



KOYOODE TUKADU:  
PYRAMID LAKE PAIUTE KIT



◆ WE ARE ALL PEOPLE OF THIS EARTH

Long ago, one large family lived in the Great Basin, known as the Numu family, now known as the Northern Paiutes. These people were generally very kind, but one brother became quarrelsome. The brother swayed some of his siblings, and soon the children were divided into factions, and constantly fighting. The parents attempted to stop the fighting, but their counseling did no good, and soon they were forced to separate the children. The parents were not happy with their choice, but they knew it was for the best. The quarrelsome brother was sent to the lands beyond the Sierra Nevada Mountains and his family became the Pitt River Indians. A brother who sided with the violent brother was sent north and his group became the Bannocks. Another brother was sent south, where his family became the Southern Paiute tribe. Others from the Northern Paiute tribe were dispersed into bands around the area. The parents remained, but were very sad. They were heartbroken when the Pitt River Indians returned to fight other groups in the area. When the father passed on, the mother became inconsolable. Even at her daily chores and seed gathering she mourned. Eventually she disappeared. Her absence went unnoticed until a large body of salt water appeared. Near the lake was the form of the mother, her burden basket beside her. She had been turned to stone, creating the lake with the tears she shed.

*Variations*

- ✿ The father was a bear spirit, who took a human form because he had fallen in love with the mother. After sending the quarrelsome children away, the father was disgusted with how the humans misused any power given to them, so he returned to his original form, abandoning the mother to her grief. In sadness the mother's tears formed the lake, and she turned to stone.
- ✿ After the children were sent away, the father died/left, and the mother turned to stone, the white settlers and explorers who began arriving were believed to be the descendents of the brother who was sent north, reportedly the most fair-skinned of the children.
- ✿ Upon splitting up the children and sending them away, the mother told them each to light a signal fire each night, so that she would know they were safe. After a few nights, she no longer saw fires from the North. Fearing the worst, and racked with grief and guilt, she cried so much that her tears formed Pyramid Lake, and her body was turned to stone.