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Ch'ahl Xontehł-taw Hil  
(Frog, Coyote Living Together)

Da hung who'dang', xontehł-taw, (to...) to:ding yina:q

ch'iqa:l do:k'iwidiya'n.

Hayał ch'ite:ng'e'n hit dang who na! waye:yto:ding.

Xoch'ing ch'ite:syay. Ch'ininyahit angkya ch'ahl ta:k'il tsit.

Cha'ahl Xontehl-taw hil, p. 1

What the Story Means  
by Ruth Bennett, PhD.

The direct translation for the story's title is Frog-Coyote-And. This is translated Frog, Coyote living Together, which is understood to mean that Frog and Coyote were married. The Hupa language is one of economy, where a few words can mean a lot. One of the reasons why this works is that when the Hupa language was more widely used the people who spoke Hupa talked to each other every day and knew each other well, so they did not need the same degree of explanation that a wider audience needs today.

Da hung who'dang', p. 1

This expression means, "a long time ago," and was a common way to begin a Hupa story. Hupa stories refer back to an ancient time before the present day Native Americans came to be when animals and other living things, including spiritual beings, were on the earth and could communicate.

Hupa stories were told at different times, in winter when everyone was gathered around a fire, in fall, when acorns were being gathered, at ceremonial times, when training for young people was taking place.

Since this is a story about marriage, it is likely to have been told around the time of the Flower Dance. If this is the case, it was told to the kinahdung, the adolescent girl as part of her training.

ch'ininyahit angkya ch'ahl ta:k'iltsit, p. 1

When Frog meets Coyote, it is the first action in a series of actions in a plot that centers on the marriage between Frog and Coyote.

Hayał xoch'ing chininyiy (ch...) xoching chixe:ne:wh. A:de:ne:

"Whe:en'do'ong yo:wxomił wiwha:l dikyang. \*Dikyang nawh'ye:wh'."

(A...) Ayoxołdiwe..ne "Yo:t ninsa:h."

Hayał chine:ł e'n hay kita:lts'it. Acho:nfe:sne "q'at wilxan (ye)  
nehwa:n (tin...) tin..niwho:n."

Yiwidingxit yeh na'xowił'a'.

A:yoxo:łdiwe:ne "Xontahding xa'sing ya nohił k'iwinyan:te."

Hayał ya'te:sdetł! Xontahding haya'e:s detł ( ? ) yeh ya'windetł.



Dikyang na:wh'ye:wh, p. 2

When the story begins, Frog is an unmarried young woman. She welcomes Coyote when he approaches her with a traditional greeting used to Hupa people to welcome visitors to their home.

nohil k'iwinyan:te, p. 2

It is not long before Coyote is invited inside Frog's home. Again, Frog uses a traditional Hupa greeting to invite someone for food. The use of these traditional expressions means that Frog is a young woman who knows how to behave properly.

Sa:'xa:wx (xo'ching) che:a'ninxa:n loq' q'ina, p. 3

Coyote is well fed with food for a traditional meal, another indication that Frog and her mother are really welcoming him.

*Q'a.oh.*

Yiwidingxit a:de:ne: "Wha:we:slets'e... nikya:wh k'e:ya'n tin  
niwho:n-tse."

Hayałq'at na:ina:sdiq'e-mił a:yoxo:łdiwe:ne "Min'day' Nikya:wh xwa:  
xiwilwetl' Dikya nohił, xe:owlwił."

Hayałq'at a:de:ne "Xa""...chine:ste:n xong' minadin. Hayał  
whikiwinwa'n-mił..."

...Ch'ahl hay xanchwing a:y<sup>l</sup> diwe:ne: "Tintse xiwe:syo hayoh

whixang silente niwhtsin. Xwana:kinga:w hay mił-k'idikdin."

Hayał xanchwing a:diwe:ne: "Xa!" De:q'inikiwinga:w....

(Song...)

Hayałq'at \*no:yk'ining'a a:diwe:ne "Q'at na:nah (king...) k'imau  
se:schwin, yisxande' che:insit-te ch'o:łtsit-te."



De:q'inikiwina:w, p. 5

Her mother even sings hay milk'idildin, "love medicine," for him. If the story is being told to the Kinahldung, perhaps it is a song that she can learn. Learning traditional Hupa songs was part of the training of a young girl, because knowing these songs was important for Hupa women.

Yisxunda' che:insit-te ch'o:tsit-te, p. 5

This song is powerful since it has the power to influence Coyote's action. The mother does not say how Coyote will be influenced, only that "he'll know what to do." Putting a degree of mystery into the story makes it more interesting. The mother's words are brought to bear on Coyote's actions later in the story, as we shall see.

A love song is "Love Medicine," in this instance, so powerful that it results in a marriage. The power of the mother is inferred from her ability to sing such powerful medicine, and prepares the reader at the end of the story for the family's intervention in the marriage to save Frog after Coyote beats her.

Hayałq'at, xatłedang, xontehłtaw ch'e:insit 'aht'indin ch'ite:ne:n.

(All of a sudden) Łahxw ach'o:nde:sne "Gee...(al) ałchwo:n hayde:di-  
ya'deł't'se: din."



alchwo:n hayde:di-ya'del't'se:din, p. 6

Knowing what Coyote is saying requires a chain of inferences to understand what a person inside the culture would know: first, by saying, "how nice" it is where Frog's family lives, Coyote is saying that he would like to live there, too; second, from Coyote's "how nice" we can infer the mother's medicine is working.

Hayah ch'ixotsa:n hay ch'ahl ke:na:lney. Chixone:te:n

a:cho:nde:sne' ("Nixang... ) niwho:ngx'a:'ante."

Hayalq'at hayah 'aht' indin ch'ite:ne:nhit xanchwing do:chiltsis.

xanchwing do:chiltsis., p. 7

Again, an inference based upon knowledge of Hupa culture, comes into play. Coyote doesn't see Frog's mother around, and yet he stays. He knows that he is alone with frog, and his staying means that he is willing to be together with her.

Hayałqat hayah ch'iwinda'...ch'iwinda'. Yiwidingxit  
xoł-na'wing'a'-e:y.

Hayał ya'de': lts'e. Hay yima:nṣile:ne:mił,...

...Lahwx hayah xonteh<sup>d</sup>taw tiwinlat. Ch'ite:sya:y-e:y dayxwo.

Na:'a:sya. Sa:'a:-na:'asya'.



But eventually Coyote strays. Knowing that it is the next spring, we wonder whether Coyote may be attracted to someone new. Again, this is a matter of inference, knowing about the culture, but also knowing what kind of a person Coyote is, something we would learn from hearing other stories about him.

We also need to know what kind of a person Frog is. There is a clue to Frog's physical appearance in her name. She is not the ideal of feminine beauty: her eyes are very large, and even though large eyes are considered beautiful, her eyes are too large, and they bulge out. And more, she has bumps all over her.

Na:'andiyay.

Hayał do:łangxw'a:yxołne. Łahwx yixone:łe:n (a:y) a:yonde:sne.

"Da:ydi-ding gya'awh-wha na'wa:-ne'en?"



Yiwidingxit yixołdiwdixit hayał (hayał) hayah xoda' chiwinla:t-winte ya'... yaxo:skis. Chixowiłwe'. Hayah hayał, dah na:' diwinla:t-e:y.



yaxo:skis, p. 12

We are now learning something about the consequences of Frog's mother's song as it is acted out between Frog, her mother, and Coyote. This is a lesson to women who want someone in their life. Frog was so certain about Coyote that she has her mother sing a song for him. The consequences are that she gets him as her husband, but this results in him beating her. Might the lesson not be, "Watch out for what you sing for, because you may get ~~what you wanted~~" Frog ~~didn't get~~ what she wanted when she got a husband who would beat her.

*more than*

Hayał na'tesyay ayo:n te:sne "te:se:y'in-te, da:ydi na'way. Ch'iqa:le  
a:dindin ch'ite:n'e:n.

te:se:y'in-te da:ydi na'way, p. 13

Knowing that Frog is not extremely beautiful would explains why Coyote may want to run away from her, and why she is willing to go look for him.

Yiwidingxit, de:di ch'iqa:l -nit diyxwho dikyang (akitsin...)

aikine'ts'iw. Yeh... yeh ya: k'iltał. Hayał mich'ing' ch'ite:sya:winte  
ch'ite:ne:n.



Hayah na:lto:'n-e:y xontelaw nahx mitaq' lahwx k'ehlts'a:n  
na:'kto:'n-e:y.



Hay ch'iltsa:n mił na'tesdiyay.



Xontahding na:diya:-winte. Kya' wana:'asya. "Nikya:wx miwho:n-te."

A:ch'o:nte:sne, wana:'asya, wana:'asya.

Kya' wana:'asya, p. 17

As the story progresses, the characters of Frog and Coyote are contrasting more

Hayał xonkehław na:'andiyay.



A:de:ne "Wha:k'e:nalna'. Wha:kiłkit!" Hayak'at 'inasdiq'e winte  
xaykiłkit. Hayał na:ne:ste:n-e:y.

Nahx yisxa:n-jit kiye 'ina:na:'isdiq'e hayał kiye' a:de:ne:, "Wha:  
k'ilkit, xwilisch, whak'ilkit!" Hayał xwaykiłkit do:łangxwa:yxolne.

Hayał kiye' na:te:sdiiyay-e:y. Hayał hayajit, hay...hayq'an kya'.

Ch'iyniłkyo:s-wint'e a:diq'it ya:niydiłt'o (xe) xwe:da'ay-tah

ch'iniyte:dimil. Hayah wint'e xoq'eh ch'ite:syiyl. Ch'ininya-ye:y

xon' na'we:din me ch'ite:ne:n an'kya q'at. Hayał na:kto:'n-e:y q'at.

Hayał no'ning'a:n-mił yehwinyiy.



Xontehław lahwx ch'ixoltsa:n a:cho:nte:sne, "Dandi ne:sing  
hayo:w 'a:ningxa' ch'inehwa:n?"

Hayał "isdo" dikyang whił-na: 'isto:'n." Hayah xoch'ing'  
te:syawint'e hay xoniwho:n ch'ing yehwilt'e. Hayah xołna:'asto:'n,  
na:'asto:'n.

'isdo' dikyang whil-na:'isto:'n, p. 24

If the audience is being told, "the wise man is one who sees beyond a woman's appearance," Coyote is being defined as just the opposite, since it is the beautiful dress that is attracting him.

Ts'e:'esding hayał no:ning'a:nq'at min'day'q'. Ch'e:na'te:detł-mił  
łahwx xonrehłtaw xokya:ng'a:y chilkit. de:xo yitsin ch'ixołte:łte:n.  
Miwa xay na:kil'dil'din.

Hayah ch'ine:sda:'winte a:de:ne "No:ne:l dikya no:ne:l"

Hayał, "Nikya yo:t (no:) no:kilteł!"

"Daw," diwe:ne.

"Hay kiwidiwa:ch' ahting o:kił!"

Hayah diwe:ne-mił lahwx xontehław ch'o:ltsit hay dundi a:'ant'e.

Hayah xoq'it dahchiwinla:winte. Chixowiłwe. Chixo:łyo:1. Xo'ching

nikya:wh...chixo:łyo:1. Hayah tse:ya'wing'ang-hit xwe:da'ay na'ne:łts'e:tł'

ya:'asts'e:tł'. K'e':wingxits'-mił dahna:diwinla:t-e:y...

... (Xontah) Xon'na:we:ch'ing.

Knowing something about the Brush Dance is necessary for understanding what Coyote is doing here, as he violates the sacred Hupa institution. Previously, he has run away from his marriage, and now he is beating someone up at a sacred dance. The lessons thus have broader significance in terms of consequences, not only for the people involved, but for the entire community. Coyote is shown to be really a scoundrel, as he has the audacity to return to the Brush Dance just after he has beaten his wife.

we learn that his bad treatment of a woman who has been good to him is not tolerated

Hayał ch'iwehswa:tł' hayal (ina:) ina:na:'sdiq'e qade-mił  
na:te:sdiyay. Ch'ahl na:wida:le, Xoma:lyo mide'e:syay. Hay xoma:lyo  
a:yxo:łdiwe:ne "Dundi ne:sing \*anch'ilahwx xola:n."

Hayał ch'ahl a:diwe:ne "Whixang diwin ch'iwhiwiłwe!" Hayah  
mił xe: 'inadiyay-e:y xontah ch'ing.

Xontahding nandiya: winte na:niste:n hayah. Hayał do:sa'a:y-mił  
xo:ma:lyo xanchwing q'ina yehya'windetł'. A:yixo:łchwe:ne:, "Dikyang  
nohił yeh-wide:dilts'e-te xo:na:ya'de:dilts'e-te dikyang. Hayał q'at  
ya:yawisetł"

## Coyote Comes Home

Do:insa:ymił, xweda'ay yeh-na:nyay na:widałts'iwh,  
na:k'iwidaltsiwh.

Hayał q'at yehch'iwingya:te:-mił ɬahwx xanchwing xe:'da'ay  
na:ne:lwatł! Ke:wingxits-mił ɬahwx ahting ya:ya'xo:swatł.  
Ya:ya'xo:swatł! Nikya:wh ya'xowiłwe' ya'ch'iwiswatł'  
ya'niyxolting...ya:yiyxoltiwh-winte ch'inayxonilwatł. Hayał ahting  
xa'ayne'en xoq'eh ch'e:yinime:tł.

Hayał xwa'at -ne'en xoq'eh yiwingxwil a:diwe:ne "Dikyan do:ina  
na:ndiya:we:ne:. Do:nihwo:n andiya (do:!) (dowx) Dowx na:nya-ne."

Hayał hayde xa:'at le:a:t silay.

Hayah-No:nt'ik'

(The End)

hayal hayde xwa':at le:a:tsilay, p. 33

The significance of Coyote's actions is brought out by the storyteller at the end of the story, hayal hayde xwa':at le:a:tsilay, "and then that wife hates him." The lesson is driven home to us that Coyote's actions have not been tolerated when he is driven away, as we are given to understand, for good, because his wife hates him.

hayah no:nt'ik', p. 33

This is a formal ending for a Hupa story. Putting the story inbetween a formal beginning and a formal ending is a way of telling us that it is an ancient myth, and that there are important lessons for us to take away.

After reading about these two lessons in the story, perhaps you can find more. Remember to think about the behavior of Frog, Coyote, and her family in deciding what the story means. Look carefully at the illustrations, as these can provide clues as well.

(The End ↗ p. 33

Lessons in Hupa stories are often not stated as morals, as they sometimes are in European fairy tales. But the lessons are similar in the sense that they provide general principles for leading a successful life, or they provide bad examples that are to be avoided. These lessons are inferred from the behavior of the characters and their consequences. Even a short Hupa story offers many lessons for life, depending upon how it is interpreted.

An understanding of Hupa and Northwestern California Native American culture is essential for interpretation of many of the lessons in the stories because certain events depend upon a knowledge of what these events mean within the culture.

The storyteller does not explain the meaning of these events to his listeners, because the stories are oral tradition, passed on from generation to generation, and in ancient times, the listeners were members of the younger generation who were experiencing the culture directly, and already knew something about Hupa life

If you found this story interesting, you may want to read other Hupa Frog stories. Other Frog stories have been told by the Hupa and other tribes in Northern California. Some of these are:

*Frog's love Medicine (Frog and Q'unch'iwilchwil), A Hupa Story, by Minnie Reeves, in Hupa Stories, Anecdotes, and Conversations, Victor Golla, ed., ms.*  
*Origin of the Flower Dance by Sam Brown, in Edward Sapir's Hupa Texts, ed. Victor Golla, ms., pp. 59-65.*

- Coyote and Toad*, by Sykes Mitchell, in *Wintu Myths*, Cora Du Bois and Dorothy Demetracopoulou, eds. University California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology, vol. xxviii, 1925, p. 383.
- Frog Story*, by Georgia Orcutt in *Karuk Myths and Formulas*, E. W. Gifford and A. L. Kroeber, eds. University of California Press, Berkeley, 1980, p. 216.
- Medicine to Get a Husband* by Nettie Reuben, translated by William Bright, in *He Was Dug Up*, ms.
- The Toad and the Mouse*, by Florence Shaughnessy, in *The Yurok language: Grammar, Texts, and lexicon*, R.H. Robins, ed., University California Press, Berkeley, Ca., 1958, pp. 164-5.
- Sun Man and Frog Woman*, in *Maidu Texts*, ed. Roland Dixon, Pub-AES, vol. iv, 1912, pp. 172-181.
- Young Man Who Married Frog Girls (#12)*, in Pliny E. Goddard, *Tolowa Tales and Texts*, ed. A.L. Kroeber, ms. (1958)
-

Frog and Q'unch'iwilchwil, A Hupa Story, (as told by Minnie Reeves)  
by laura lee George as told to Ruth Bennett 3/12/96

The girls are getting ready to dance in the Brush Dance, and Frog gets all dressed up. But when she finishes dressing, and asks the others, "How do I look?" they just laugh at her and say, "You will never get a husband. You will always be Frog." When Frog hears this, a tear falls down her cheek.

Then she goes down by the river and sits on the sand where she cries and cries and cries. She finally cries so much that her tears made a pool, large as a k'italts'it, the leaching pit the riverbank, used for leaching acorns.

But something happens to Frog after she cries so hard. When she comes back, she has a shine about her, and the other girls wonder, "Why does she shine like that?"

Q'unch'iwilchwil sees how brightly she shines, too, and she is the one who marries him.