



KOYOODE TUKADU: PYRAMID LAKE PAIUTE KIT



◆ WE ARE ALL PEOPLE OF THIS EARTH

Long ago, the Numu traded with the people living west of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, what is now California. One party of traders was preparing to return to Numu land, but one member was not to be found. The party waited for several days, until it was decided that the return trip must be made with or without the missing man. The group took their time on the return trip, hoping the missing member would overtake them. After several nights into the return journey, the young man did reappear. Everyone was very excited to see him, and although happy at the reunion, the young man was noticeably depressed. The other members of the group told stories of their adventures in the man's absence, but he did not contribute with details of where he'd been.

Gradually, the members of the group retired to bed, until it was just the young man and the leader left awake. The leader prompted the young man to tell what was troubling him. The young man confessed that he was planning to return with a wife. Not too surprised, the leader asked the young man to bring the woman to camp, so that they might all leave together in the morning. The man went to retrieve his wife, and shocked the leader when he returned with a mermaid in his arms. The leader begged the man to return the mermaid to the sea. The young man was persistent, and eventually the leader gave up and went to bed. He awoke early to inform the party of the new traveler in their midst, and as he predicted, they were very unhappy, and all tried to convince the young man to return his wife to the sea, where she belonged. The young man continually refused, and eventually water began surrounding the campsite.

Every morning, the group found it necessary to move quickly to avoid the water. For the safety of the group, the young man and his wife were asked to stay behind. The rest of the party hurried home, hoping to never see the mermaid again. Days passed before the young man and his wife appeared in the village and a stream of water followed the couple. Relatives insisted that the couple live on the outskirts of the village. Visitors to the couple returned with reports of a large body of water that had formed by the couple's home, in which the mermaid spent much of her time immersed. Eventually the visitors stopped going to see the couple out of fear.

Today the descendents of the couple may be encountered at the northern end of Pyramid Lake. Crying of babies has been heard, and small children or their footprints have been seen on occasion. Since she was never accepted by the tribe, the mermaid cast a spell over her descendents, so that if any Numu see these babies, they become very ill and may even die.

It is said that Lake Tahoe was created when the bride and groom camped with the group of travelers, the Truckee River was created on their journey, and Pyramid Lake was formed at their final residence.