

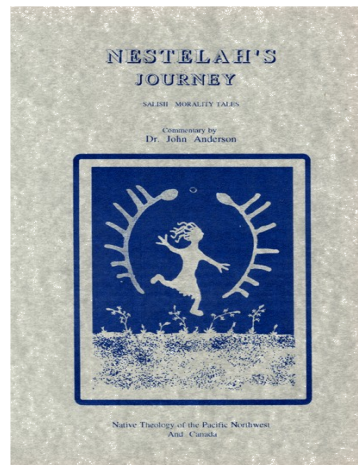
# NESTELAH'S JOURNEY

## SALISH MORALITY TALES

*(Excerpts from a short book by Dr. John Anderson)*

*Kalispel, Okanogan, Wishing Stone, Pasayten Wilderness*

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## INTRODUCTION

"This publication features two closely related Salish Indian stories about a magically created 'wishing stone.' The heroine of each tale is a beautiful Kalispel woman who takes a fateful journey from her Idaho home to visit the Okanogan valley. Here she encounters Coyote the Trickster and numerous other interesting characters.

In the first story the heroine is called Blue Flower in deference to the lovely camas flower so admired by her Kalispel relatives. The narrator tells how she began a great journey in hopes of finding and wooing a handsome youth she had fallen in love with. The cover illustration shows her running through a flowering field, with her suitor and his brother hovering on each side. But jealousy, and a sharp temper, eventually led Blue Flower into conflict with Trickster Coyote. He became annoyed with Blue Flower and used his supernatural powers to create the Wishing Stone and transform other features of the regional landscape.

The second tale dates back to an era when volcanoes were active in the mountains of the Pasayten wilderness overlooking the Okanogan valley. It also features magical geographic transformations by Coyote Trickster and emphasizes the lesson to young listeners (as well as to us grown-ups) that good intentions often fail us when we lack self-discipline."

(From the introduction).

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## CONCLUDING COMMENTARY

"The fatal flaw of the two younger brothers in this second narrative was that they could not put aside sibling rivalry long enough for Nestelah to complete her (all important) religious obligations. Nestelah was therefore divided between her loyalties to her Kalispel family and her infatuation with these handsome and flirtatious Okanogan suitors. As in the first story, Amotqen who was the god at the top of the heavens intervened to re-establish moral order.

In ancient Salish cosmology, the North Star was probably the realm of the deity called Amotqen. Nestelah could have saved herself if she had been true to Amotqen's uncompromising ethics (as the North Star, he never moved in the sky). But she fell instead under the influence of the forces of chaos, change, and disorder exemplified by the actions of Coyote. The Okanogan celestial Coyote was (as presumably is the case in other Salish myths) the ruler of the stars in the southern sky and thus associated with chaos, disorder, and moral decadence. Nestelah as thus caught up in a cosmic drama involving the ruling gods of the north and south"

(from the section on Greed, in the concluding commentary, page 17).

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\* John's text is especially designed for use by tourists visiting the inland Northwest. It includes maps showing visitors how to reach the Nestelah Stone, from Spokane and Wenatchee in the south, Idaho and Montana in the west, Kelowna in the north, and Seattle in the west. The actual Nestelah

Stone monument is a simple wayside site, located a short distance from Tonaset, Washington. Camping is available in nearby state and private parks.

*This book is no longer in print. It will eventually be entered in full text for a free download through the John M. Anderson Library Project.*

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