
Takelma Indians

Edward Sapir The following information on Rock Old Woman is from Sapir's *The Religious Ideas of the Takelma Indians of Southwestern Oregon*.¹

Storm-Spirit "Go thou away from here, with thy camass-stick pass thou away from here, mountainwards pass thou with thy sifting-pan, away to **Mt. Alwilamxadis** pass thou with thy camass-stick! Come thou not hither with it, come thou not hither! Perchance thy children touch with their feet dead people's bones." Just that was said to her. A friend of my mother's told her: "If a great storm comes, you shall say that to it." (Page 38)



Camas **Medicine-Men** In fact the two are mutually exclusive terms, and the relation between the two sorts of medicine-men was one of hostility, the *s somloholxas* having been often hired to counteract the evil work of *goyo*. It is interesting to note that the two appealed to entirely different spirits as supernatural helpers, and thus made use of different medicine-songs.

No supernatural power that was wont to aid the *s somloholxas* could ever become the guardian spirit of a *goyo*, but, on the contrary, was ever ready to inflict punishment upon him. The most potent of these spirits were the chicken-hawk (*husu*), the sparrow-hawk (*yekiye*), the acorn-woman, and a number of local mountain spirits. Among these latter was the **dan mologol (Rock Old Woman) addressed as "Grandmother," and closely associated with a rock of about three feet in height and with an elongated round top, situated in the vicinity of Daldanik**, a village north of Rogue River, and between Grant's Pass and Leaf Creek; near the rock impersonating the old woman were a number of others known as her pipe (*nax*), bucket (*kel*), stirrer (*sumxi*), to prevent it from boiling over, and tongs (*kama*) for picking up the hot stones used for boiling (the purpose of these cooking instruments will soon become apparent). Various kinds of food were laid on top of the rock as an offering to the old woman for the cure of sickness. (Page 45). (emphasis added)

Dan Mologol, Was "Rock Old Woman"

A mountain spirit subordinate to her was **Aldauykwadis**; the four fir-trees that surmounted its summit were termed the ceremonial feathers of the mountain spirit, the mountain itself and its pre-siding spirit being, as usual in such cases, more or less commingled in one conception. Still other such mountain spirits were another **Aldauykwadis**, near Illinois River, in sight from the summit of the former, and referred to as his brother; **Alsawentadis**, next to the first of the two mountain brothers and covered with oaks and *tbal* bushes (about three feet in height and of a yellowish color), used by the *s somloholxas* in the cure of fever; and **Aldankoloida**, in the vicinity of the present town of Jacksonville. These various animal, plant, and mountain spirits (there must have been many others) had each his or her particular medicine-song, efficacious in bringing harm to the *goyo*. Of three of them, the chicken-hawk, the Acorn Woman, and the **Old Rock Woman** myths were obtained in which it is related how some great misfortune befell a shaman in the past; the recitation of these myths by the *s somloholxas* has power to injure the *goyo* against whom they are directed. The myth of the **Old Woman and the mountain Aldauykwadis** is here given in literal translation: (Page 45). (emphasis added)



"When this great world was first set [word employed is identical with that used in referring to the making of a basket-bottom], at that time the **Old Rock Woman** was told: 'Thou shalt be a "shaman wisher" (or "poisoner"); if an evil-minded shaman devours people, *thou* shalt sing for that.' And she said: 'Yes!' And thou shalt put thy pipe in the shaman's mouth, thou shalt give him to smoke!' it was said to her. Here alongside of her rock bucket, and then in her bucket her stirrer, and her tongs. Thus it was given to the **Old Rock Woman**. Her bucket is for boiling the shaman's heart, and her stirrer - with that she stirs up the shaman's heart while she is boiling it, and with her tongs she lifts stones - hot stones. Then she made the stones steam in her bucket and boiled the shaman's heart. (Page 46). (emphasis added)

Religious Ideas Of The Takelma Indians Of Southwestern Oregon

For that - a shaman's heart - is her rock bucket 'medicine.' And then she sang for the shaman, where-upon the shaman died. The **Old Rock Woman**, 'My (paternal) Grandmother,' has done it. And then Mt. **Aldauykwadis** was told about it. 'Now the **Old Rock Woman** has killed the shaman,' he was told. Then he was ready to join her and tied his head-hair up into a top-knot [indicative of war-dance].



Salmon

Then he put dust on his forehead [white war-paint]. Now when he came there, the shaman was lying dead. He took up his arm and wrenched loose the shaman's arm. A little distance away he jumped with the shaman's arm into a ditch. Then he danced around rapidly and brandished [like a knife] the shaman's arm. Then he sang and danced with it. Now some time elapsed; he looked up, **looked across to his younger brother [near Illinois River]**. Then he did as before and also his younger brother did the same thing; and they on either side nodded to each other. In that way they killed the shaman, the evil-minded shaman. He brandished the shaman's arm before his face; just as nowadays a knife is brandished, that he did with it. Thus, when this great world was set firm, thus it happened. In this manner the *somloholxas* makes 'medicine;' my paternal grandfather



Tarweed

made the *somloholxas* 'medicine' with it [i. e. with this dance and song against shamans]. I don't know who arranged matters thus; it is said the 'Children Maker' did it. Thus they call him: 'Children Maker;' nowadays people call him thus." (Page 46). (emphasis added)

Want more information? Contact an member of the HNAT.

1. Sapir, Edward. 1907. "The Religious Ideas of the Takelma Indians of Southwestern Oregon," Journal of American Folklore. Volume 20:33-49.

Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society's Mission

This information brochure is one of a series of documents published by the Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society (*Hugo Neighborhood*). It is designed to be shared with neighbors for the purpose of helping protect our rural quality of life by promoting an informed citizenry in decision-making. The *Hugo Neighborhood* is an informal nonprofit charitable and educational organization with a land use and history mission of promoting the social welfare of its neighbors.

Land Use & History

The *Hugo Neighborhood's* land use mission is to promote Oregon Statewide Goal 1 — Citizen Involvement, and to preserve, protect, and enhance the livability and economic viability of its farms, forests, and rural neighbors. It will act, if requested, as a technical resource assisting neighbors to represent themselves.

Its history mission is to educate, collect, preserve, interpret, and research its local history and to encourage public interest in the history of the Hugo area.

Volunteer membership dues are \$10.00 annually per family and normally used for paper, ink, envelopes, publications and mailings. Send us your e-mail address if you want to know what we are doing.

Email: hugo@jeffnet.org

Web Page: <http://www.hugoneighborhood.org/>

Edited by Jean Boling, Karen Rose, & Mike Walker

Hugo's Native American Team (HNAT) Hugo Neighborhood Association

Jean Boling, Member
Hugo Neighborhood &
Historic Sites Chair,
Josephine County Historical Society
214 NW Booth Street
Grants Pass, Oregon 97526

Janet McKy, Member
Hugo Neighborhood
6497 Hugo Road
Grants Pass, Oregon 97526

Wayne McKy, Member & Officer
Hugo Neighborhood
6497 Hugo Road
Grants Pass, Oregon 97526

Karen Rose, Member & Web Master
Hugo Neighborhood
575 Red Mountain Drive
Grants Pass, Oregon 97526

Mike Walker, Member & Officer
Hugo Neighborhood
3388B Merlin Rd #195
Grants Pass, Oregon 97526

Sapir's *The Religious Ideas of the Takelma Indians of Southwestern Oregon*



Brochure NA-18D Of Hugo's
Native American Brochure Series



Edward Sapir: 1910¹

September 8, 2011

**Hugo Neighborhood Association &
Historical Society
Josephine County Historical Society**

Brochure NA-18D in Hugo's Native American Brochure Series

HNA&HS 2010 - NA-18D

C:\Documents and Settings\mike\My

Documents\Genealogy\Native_Americans\Brochures\BROCHURE_NA18D Sapir Takelma Religious Ideas
090811.wpd