

home as fast as he could go. His grandmother was waiting for him. As soon as he came in sight she exclaimed, "Oh! Thanks be! He is alive."

"I killed Otter's sister," he told her. "There's no hope for us now," said the grandmother. Then Muskrat said, "Make a hole through the bushes like a tunnel beginning where you are sitting. Then go through there and you will see a lake." The old woman did so. Then she came back. "Tie up my head and keep sprinkling it for me," he ordered next.

The Otter brothers kept looking for their sister to return with her child. They heard the baby cry. Then said one, "Why doesn't she look after her child? Go tell her to take it up." One went to see what was the matter. He found her dead. He reported to his brothers, "She's dead, shot with an arrow." They went and looked. "Muskrat must have done that," they said. The youngest said, "I am going to kill him."

He came to Muskrat's house. The grandmother was watching. "Here they come. Let's get ready." When the Otter arrived the grandmother was sitting there quietly sprinkling Muskrat's head. He was lying near with his head all tied up. Otter came in with a stick. "You must be the one who killed our sister." "Why how could that be?" said the grandmother. "He is pathetic. He always lies there just like that." "Who could it have been then?" "Oh, sprinkle my head, grandmother," moaned Muskrat. Otter thought, "It must be true. He never gets up." He left. Then Muskrat said, "Keep watching him until just as he rounds the curve, then dance and sing."

The grandmother watched. Just as Otter got out of sight she began to sing and dance, "*Uhu · uhu · · ·*, Otters' only sister was killed by a little arrow. She fell headfirst into the water." Otter kept on thinking, "Who could have killed our sister?"

He rowed back again. He heard the song more clearly. He saw the grandmother run into the house. She ran into the hole she had made and covered it over. He could not find her. He looked around outside. Then he went in, lifted the cover and saw the hole. He reached down into it, but the muskrats had filled it with dirt as they went through. Otter followed as far as the timber but he had to give up as the hole became too small for him.

The end of the road.

In *Shuswap* and *Coast Salish* mythology are found examples of myths which are on the whole comparable, though they vary in specific details:

In the *Shuswap* myth Muskrat kills a girl who refuses to marry him; Muskrat sings a song revealing himself as the killer; the people pursue Muskrat who escapes through a hole in the ice (MAM 4:680).

In the *Coast Salish* story it is Wren who kills Otter. The motivation lies not in a trespassing incident but in Otter's theft of Wren's fish. When the people discover Wren to be the killer, he is invited to a gathering. In the *Upper Chehalis* version Wren escapes, Bluejay catching Snail by mistake (MAFLS 27:31). In the *Humboldt* account Wren is kicked into the fire; his grandmother blows on his cinders and he becomes a wren; she turns into a spider (MAFLS 27:326).

### 31. Toad Saves Children

Lazy daughter of chief, her baby brother and all the village children are deserted  
The children stay in the house of a child-eater  
Toad keeps girl from rising  
Toad takes girl's place in monster's oven  
Girl runs away

There was a chief of a village who had a grown daughter and a son who was merely a baby. Every morning the girl carried the little boy away from the settlement and took all the other little children with her. All day she played with them and brought them back at night. For some time she did this. One morning when the chief saw her persist in leaving home with the little ones instead of learning to work like the women, he felt sad. So he decided to punish her.

After she had gone he called his people together for a council and said, "We will leave the children." They pulled out all their tipi poles and all the people went into the holes.<sup>1</sup> At night the children came back. Everything was gone. There were no people. No fire. They cried. The girl told them all to come into one house to sleep. The next day she said, "We'll go look for our parents." All day they travelled. At night they saw a camp. The girl said, "Let's camp there."

Someone came out and saw them. They were glad. "We want to camp here," said the girl. "All right!"

The children went in. The owner of the house was glad to see them. They sat around but were given nothing to eat. The owner of the house had some children already lying there asleep. All went to sleep except the chief's daughter. "Go to sleep," he said. "No," she answered. "Put down your little brother." "No, he might cry."

The owner lay down. After dark the chief's daughter heard someone get up. *Xuts xuts xuts*, she heard a bone breaking. She kicked the fire to make it lighter and heard him go out. This kept up all night. She thought, "He devours a lot of people."

In the morning he said, "Come, let's bake them." He made a pit in the ground for baking. He said to the girl, "Go get the leaves for the

<sup>1</sup>They were some kind of animal.

baking. Give me your brother, I will hold him." "No, he might cry." She went. She cried, "I will be killed and my brother too."

She pulled out a lot of leaves and grass and made a big stack which she then tied. She had to put her brother down in order to get the pack on her back. When she tried she could not get up. When she did get up she saw there was a Toad in the grass. She laughed, "Ha ha, you are going to die. Your brother will have to die too. Every time you see an animal, step on his back, don't step on the ground. I am Toad. I am ugly, you are young and beautiful. I will die in your stead."

She loaded the grass, her brother and Toad on her back and returned to where the fire was being made. The children were lying there. She put down the grass, but kept her brother on her back. The monster fixed up the pit, put the children in and arranged grass over them. Then he put soil on top and baked them. In about an hour he thought they ought to be cooked. He took the oven apart and came to the children. They had not begun to cook. He piled them on one side and came to Toad. She was still alive. "It's your fault. You are the one who caused the fire not to bake."<sup>1</sup>

The girl ran away. She stepped on the backs of the animals she met and never on the ground. Finally she came to a mountain where she stepped on the ground. From there she stepped on another mountain. She went far this way.

The end of my road.

In the mythology studied no parallels were found for the Coeur d'Alene Toad Saviour episode. There are typical examples of the desertion of a girl and her young brother and their capture by a child-eater in *Sahaptin* and *Nez Percé* mythology.

A mother and father desert their daughter and small son who have refused to fetch water; the children are captured by Screech Owl (Owl Monster) and put in her basket; Screech Owl hangs up her basket and rushes home when the children shout that her family is burning; the children cross the river on their grandfather's leg; their grandfather has Crawfish, Mussel and Butterfly (and Bullhead) and Swallow drown Screech Owl who comes in pursuit (MAFLS 11:176, 192).

The element of the captive placed over the fire to cook who urinates and extinguishes the blaze may also be found in otherwise dissimilar myths as, for example, among the *Thompson* and the *Shuswap*:

The man-eaters place their victims (the wives of Eagle and Owl and their two children, a boy and a frog; Coyote's two daughters and their son; a mother and

<sup>1</sup> Toad spoiled the fire by making everything wet (cp. tale 1).

her boy) in a kettle over the fire to cook overnight; the child (the frog) urinates through a hole in the kettle and saves them from boiling; they escape (MAM 12:253; MAFLS 6:35; MAM 4:636).

### 32. *Chipmunk and Snake (Contest for Winter and Spring)*

Chipmunk pokes fire to bring spring  
Snake pokes fire to delay it  
Chipmunk goes out and nibbles grass  
Snake smells fresh grass and sees spring has come

Chipmunk and Snake lived together. Their fire was one long burning log. Each of them had a stick with which to poke the fire. Chipmunk poked the fire, *u ya ha ya ha*.<sup>1</sup> Snake poked it. "Winter" was the noise he made. When the log was burned through the middle it would be spring. Chipmunk was hurrying it to make spring come quicker, Snake was trying to delay it because he wanted winter. The only time they ceased arguing was when they slept. At dawn as soon as they woke they took up the stick. Suddenly the Chipmunk said, "I'll go outside and see."

She went out the door. Already the ground was clear of snow. Small blades of grass showed through. She nibbled it. She went in again and took up her stick to poke the fire. Snake asked, "Is it clear yet?" "No, there it still snow on the ground." Then Snake repeated, "Winter!" Suddenly she said, "You smell of green grass." "No, it's the mat you smell. I just turned it over."

Outside all was green. "*tsatapi'yap*" spoke Snake. "*Ya ha*," said Chipmunk. *Patsatsa*, Chipmunk ran out. Snake said, "My! She does smell of green grass."

Then he went out. The ground was clear. The sun was shining. Snake ate grass and curled himself up on the ground.

The end of my road.

In a *Thompson* myth Grizzly Bear and Chipmunk dispute about light and dark, warmth and cold in general, with no specific reference to the seasons.

A log is burning on a mountain (perhaps kindled by Coyote's youngest son to give the people fire); Grizzly Bear dislikes warmth and light and throws earth on the fire; Chipmunk throws sticks on the fire; and fire burns more brightly; Grizzly pursues Chipmunk who escapes into a log as Grizzly tears the skin off his back leaving stripes (MAFLS 6:61).

In *Coast Salish* mythology are found typical versions of the numerous

<sup>1</sup> This is said for the word which means "calm weather."