

THE SNAKE THAT GIVES MONEY: A TOTONAC MYTH

ELIZABETH D. ASCHMANN
Summer Institute of Linguistics

This story, recorded among the Totonacs by Mrs. Elizabeth Aschmann, is one of the most interesting tales Tlalocan has published. It immediately recalls the epic of Quetzalcoatl, and certain traits in the texts of the *Anales de Cuauhtitlan* and Sahagún are too similar to the present text to be a coincidence. The snake (Feathered Serpent) takes off into the skies and becomes the Morning Star, Tlahuizcalpan-tecutli, the Lord of Dawn. See Garibay's beautiful translation of the ancient story in *Historia de la literatura náhuatl*, Volume I, pp. 303-319.)

"... los viejos dicen que (Quetzalcóatl) se mudó en lucero del alba, el que aparece cuando la aurora."

It is to be hoped than modern linguists and ethnographers will gather mythological texts while it is still possible. A wealth of material — fragmentary at times — is available and will undoubtedly help us to understand the cosmogony of ancient Mesoamerica. (F.H.)

Lūwā² ntū mās³tā ntumīn.

1. Ličuwīnanqū' nči'skuwī'n ntī nlaqa'ya'-laqqūluna':
2. A'nān ntantum lūwa'.
3. Hūki'-lūwa' wanikan.
4. Mat-mās³tā' ntumīn.
5. Šqa'ḥqū'kan šapū'lanah.
6. Mpalapī-

Snake that it-gives-it money.

1. They-tell-of-it men who most old-men:
2. it-exists one-animal snake.
3. Deer-snake it-is-called.
4. It-is-said it-gives-it money.
5. They-had-them in-times-past.
6. If-it-should-he-that man he-finds-it,
7. well-them it-

Free Translation of the Text

The old men say that there is a snake — "Deer Snake" they call it, and it is said to give money. People possessed such snakes in the past.

čičškū' ntāqsa, 7. pus-tapalaha; puskāt-wan. 8. Cīmpalapī-puskāt ntāqsa, 9. pus-čičšku'-wan ntapalaha.

10. Šwī' nčā'tum nqūlucīn; 11. mat-šqa'hī ntantum. 12. Kškā'tu'wā'n ntilimił. 13. A'ntā' ntitāqšhī. 14. Tīcukul' šaqalī'. 15. Tiwani'ł mpī-nalīmin kščik. 16. Tiwani'ł, Lānłā' namāwī'kan? 17. Tiwā lūwa', Łān naki-lī'pina'. 18. Kalī'tā' ntū nakimpūli'pina'. 19. Kalī'tā' mpala-miwahkat, 20. nā-panamāk nakilakwi'li'ya'. 21. nā-a'kštum-nakintā'wā'ya'na'. 22. Pus-lān mpalapī-čunā' mpuwa'na'. 23. Tilimił kščik nqūlu'. 24. Akšnī'

changes-into; woman it-becomes. 8. On-the-other-hand if-it-should-be-that woman she-finds-it, 9. well-then man it-becomes it-changes-into.

10. There-was one-human old-man; 11. it-it-said he-had-it one-animal. 12. From-his-ranch he-brought-it. 13. There he-found-it. 14. It-began it-speaks-to-him. 15. It-said-it-to-him that he-will-bring-it to-his-house. 16. He-said-to it, "How one-will-feed-it?" 17. He-said-it snake, "Good you-will-take-me. 18. You-bring-it what you-will-carry-me-in-it. 19. You-bring-it something-like your huacal, 20. also cotton you-will-sit-me-in-it, 21. also together you-will-eat-with-me." 22. "Well-then good if-it-should-be-that like-that you-think." 23. He-brought-it to-his-house old-man. 24. When he-arrived-

If man encounters such a snake it becomes a woman and if a woman comes across one of these animals it becomes a man.

Once there was an old man who found such a snake out on his ranch. When he found it the snake asked to be taken to the old man's house. "How will I feed you?" said the old man. "Good," answered the snake. "You will take me then! Bring something to carry me in, such as a crate or box and put plenty of cotton in it so I can lie there."

ntiličič, 25. šmaqñikanit-ta' štilān; 26. tipāūwā' šliwat.
 27. Pus-a'kštumtitā'wā'yał, 28. (wā'mpī-puskāt-tiwah).
 29. Pus-akšnī' ntiwā'yanqū'ł, 30. ti'a'ł-tawi'łā kšmāsaqā
 ntā'nī šwī' španamāk. 31. Akšnī' nticukukah tiyakan
 mpūwā', 32. a'nti'yā' nčū' šwī' mā'qū't. 33. Špūwi'hā'
 ntumīn ntū šmāstā'nī't. 34. Akšnī' maqatunu'-šwā'yan-
 qū', maqka'čei šmāstā' ntumīn. 36. Wā'mpī-wā' ntī
 šlā'lūwā' ntiliłaqwa'ł. 37. Ni 'ā'ł maqtaqałpu'tuł.
 38. Pus-tili'ya'ł tā'pašyā'ñan. 39. Akšnī' mpułli
 mātankuh, 40. wa'ti'yā' ntita'lał mātankuh.

with-it, 25. someone-had-killed-it already chicken; 26.
 many-different-kinds its-food. 27. Well-then together
 he-ate-with-it, 28. (but woman it-became.) 29. Well-then
 when they-finished-eating it-went it sits in-its nest
 when they-finished?eating it-went itsits in-its-nest
 there-where it-was its-cotton. 31. When one-began one-
 gets-it dishes, 32. right-there now it-was gourd-dipper.
 33. It-was-inside already money what it-had-given. 34.
 When each-time they-ate, continually it-gave money.
 36. But the he-who his snake he-tired-of-it. 37. No
 longer he-wanted-to-take-care-of-it. 38. Well-then he-
 took-it he-walks-with-it. 39. When it-came-up morning-
 star, 40. the-very-same it-hit-it morning-star.

The old man brought the snake to his house. Someone had killed a
 chicken and the man and the snake ate together. After this the snake
 went back to lie in the cotton. But every time that the man ate with
 the snake the animal would give him money.

But after some time the old man became tired of the snake and did not
 want to take care of it. He went out one early morning with it and
 threw it into the sky, whereupon it became the morning star. (F.H.)