

Odzihozo Shapes the World

Told by Ambroise Obomsawin, who had it from Theophile Panadis

Odanak, Quebec

February 23, 1968

Source: Gordon Day. [Abenaki texts], pp. 3–7. MS, Canadian Museum of Civilization. Hull, PQ.

Day's transcription and literal translation are given below in (a); a tentative retranscription by Philip LeSourd is given in (b), followed by a new translation.

1. a. ⟨Yo ôtlokôgan -- yo bilôtlokad alsedawôd Simo Obomsawinna ta Lowi Tahamôda⟩

“This story this strange story it was told by Simon Obomsawin (deceased) and Louis Tahamont (deceased).”

b. Yo ąthlohkąkan, yo piląthlohkat alsətawąt Simo Opomsawinna tta Lowi Tahamąta.

‘This story, this strange story was recounted as it was heard by the late Simon Obomsawin and the late Louis Tahamont.’”

2. a. ⟨Pita nôwad odainazagwa awani giziôd wajoa ta benôkoal, ziboal ta nebesal. ta gizok tkôkoal⟩

“Very long ago there used to live a being he that made the mountains and the hills, the rivers and the lakes.”

b. Pihta nąwat wətainasa=ak^wa awani kisiąt wacoa tta pəmąkkoal, sipoal tta nępęssal, ta kisoak ktąkkoal.

‘Very long ago, there lived, they say, a being who created the mountains and the riverbanks, the rivers and the lakes, and the sky, the high slopes.’

3. a. ⟨Waji mōjasaid natamatag wajōnem ohaga ta opedinal, ganewa ozeskwiganal ozōmiga daakwaswal waji gizi pmosad, ni aiyagō waji gizi mōjid aiyagō batkwabid.⟩

“For beginning at first he had his body and his arms, but his legs were too short to be able to walk, and he had-to be able to move, he had to sit.”

b. Waci-maçassait nahtamahtak wacānēm wēhaka tta wēpētinal, kanēwa wēsosk^wikanal wēsami=ka taakahsēwal waci-kisi-pēmohsat, ni ayakā waci-kisi-mācit ayakā patk^wapit.

‘When he got his start, he at first had his body and his arms, but his legs were too short for him to be able to walk, so in order to move he had to be seated.’

4. a. ⟨Ni odawakan weljial waji gizi bmakannikhozid, ni omaōnemen ali psaniljōd nagako waji gigiōd wajoa ta benōkoal.⟩

“And he used his hands to be able to travel, and he gathered it so he filled his hands with sand to make mountains and hills.”

b. Ni wētawahkan wēlācial waci-kisi-pēmahkannikhozid, ni wēmaānēmēn ali-psanilēçat nakahko waci-kisiqt wacoa tta pēmākkōal.

‘So he used his hands to make his way and travel, and he grabbed handfuls of sand to make mountains and slopes.’

5. a. ⟨Ni waji bmakannid, ni aiyagō bamenasid ozabi kik waji gizitok ziboal ni, ali wōlkahigad nebi onosokōgon ni wadosaig.⟩

“And to travel, then he had to drag his bottom on the ground to make rivers and, as he dug the water it followed it and it flowed along.

b. Ni waci-pəmāhkannit, ni ayakā pamənahsit wəsapi kkik waci-kisihtok sipoal, ni ali-wāłkahikat nəpi wənohsohkəkon ni watohsaik.

‘Then as he traveled along, he just had to haul his butt along the ground to make rivers, and as he dug up the land, the water followed it (his butt) and flowed along that way.’

6. a. ⟨Giziton nebesal, ni waji olito gaci nebesal neigô (ni aiyagô) gwolebokwabid taa baami gizi molôgeg yo batkwabid.⟩

“He made it the lakes, and to make big lakes he had to turn sitting and then (further) made a deep one here sitting.”

b. Kisihto nəpəssal. Ni waci-wəlihtok kci-nəpəssal ni ayakā k^wələpohk^wapit tta paami-kisi-moləhkak yo patk^wapit.

‘He made lakes. And to make big lakes he had to turn around where he sat and work down as deep as he could where he sat.’

7. a. ⟨Ni agwa zalakiwi gizi mōjageg ozeskwiganal tahôlawi agwôlagweji.⟩

“And it is said (that) some time afterwards he grew his legs like a tadpole.”

b. Ni=ak^wa salahkiwi kisi-məçakək wəsosk^wikanal tahəlawi ak^wələk^wəci.

‘Then, they say, at one point he grew legs like a tadpole.’

8. a. ⟨Ni adoji boneg ozeskwigan yodali bazegwen, yodali mina gedag waji olitog ziboal, waji bōnomoodid gaci zibo.⟩

“And then he placed his leg here one, here again the other to make rivers, so they make a big river.”

b. Ni atoci-ponək wəsosk^wikanal yo tali pasək^wən, yo tali mina kətak waci-wəlihtok sipoal, waci-ponəmootit kci-sipo.

‘Then he placed his legs one here, the other here, so that he could make rivers, so that they could establish a great river.’

9. a. ⟨Ni negwejijibiwi odali baiyôn nikitotegwak dôni adali môjagid wa koai agwôdawas, ni odali jannabin waji ôdokaziidid.⟩

“And at one place he there he came to a fork where there it grew this white pine fungus, and he there he stopped [s]o they talk.

b. Ni nəkwəci-cəpiwi wətali-payən nikətawtəkwahk tən̄i atali-maçakit wa koai-ak^wətawahs, ni wətali-canapin waci-ətəhkasiitit.

‘Then at one point he came to a place where the river branched, where this pine fungus (bracket fungus sp.) was growing, and he stopped and sat down there so they could talk.’

10. a. ⟨Ni na agwôdawas pitta agwa gci damigo nebizôn. Gci damigen onebizôn.⟩

“And that one the fungus very it is said very medecin. Very it is important medicine.”

b. Ni na ak^wətawahs pihta=ak^wa kcitamiko nəpison. Kcitamkən wənəpison.

‘And that bracket fungus, it is said to be very highly regarded as medicine. Its medicine is very highly regarded.’

11. a. ⟨Ni gizi gaciaoid, ta ato zawtosa.⟩

“And afterwards he became old, and probably he became tired.”

b. Ni kisi kaciawit, tta=ahto sawtohsa.

‘Then he had become old, and he also grew tired.’

12. a. ⟨Ni oliton Bitawbagw, ni ni oji obatkwabın senek ni nebesek, ni ôjihozin — agematta ni senek⟩

“Then he made it the-Between-Lake (Lake Champlain), and from then he sat on the rock there in the lake [handwritten:] or ‘on that rock in the lake’, and he changed himself — (he himself (did it) on that rock.”

b. Ni olihton Pihtawəpak^w, ni ni wəci wəpatk^wapin ssənək ni nəpəssək, ni [wət]açihosin akəma=ttā ni ssənək.

‘Then he made the Lake in Between (Lake Champlain), and from then on he sat on a rock in the lake, and he changed himself into stone there.’

13. a. ⟨Ni sen gizi namitôzo oji Baliten, ni liwitôzo Ojihos ala Ojiozosa dōni laka ali dōnewa gizitog ni nebes giziozid, giziliozid sen ni oji ni waji li namitôzig oji Baliten.⟩

“That rock can be seen from Burlington (Vermont), and it is called Ojihos or Ojiozosa because whoever made it that lake he made himself, he made himself into a rock and from then to be seen from Burlington.”

b. Ni ssən kisi-namihtəšo wəci Palihtən, ni liwihtəšo Wəcihos ala Wəciosossa, tənī=ak^wa (?) ali- tənəwa -kisihtok nəpəss kisiosit, kisi-liosit ssən ni wəci waci-li-namihtəšik wəci Palihtən.

‘That rock can be seen from Burlington (Vermont), and it is called *Wăcihos* or *Wăciosossa* ‘he made himself’, because, they say (?), the one who made the lake made himself, made himself into stone, and thus he can be seen from Burlington.’

14. a. ⟨Naoji nikwôbi askwa oliwitamenô Ojiozek.⟩

‘Some now they call it at Ojiozo.’

b. Nawăci nihk^wăpi ask^wa oliwihtaməŋă Wăcihosək.

‘Some people still call it “at Odzihozo”.’

15. a. ⟨Bastoniak oliwitamenô Rock Dunder.⟩

‘Boston people (Americans) they call it Rock Dunder.’

b. Pastoniak oliwihtaməŋă *Rock Dunder*.

‘Americans call it Rock Dunder.’

16. a. ⟨Oji kôgassadegwa gassigaden Wôbaniak adalkanniidid ni Bitawbagok majimiwi odalijigitamawônô odamô ta odamôwôganal waji gizi odamôd ta aci waji nda ginlômsenog waji gizi bikagôdid ni waji losaadid Gici Menahanek.⟩

‘For hundreds of years Abenakis (when they) travelled there on Lake Champlain always there [??] they left for him tobacco and pipes so he can smoke and also so not it blows hard so can they cross and so they go Grand Isle-to.’

b. Wăci kăkăhsatək^wa kăhsikatən Wăpăniak atalkanniitit ni Pihawəpakok macimiwi wətali-cikihtamawəŋă wətamă tta wətamăwăkanal waci-kisi-wətamă, tta ahci waci- ăta -kinələmsənnok^wk^w waci-kisi-pihkăkăqătit ni waci-lohsaatit Kihci-mənanăk.

‘For hundreds of years Abenakis traveling on Lake Champlain have always left tobacco and pipes for him there so that he could have a smoke, and also so that there would not be a strong wind, so that they could cross over and they could go to Grand Isle.’

17. a. ⟨Yo alidaôdamakw naoji ali - olômawaldamoodid ni liwitôzo Ojios, ali olalemegwezoôganoig awawani. aligen⟩

“This they think some (from this some think) that -- they believe it is called that is someone taking a chance (as drawing a straw).”

b. Yo alitaâtamak^w nawæci ali-wəlamawalətamootit ni liwihtəso Wæcios, ali-olaləmək^wəzoəkanoik awani alikən.

‘From this you may understand how some people believe that (the rock) is called *Wæcios* ‘make for oneself’, like someone’s good luck charm.’

18. a. ⟨Sen nôbi aligek ni kwahliwi matanaskigeg ni Gici Menahan aliwitôzig Ojihozskwa matenagag.⟩

“A stone similar it is there near at the end of that Grand Isle that is called Ojihozo’s Wife at the end of the island.”

b. Ssən nəpi alikək ni k^wahliwi mahtanaskikek ni Kihci-mənanahan aliwihtəsik Wæcihosoisikwa, mahtənakak.

‘A rock just like it is located near the end of Grand Isle that is called Odzihozo’s Wife, at the end of the island.’

19. a. ⟨Kicayak nōwad alidawakwtoodid ôtlókôganal ni liwi: “Gemosomesnoga ni idageb. Ni gizitogeb. Ni alcowaldageb. Ni alec.⟩

“The old men long ago they ended stories this way: ‘Our Old Ancestor he said that. He made that. He wanted it that way. Let it be that way.’”

b. Kihcayak nāwat ali-tawak^wtootit āthlokākanal ni liwi: “Kēmohsomæssōnoka ni itakēp. Ni kisihtokēp. Ni alcoalētakēp. Ni alac.”

‘Long ago the way the old men ended stories was like this: “Our grandfather of old told it that way. He made it that way. He wanted it that way. Let it be that way.’”