said, "We will gamble now. We will sing now. We do not fear ghosts any more. We will start the

hand game now." A man named Pitcinu played against Tcipo Bird and was beaten. After the game Pitcinu was lost in the country.

Meantime the ghost stood in the middle of the dust [perhaps a whirlwind in which ghosts are believed to travel]. She saw many people coming from the east, across the mountains, laden with numerous baskets. "Why, those must be Sibitüm (Paiutes) coming," said the girl ghost. "Which road shall I take?" she said, for there were three trails. "Well, I will take the middle trail," she said. The girl ghost followed the middle trail, until she reached a large lake. Then she proceeded along a small trail, which became narrower and narrower. She crossed a creek and some hummingbirds flew up and went in advance of her. She picked up stones and threw at them, but they kept a little ahead of her continually. "Where have I come to?" she asked herself, bewildered. She thought she heard people calling down on the lake, but they proved to be only ducks. "What sort of a lake is this?" she thought to herself. "I have never seen anything like this before. I think that I had better turn back." She followed down a creek and, after she had gone a distance, the hummingbirds transformed themselves into boys. All had their hair tied up. The boys said to her, "You cross behind us," as they crossed a slippery rock. The girl ghost objected, "This looks slippery. I cannot cross this rock. I may find a place a little above." So she climbed seeking an easier place to cross. She found another lake. In seeking a place to cross the outlet of the first lake, she had found a second one. "What am I going to do now?" she cried. "I am certainly in trouble." She stood there.

The girl ghost struggled along through the underbrush, the willows striking her face and causing her to feel like one suddenly and rudely roused from sleep. Finally she reached the camping place of her mother at the headwaters of the San Joaquin river. Together they went down the river towards the plains. Two young men, who had come across the plains, saw them and stood watching them, as they approached a place where it was necessary to cross the river. The mother of the girl ghost objected to crossing, saying that the river was too high. However, the mother followed the two young men who led her over a cliff, so that she fell into the river and was drowned. "Well, I fear that my mother is drowned," mourned the girl ghost, and she turned back, crying as she went. She had not gone far, when she met two young women. "What is the matter with you?" they asked. "My mother has been drowned," explained the girl ghost. "You are mistaken," returned the women. "Your mother is pounding acorns over there. We saw her. You are mistaken. You have been following a ghost all of the time. Your mother is safe."

The girl ghost started home and she came to a large lake. As she was going along the shore of the lake, some one shot her in the leg with an arrow. "You had better go and see a doctor and get that obsidian removed from your leg," said the two young men, who had come from across the plains and who were lying down close by when she was wounded. They put a big cane over the river and told her to cross by means of it. When she was half way across on the cane, she saw a man on the opposite side of the river and cried to him, "Will you help me across?" The man promptly stretched his leg right across the river. Then she crossed, taking his hand. Once on shore, she looked at her helper. "I know this man," she said. "I thought that he was dead a good

many years ago and had turned into stone. His name is Pistani. I know this Pistani. He turned into stone a while ago. Now his body has become a skeleton. What does that mean?"

Again the girl ghost set out, following a small trail. She came to a house. There she found two old women. She stood in the house. Two young men came along, riding a stag. "Who are these men?" the girl ghost asked. While she was inquiring about them, the two young men disappeared into a large spring. "Where have those two men gone?" she asked the old women. They warned her, "If you go by that spring, you will fall in. also. However, let us go down and examine the spring," suggested the old women. "All right," acquiesced the girl ghost. The old women carried a long pole, which they thrust into the spring, as far as they could reach. After a time they became alarmed and said, "We had better be on our guard. The young men might shoot us as we return. They are dangerous." When the three had returned to the house, the old women turned into stone, to the dismay of the girl ghost. "What am I to do now?" she wailed. "What am I to do now? I have had nothing to eat for ten days. I am going to sing now and maybe I can help myself." She sang, "I will turn into a meadowlark (panakon)," and she did.

The girl ghost travelled up Willow creek, high in the mountains. She found a child, whose mother was digging ponowi ("grass nut" or "wild potato"). "Well, I must know this child," said the girl ghost. "I think I will take it with me on my travels. I think that I can rear it. The child turned into a lizard and the girl ghost re-treated from it, moving further and further away from it. She did not want to touch the child, now that it had become a lizard. Neverthe-less, the lizard kept coming towards her, growing bigger and bigger, until it had a body as big as a man's. "I will slip away out of his reach," thought the girl ghost to herself. The lizard now became a man, but still the girl ghost retreated from him. "I wish water would surround that fellow," she thought to herself. The water came as she wished, and she sought refuge on a cliff. From her vantage point she could see the lizard struggling vainly to cross the water to reach her. He was covered with mud and made scant headway. He looked up at her and said, "I was going to make love to you. It is a good thing that you got away." She replied, "It is a good thing that I got away. This is the last you will see of me."

*Told in Mono into a graphophone by Chepo. Translated by Mary Sharpton Teafor from Univ. Calif. Mus. Anthr. graphophone records 2173-2181. (Gifford, 1923, pp. 307-310)*

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