

How Jobe'eso Ro'i Got His Name

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THE STORY of Jobe'eso Ro'i was given to me in the Yaqui language by Ambrosio A. Castro. Yaqui is classed under the Cahita family of the Uto-Aztecan group. The territory proper of the Yaqui Indians lies between Guaymas and Ciudad Obregón, on the Yaqui River in the State of Sonora in Mexico. They inhabit the traditional eight Yaqui towns, and certain areas closely bordering the river.

The text is given here in Yaqui and in a literal translation, accompanied by a third or free idiomatic rendering. The story explains the origin of the nickname of my informant's grandfather, which nickname the informant himself also bears.

A full appreciation of the story can come only from an intimate knowledge of Yaqui customs. Only a few details may be set forth here. Jobe'eso ró'i was a pajkó'ola, that is, 'old-man-of-the-feasts' whose office is fundamentally 'religious' and consists of supervising ritual dances and ceremonies, but who is required to function as a sort of master of ceremonies and clown at the feasts, to keep the people entertained. It was at one such feast, in which Castro's grandfather is alleged to have first told the story in order to explain his name.

Much of Yaqui humor consists of plays on words in the Yaqui language, and not a little of it, in the imitation of bird and animal sounds, thus figuratively making them talk. So far this story has never failed to cause great merriment among the Yaquis to whom I have read it; they being particularly impressed by the humor of the simulated sounds and speech, and also by the idea of someone being knocked down and throwing milk all around. The 'making' of the story depends largely on the ability of the one who is telling it to produce the required imitations.

This story has been published in Spanish by Alfonso Fabila,¹ and I am reasonably sure that Castro has made it available to other anthropologists, but I do not believe that any Yaqui language text of the story has been published before.

I am more indebted to Dr. Edward Spicer for material on the 'pajkó'ola' than to my own personal observation of Yaqui religious life. What observations I have made only verify his statements.

The orthography employed corresponds practically to the Spanish

¹ "Las Tribus Yaquis de Sonora".

orthography, except that 'k' and 'w' are used throughout with 'č' representing 'ch', 'ʔ' the glottal stop, and 'bu' (adopted for typographic reasons) a labialized b.

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1. temáiwaka ʔinen ʔámyoópnak

2. néjpo, káa yóʔotakai, kapyeótukan. 3. túane mékka yeépsan ʔín kabáammake, 4. yúʔin ne kabáakan, 5. júmesan buáram kía boayaya-júika ʔaʔáuwikai boayajúyajúti kaáte júam nasuku, 6. kúta pépetčeʔeku boajutjútti yeuréjte. 7. júme ʔíntok kabáam kía ʔáuíwi lolobólai. 8. ʔámet koptiáči. 9. táa néjpo ket júnen túʔulisam ʔujúʔu, 10. kanam ʔóuba, 11. ʔamabutíne ʔambúʔuuriak. 12. jamákne woi, baji taʔápo káa ʔín jóʔau yeuyépsa, 13. jíba ne póčoʔoku ʔámnúnuʔubua, 14. baʔábeʔe-katana, 15. juasárita, léjtiboʔokaʔapo. 16. jáksa wéekane ʔín jóʔau yeuyebíjbaek. 17. kúpteʔo bičaane ʔín kabáam jóʔarau lúula kuátak, 18. tebékne jíbebiaka ʔamnaáma. 19. buéʔu toóʔočiata kečáʔi, 20. kía káa mačíku kaáte, 21. asóʔolam buansáka, 22. jámyoyoʔam júni buansáka,

1. having-been-asked thus them-answered

2. I not old-being, shepherd-was. 3. truly-I far arrived my goats-with, 4. many I goats-had, 5. and-those rams only wool-rippling fat-being wool-bouncing walk trees among-in, 6. wood thickets wool-jerking out-walked. 7. those and goats only fat balls. 8. them-on forgettable. 9. but I still thus beautifully-them nursed, 10. not-I-them lazy, 11. too-many-I them-many-had. 12. at-times-I two, three days-in not my house-to out-arrived, 13. only I woods-in them-carried 14. water-every-one-from, 15. tree-greenery, scattered-laying-where 16. somewhere occasion-I my house-to out-arrive-wished. 17. evening sight-I my goats house-to straight turned, 18. long-had-I crook them-direct. 19. big dust stood, 20. nothing-but not light-in travel, 21. babies crying-go, 22. women-old also crying-go,

When I was a boy I was a shepherd. I would go very far with my goats; I had many goats. And the sheep were so fat that the wool rippled and bounced as they walked among the trees. And as they walked through the thickets their wool was snatched off. And the goats were just fat balls. They were careless but I nursed them carefully and did not neglect them; I had very many. At times I would be out two and three days with them without returning home, hunting the waterholes and the grassy spots. On one such occasion, desiring to return home, in the evening I headed my flock homeward and directed them with a long crook. We raised such a big dust that one could not see through it. The ewes and the little ones cried as they went,

23. junúen ne ʔámemak bóʔojoosimékasu, 24. káa mačiak. 25. síʔime batóʔoraata kokóčeo ne ʔín jóʔaune yépsak, 26. kabáamne kíimák, 27. ʔínepintok kibákek kariwi, 28. buáʔamta jariusekai, 29. buéʔitukne tébaure, 30. jíapsipo kóʔokosi tebaure, 31. júme kúta púʔatom báksiataka momobelaačáʔaka, 32. sótoʔim júni báksiari, 33. kaíta ne teak beja buáʔamta, 34. ʔín síam koóʔoʔotijia sía buanáʔabuanne, 35. kaíta teak beja, 36. ne kúta púʔatota núʔuka čibákoau kibákek, 37. sepne senuk buísek, ʔáaʔa wokkuriák, sépne jipíktaitek. 39. béja ne kusísi jipiʔike, 40. jipiʔikim púʔatopo kóʔom kíiktaka noóka. 41. ʔínenimjia, 42. čióbon čóbon, čióbon čóbon, čobók, čobók, čóok, čóok, čók, čók 43. ketúni née jipiʔikeosu, 44. júuʔu jubékame neu ʔomtéka née kónila weámaka ʔínen néu já, 45. jáʔačijteka néu noóka, 46. ʔiiyílen já túʔisi náʔa níkkaja, 47. ʔábue, ʔábue, ʔábue kátaʔa píike, 48. ʔíneponaʔa juúbek, 49. ʔínepintok kía káteka jipiʔike, 50. wáaʔa ʔínto júči naátek, 51.

23. thus I them-with travel-going-as, 24. not light. 25. all people sleeping-when I my house-to-I arrived, 26. goats-I put-in, 27. I-and entered house-to, 28. food hunt-going-for 29. because-I hungry, 30. heart-in painfully hungry, 31. those wood plates washed-being face-down-piled, 32. pots also washed, 33. nothing I find then food, 34. my bowels rumbling-sound, bowels crying, 35. nothing found then, 36. I wood plate grabbing goat-pen entered, 37. then-I one got, it foot-turned, 38. then-I milk-bekan, 39. then I soundingly milk, 40. milks plate-in down standing talked, 41. thus-they-sound, — 43. still I milking-while, 44. that wife-having-one me angering me around walking thus me-to sound, 45. sneezing me-to talked, 46. thus sound much I-it hear, 47. hey, hey, hey, not-it milk, 48. I-it wife-have, 49. I-and only sitting milked, 50. that

and as I was thus traveling with them it got dark. When everyone was asleep we got home. I put up the flock, and I went into the house to hunt some food because I was hungry. So hungry that my heart was sick. All the wooden plates were washed and stacked face downward, and the pots were also clean. My bowels were growling with hunger. And so finding nothing I took a wooden plate and went into the goat-pen, and finding a goat, I kicked her with my feet making her to stand, then I began to milk her. The milk streaming down into the plate sounded like talking; they sounded thus: čióbon, čóbon, čobók, čóok, čok, (etc.) [This rigamarole has no significance in Yaqui.]. While I was milking, her husband being angry with me was walking around me. And this he said to me, sneezing as he talked, exactly this, I heard him very distinctly, "Hey there, hey there, hey there, don't you milk her! She's my wife." And I remained seated there milking, so he began

ʔábue, ʔábue, ʔábue, kátaʔa piíke, 52. ʔíneponaʔa juúbek, 53. kúta púʔato tápunak ne ʔínto kíktek, 54. júʔubua ʔímin neé warákteo néu tájti wantéka, 55. wépeʔepo neé ʔáaktaka móbela neé tátabek, 56. jipíʔikim síʔime woʔótek, 57. ʔínepintok ʔáma bóʔoka káa ʔáa kíktekai, 58. tamuláatukan, ʔíntok wépeʔepo nasóntula, 59. junáman naátekane wákaʔateka ʔín jóʔau yepsak, 60. yokótuk beja, ne bóoniaka weáma róʔiroʔite weáma, 61. júnak naátekane jobéʔeso róʔimea teuwaawa.

and again began, 51. hey, hey, hey, not-it milk, 52. I-it wife-have, 53. wood plate full I and stood, 54. just-now here me ran-at me-to until running, 55. hip-in me hooking face-down me threw, 56. milk all thrown-out, 57. I-and there laying not able stand-being, 58. dizzy-being, and hips-in damaged-being, 59. there beginning-I on-all-fours my house-to arrived, 60. tomorrow now I crutch-having walk limp-limp-ly walk, 61. then beginning-I ram crippled-with was-called.

again, "Hey there, hey there, hey there, don't you milk her! She's my wife." The plate being full, I stood up again, but just as I was bent over raising up, he made for me, and butting me full in the seat, pitched me face down on the ground flinging the milk all over everything, and I remained lying there because I was unable to walk, being groggy, and with my hip injured. Then beginning to crawl on all fours I finally made it to the house. The following day I had to walk with a crutch, and went limpity limpity around. Beginning at that time I was called "jobéʔeso roʔi," that is, "Ram-crippled."