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Hopi mythology

The **Hopi** maintain a complex religious and mythological tradition stretching back over centuries. However, it is difficult to definitively state what all Hopis as a group believe. Like the oral traditions of many other societies, Hopi mythology is not always told consistently and each Hopi mesa, or even each village, may have its own version of a particular story. But, “in essence the variants of the Hopi myth bear marked similarity to one another.”^[1] It is also not clear that those stories which are told to non-Hopis, such as anthropologists and ethnographers, represent genuine Hopi beliefs or are merely stories told to the curious while keeping safe the Hopi’s more sacred doctrines. As folklorist **Harold Courlander** states, “there is a Hopi reticence about discussing matters that could be considered ritual secrets or religion-oriented traditions.”^[2] David Roberts continues that “the secrecy that lies at the heart of **Puebloan** [including Hopi] life...long predates European contact, forming an intrinsic feature of the culture.”^[3] In addition, the Hopis have always been willing to assimilate foreign ideas into their cosmology if they are proven effective for such practical necessities as bringing rain.^[4] As such, the Hopi had at least some contact with Europeans beginning the 16th century, and some believe that European Christian traditions may have entered into Hopi cosmology at some point. Indeed, Spanish missions were built in several Hopi villages starting in 1629 and were in operation until the **Pueblo Revolt** of 1680. However, after the revolt, it was the Hopi alone of all the **Pueblo** tribes who kept the Spanish out of their villages permanently, and regular contact with whites did not begin again until nearly two centuries later. The Hopi mesas have therefore been seen as “relatively unacculturated” at least through the early twentieth century, and it may be posited that the European influence on the core themes of Hopi mythology was slight.^[5]



A mural depicting Tawa, the Sun Spirit and Creator in Hopi mythology.

1 Major deities

Most Hopi accounts of creation center around Tawa, the Sun Spirit. Tawa is the Creator, and it was he who formed the First World out of Tokpella, or Endless Space, as well as its original inhabitants.^[6] It is still traditional for Hopi mothers to seek a blessing from the Sun for their newborn children.^[7] However, other accounts have it that Tawa, or Taiowa, first created Sotuknang, whom he called his nephew. Taiowa then sent Sotuknang to create the nine universes according to his plan, and it was Sotuknang who created Spider Woman, or **Spider Grandmother**.^[8] Spider Woman served as a messenger for the Creator and was an intercessory between deity and the people. In some versions of the Hopi creation myth, it is she who creates all life under the direction of Sotuknang.^[8] Yet other stories tell that life was created by Hard Being Woman of the West and Hard Being Woman of the East, while the Sun merely observed the process.^{[9][10]}

Masauwu, Skeleton Man, was the Spirit of Death, Earth God, door keeper to the Fifth World, and the Keeper of Fire. He was also the Master of the Upper World, or the Fourth World, and was there when the good people es-

caped the wickedness of the Third World for the promise of the Fourth.^[11] Masauwu is described as wearing a hideous mask, but again showing the diversity of myths among the Hopi, Masauwu was alternately described as a handsome, bejeweled man beneath his mask or as a bloody, fearsome creature. However, he is also assigned certain benevolent attributes.^[12] One story has it that it was Masauwu who helped settle the Hopi at Oraibi and gave them stewardship over the land. He also charged them to watch for the coming of the Pahana (see section below), the Lost White Brother.^[13] Other important deities include the twin war gods, the *kachinas*, and the trickster Coyote.

Maize is also vital to Hopi subsistence and religion. “For traditional Hopis, corn is the central bond. Its essence, physically, spiritually, and symbolically, pervades their existence. For the people of the mesas corn is sustenance, ceremonial object, prayer offering, symbol, and sentient being unto itself. Corn is the Mother in the truest sense that people take in the corn and the corn becomes their flesh, as mother milk becomes the flesh of the child.”^[14]

1.1 Feminist interpretations

Some contemporary writers tend to posit an absolute importance of the feminine to the Hopi and attribute the role of a male Creator (Tawa) to intrusions into Hopi folklore of European beliefs. In this interpretation, the Hopis traditionally saw the goddess Spider Woman as their creator, “Grandmother of the sun and as the great Medicine Power who sang the people into this fourth world we live in now.”^[15] The theory holds that under centuries of pressure by white culture, Spider Woman has only recently been replaced by a male Creator and “the Hopi goddess Spider Woman has become the masculine Maseo or Tawa...”^[16]

While this view of Hopi mythology is deeply controversial, certainly the Hopi have much in their culture and mythology which emphasized the importance of the feminine. For instance, the Hopi are a matrilineal society, and children belong to the clan of the mother, not the father. The Hopi Mother Nature is symbolized by both Mother Earth and the Corn Mother. “Spider Woman, Sand Altar Woman, and other female spirits [are] conceived to be the mothers of all living things. This mother is represented in the cult by the *sipapu*, the opening in the floor of the underground ceremonial chamber, or *kiva*, for the *sipapu* is the womb of Mother Earth, just as it

is the hole through which humankind originally emerged from the *underworld*.”^[17]

However, Hopi religion was and is presided over by men, as were most political functions within the villages. Most importantly, it was only men who perform the required dances and ceremonies which brought rain to the Hopi.

2 Four Worlds

Hopi legend tells that the current earth is the Fourth World to be inhabited by Tawa’s creations. The story essentially states that in each previous world, the people, though originally happy, became disobedient and lived contrary to Tawa’s plan; they engaged in sexual promiscuity, fought one another and would not live in harmony. Thus, the most obedient were led (usually by Spider Woman) to the next higher world, with physical changes occurring both in the people in the course of their journey, and in the environment of the next world. In some stories, these former worlds were then destroyed along with their wicked inhabitants, whereas in others the good people were simply led away from the chaos which had been created by their actions.

2.1 Entrance into the Fourth World



A Hopi petroglyph in Mesa Verde National Park. The boxy spiral shape near the center of the photo likely represents the sipapu, the place where the Hopi emerged from the earth in their creation story.

Two main versions exist as to the Hopi’s emergence into the present Fourth World. The more prevalent is that Spider Grandmother caused a hollow reed (or bamboo) to

grow into the sky, and it emerged in the Fourth World at the *sipapu*. The people then climbed up the reed into this world, emerging from the *sipapu*. The location of the *sipapu* is given as in the *Grand Canyon*.

The other version (mainly told in Oraibi) has it Tawa destroyed the Third World in a great flood. Before the destruction, Spider Grandmother sealed the more righteous people into hollow reeds which were used as boats. Upon arriving on a small piece of dry land, the people saw nothing around them but more water, even after planting a large bamboo shoot, climbing to the top, and looking about. Spider Woman then told the people to make boats out of more reeds, and using island “stepping-stones” along the way, the people sailed east until they eventually arrived on the mountainous coasts of the Fourth World.

While it may not be possible to positively ascertain which is the original or “more correct” story, Harold Courlander writes, at least in Oraibi (the oldest of the Hopi villages), little children are often told the story of the *sipapu*, and the story of an ocean voyage is related to them when they are older.^[18] He states that even the name of the Hopi Water Clan (Patkinyamu) literally means “A Dwelling-on-Water” or “Houseboat”. However, he notes the *sipapu* story is centered on *Walpi* and is more accepted among Hopis generally.^[18]

2.2 Migrations

Upon their arrival in the Fourth World, the Hopis divided and went on a series of great migrations throughout the land. Sometimes they would stop and build a town, then abandon it to continue on with the migration. However, they would leave their symbols behind in the rocks to show that the Hopi had been there. Long the divided people wandered in groups of families, eventually forming clans named after an event or sign that a particular group received upon its journey.^[19] These clans would travel for some time as a unified community, but almost inevitably a disagreement would occur, the clan would split and each portion would go its separate way. However, as the clans traveled, they would often join together forming large groups, only to have these associations disband, and then be reformed with other clans. These alternate periods of harmonious living followed by wickedness, contention, and separation play an important part of the Hopi mythos. This pattern seemingly began in the First World and continues even into recent history.

In the course of their migration, each Hopi clan was to

go to the farthest extremity of the land in every direction. Far in the north was a land of snow and ice which was called the Back Door, but this was closed to the Hopi. However, the Hopi say that other peoples came through the Back Door into the Fourth World. This Back Door could be referring to the *Bering land bridge*, which connected Asia with far north North America. The Hopi were led on their migrations by various signs, or were helped along by Spider Woman. Eventually, the Hopi clans finished their prescribed migrations and were led to their current location in northeastern Arizona.

Most Hopi traditions have it that they were given their land by Masauwu, the Spirit of Death and Master of the Fourth World.

2.3 Sacred Hopi tablets

Hopi tradition tells of sacred tablets which were imparted to the Hopi by various deities. Like most of Hopi mythology, accounts differ as to when the tablets were given and in precisely what manner.

Perhaps the most important was said to be in the possession of the Fire Clan, and is related to the return of the Pahana. In one version, an elder of the Fire Clan worried that his people would not recognize the Pahana when he returned from the east. He therefore etched various designs including a human figure into a stone, and then broke off the section of the stone which included the figure’s head. This section was given to Pahana and he was told to bring it back with him so that the Hopi would not be deceived by a witch or sorcerer.^[20] This one is Truth, the stone has an Indian face of black, white and grey with black feathers, and it is not etched but looks more like ink that soaked into the stone.

Another version has it that the Fire Clan was given a sacred tablet by Masauwu, who as the giver of fire was their chief deity. In this version the human figure was purposely drawn without a head, and a corner of the stone was broken off. Masauwu told them that eventually the Pahana would return bringing the broken-off corner of the stone, but if in the meantime a Hopi leader accepted a false religion, he must assent to having his head cut off as drawn on the stone.^[21]

This same story holds that three other sacred tablets were also given to the Hopi. These were given to the Bear Clan by their patron deity *Söqömhonaw*, and essentially constituted a divine title to the lands where the Hopi settled

after their migrations. The Hopi had a Universal Snake Dance. The third of these was etched with designs including the sun, moon, stars, clouds, etc. on one side with six human figures on the other.^[22] A letter from the Hopi to the President of the United States in 1949 also declared that “the Stone Tablets, upon which are written the boundaries of the Hopi Empire, are still in the hands of the Chiefs of Oraibi and Hotevilla pueblos...”^[23]

3 Kachinas



Drawings of kachina dolls from an 1894 anthropology book.

Historically speaking, the kachina religion long predates European contact, and its traces have been found which date to as early as 1325 A.D.^[24] However, it remains an open question among scholars as to whether the kachina religion was an indigenous creation, or an import from Mexico. The similarity of many aspects of Hopi religion to that of the Aztecs to the south strongly suggest the latter to many scholars.^[25] For example, the Hopi horned or plumed serpent Awanyu uncannily resembles the Aztec Quetzecoatl, as does the Hopi legend of the Pahana.

To the Hopi, kachinas are supernatural beings who represent and have charge over various aspects of the natural world. They might be thought of as analogous to

Greco-Roman demi-gods or Catholic saints. There are literally hundreds of different Kachinas, which may represent anything from rain to watermelon, various animals, stars, and even other Indian tribes. However, the kachinas are also thought to be the spirits of dead ancestors, and they may come to the Hopi mesas in the form of rain clouds.^[24]

The Hopi say that during a great drought, they heard singing and dancing coming from the San Francisco Peaks. Upon investigation, they met the Kachinas who returned with the Hopi to their villages and taught them various forms of agriculture. The Hopi believe that for six months out of the year, the Kachina spirits live in the Hopi villages. After the Home Dance in late July or early August, the Kachinas return to the San Francisco Peaks for six months.^[26] The Hopi believe that these dances are vital for the continued harmony and balance of the world. It serves the further and vital purpose of bringing rain to the Hopi's parched homeland.

4 Pahana

The true Pahana (or Bahana) is the Lost White Brother of the Hopi. Most versions have it that the Pahana or Elder Brother left for the east at the time that the Hopi entered the Fourth World and began their migrations. However, the Hopi say that he will return again and at his coming the wicked will be destroyed and a new age of peace, the Fifth World, will be ushered into the world. As mentioned above, it is said he will bring with him a missing section of a sacred Hopi stone in the possession of the Fire Clan, and that he will come wearing red. Traditionally, Hopis are buried facing eastward in expectation of the Pahana who will come from that direction.^[27]

The legend of the Pahana seems intimately connected with the Aztec story of Quetzalcoatl, and other legends of Central America.^[4] This similarity is furthered by the liberal representation of Awanyu, the horned or plumed serpent, in Hopi and other Puebloan art. This figure bears a striking resemblance to figures of Quetzacoatl, the feathered serpent, in Mexico. In the early 16th century, both the Hopis and the Aztecs believed that the coming of the Spanish conquistadors was the return of this lost white prophet. Unlike the Aztecs, upon first contact the Hopi put the Spanish through a series of tests in order to determine their divinity, and having failed, the Spanish were sent away from the Hopi mesas.^[28]

One account has it that the Hopi realized that the Spanish were not the Pahana based upon the destruction of a Hopi town by the Spanish. Thus when the Spanish arrived at the village of *Awatovi*, they drew a line of cornmeal as a sign for the Spanish not to enter the village, but this was ignored. While some Hopi wanted to fight the invaders, it was decided to try a peaceful approach in the hope that the Spanish would eventually leave.^[29] However, Spanish accounts record a short skirmish at *Awatovi* before the Hopis capitulated. Frank Waters records a Hopi tradition that the Spanish did ignore a cornmeal line drawn by the Hopis and a short battle followed.

Tovar [the leader of the Spanish] and his men were conducted to Oraibi. They were met by all the clan chiefs at Tawtoma, as prescribed by prophecy, where four lines of sacred meal were drawn. The Bear Clan leader stepped up to the barrier and extended his hand, palm up, to the leader of the white men. If he was indeed the true Pahana, the Hopis knew he would extend his own hand, palm down, and clasp the Bear Clan leader's hand to form the *nakwach*, the ancient symbol of brotherhood. Tovar instead curtly commanded one of his men to drop a gift into the Bear chief's hand, believing that the Indian wanted a present of some kind. Instantly all the Hopi chiefs knew that Pahana had forgotten the ancient agreement made between their peoples at the time of their separation. Nevertheless, the Spaniards were escorted up to Oraibi, fed and quartered, and the agreement explained to them. It was understood that when the two were finally reconciled, each would correct the other's laws and faults; they would live side by side and share in common all the riches of the land and join their faiths in one religion that would establish the truth of life in a spirit of universal brotherhood. The Spaniards did not understand, and having found no gold, they soon departed.^[30]

5 In popular culture

The art film/avant-garde opera *Koyannisqatsi* references both the Hopi term *Ko.yan.nis.qatsi* ("life out of balance"), and three Hopi prophecies —i.e. warnings or eschatology.

David Lanz and Paul Speer's 1987 new-age album *Desert Vision* has a track named "Tawtoma."

The novel by Tony Hillerman, *The Dark Wind* first published in 1982, discusses Hopi mythology throughout the story, as key characters are Hopi men, and events of the story occur near important shrines or during an important ceremony. The fictional Navajo sergeant Jim Chee works with fictional Hopi Albert "Cowboy" Dashee, who is a deputy for Coconino County, Arizona, and speaks Hopi and English, translating for Chee on occasion, as well as explaining shrines and ceremonies to him.

6 See also

- [Blue Star Kachina](#)

7 Notes

- [1] Christopher Vecsey. *The Emergence of the Hopi People*, in *American Indian Quarterly*, vol. 7, no. 3, *American Indian Religions*, 70 (Summer 1983).
- [2] Harold Courlander. *The Fourth World of the Hopis: The Epic Story of the Hopi Indians as Preserved in their Legends and Traditions*, 201 (University of New Mexico Press, 1987)
- [3] David Roberts. *The Pueblo Revolt*, 5 (Simon and Schuster, 2004).
- [4] Susan E. James. *Some Aspects of the Aztec Religion in the Hopi Kachina Cult*, *Journal of the Southwest* (2000)
- [5] David Roberts. *The Pueblo Revolt*, 48.
- [6] Harold Courlander. *The Fourth World of the Hopis: The Epic Story of the Hopi Indians as Preserved in their Legends and Traditions*, 17 (University of New Mexico Press, 1987)
- [7] Louise Udall. *Me and Mine: The Life Story of Helen Sekaquaptewa*, 7 (University of Arizona Press, 1969)
- [8] Frank Waters. *The Book of the Hopi*, 3-5 (Penguin Books, 1963).
- [9] H.R. Voth. *The Traditions of the Hopi*, 1 (Chicago, 1905)
- [10] Harold Courlander explains that this version of the story is an attempt to amalgamate two conflicting Hopi traditions dealing with two female deities, Spider Grandmother

and Huruing Wuhti (Hard Being Woman). Spider Grandmother has a central role or myths where the Hopi arrive in the Fourth World via the sipapu, whereas Hard Being Woman is related to Hopi legends that they arrived in the Fourth World by boat. *The Fourth World of the Hopi*, 205.

- [11] Harold Courlander. *The Fourth World of the Hopis*, 22.
- [12] Hamilton A. Tyler. *Pueblo Gods and Myths*, 5-7 (University of Oklahoma Press, 1964)
- [13] Dan Kotchongva. *Where is the White Brother of the Hopi Indian?*, in *Improvement Era* (1936).
- [14] Dennis Wall and Virgil Masayesva, "People of the Corn: Teachings in Hopi Traditional Agriculture, Spirituality, and Sustainability", *American Indian Quarterly*, Summer/Fall 2004, pages 435–453.
- [15] Paula Gunn Allen, *The Sacred Hoop*, Beacon Press, 1992, page 19.
- [16] Gunn Allen, page 41.
- [17] Ake Hulkrantz, "The religion of the Goddess in North America", Crossroad Publishing Co., 1990, pages 213–14.
- [18] Harold Courlander. *The Fourth World of the Hopis*, p.205.
- [19] See, e.g. Harold Courlander. *The Fourth World of the Hopi*, 35.
- [20] Harold Courlander, *The Fourth World of the Hopi*, 31.
- [21] Frank Waters, *The Book of the Hopi*, 31
- [22] Frank Waters, *The Book of the Hopi*, 33 (Penguin Books, 1963).
- [23] Waters, *The Book of the Hopi*, 323.
- [24] David Roberts. *The Pueblo Revolt*, 36.
- [25] David Roberts. *The Pueblo Revolt*, 45.
- [26] Pecina, Ron and Pecina, Bob. "Hopi Kachinas: History, Legends, and Art". Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 2013. ISBN 978-0-7643-4429-9.
- [27] Harold Courlander. *The Fourth World of the Hopis*, 31.
- [28] Raymond Friday Locke. *The Book of the Navajo*, 139-140 (Hollaway House 2001).
- [29] Harold Courlander. *The Fourth World of the Hopis*, 176.
- [30] Frank Waters. *The Book of the Hopi*, 252.

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- Courlander, Harold, *The Fourth World of the Hopis: The Epic Story of the Hopi Indians as Preserved in Their Legends and Traditions* (University of New Mexico Press, 1987).
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Awanyu

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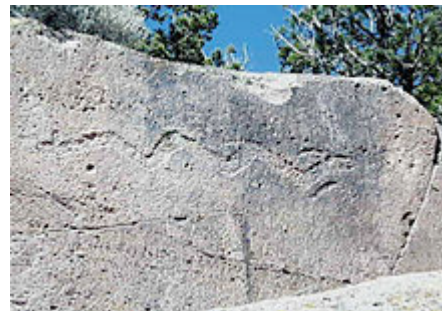
Avanyu (also **Awanyu**), is a Tewa deity, the guardian of water. Represented as a horned or plumed serpent with curves suggestive of flowing water or the zig-zag of lightning, Avanyu appears on the walls of caves located high above canyon rivers in New Mexico and Arizona. Avanyu may be related to the feathered serpent of Mesoamerica—Quetzalcoatl and related deities. Avanyu is a frequent motif on Native American pottery of the Southwestern United States.

"The Avanyu, as it is pronounced in Tewa, or horned serpent, is not a myth. The pueblo people of Santa Clara Pueblo, New Mexico, believe that the great horned serpent lives in the waters and tributaries of the Rio Grande river. It is a common belief that there a vast underwater tunnel systems that run under the ground and that natural springs are "sipapu," or gateways to these underground places where the serpents live. These are not unlike the great anaconda of South America, often depicted and described as being more than a hundred feet long when fully grown, the difference being that the Avanyu has a single or several horns protruding from the back of its head. Judging from several eyewitness accounts, it is my personal theory that the younger ones have one horn and grow more as they age, with the adult specimens having several. Sometimes the serpent is depicted as being "feathered," although, those that have claimed to see the creature describe it as having smooth or scaly surfaces, no feathers being noted. Many important and trustworthy people among the descendants of the people known as the "anasazi" have seen this legendary creature with their own eyes, my great-grandmother, Margaret Tafoya, being one of them. They are often described as having a horse-like head, and grey skin with red markings running over the front of its face to under its eyes. The common belief is that they are able to release energy in the form of lightning from their mouths, as well as control the water in which it resides.

Although they may be labeled as a deities, and other entities such as the many various kachinas, are seen as "gods", the pueblo people as well as our relatives, the Hopi, only worship ONE deity, the creator who made everything that is and everything that is not. The

Awanyu

Guardian of water



Rock art at Tsirege depicting Awanyu.

Abode	Rio Grande
Symbol	plumed serpent

Avanyu and various kachinas are known to us as "parts" of the one true god, much as Jesus once was. Yes, we believe in him as well.

The creature or "feathered" serpent of the Aztecs, as well as Quetzalcoatl, may very well be all the same creature, however Quetzalcoatl was often depicted or described as taking the form of a humanoid and teaching mankind knowledge, whereas, the Avanyu of the pueblo people is an actual cryptozoological animal, known to exist even today, with the last sighting being about 40 years ago.

The month of July is when the pueblo people do not go swimming in the lakes and streams of our land, as it is then that we believe that the Avanyu feeds. Out of respect for us, the Avanyu only feeds at this time, so that humans can use the waterways without fear of being eaten. This is an ancient truce between the people and the great horned serpent. It is during this time that people go missing when they ignore or are not aware of this pact. Many have drowned in the month of July, their bodies never found. It is commonly believed that they were eaten by the great snake.

The now abandoned pueblo of Pecos, or Cicuye, as it was known by the locals, was home to a society of tribal community members who's clan animal was the snake. The site of the pueblo itself, has archaeological evidence that suggests it has been a continual place of human habitation for more than 7,000 years. Legend claims that they possessed an avanyu of tremendous size. It is said that they would feed it human sacrifices, probably criminals or volunteers, to the great snake in exchange for favors, such as rain or good fortunes. Legends also say that they HAD to feed it in order to keep it from eating the community members and running amok. According to those same legends, the serpent was in fact an avanyu, and grew to such gigantic proportions that eventually they had to keep the serpent trapped inside of a cave somewhere in the vicinity of Pecos pueblo. They were forced to keep a bonfire burning in the entrance to the cave, as it was the only thing that kept the great serpent contained. In the 1920's a woman named Helen Roberts spent some time amongst the indians of San Ildefonso Pueblo where she befriended a 70 year old man by the name of Ignacio Aguilar. He told her a tale that was related to him by his grandfather, who had witnessed an incident while on a hunting trip along the Rio Grande. He said that one day while his grandfather was hunting with his friends, a very excited band of Pecos indians appeared out of the foliage. They were about 35 miles from Pecos, and when asked why they were so far from their pueblo, the Pecos indians said that they were searching for their Avanyu, which had escaped from its den near their pueblo. They showed Aguilar's grandfather and his friends the trail of flattened brush the creature had left behind. Aguilar's grandfather and his friends agreed to help the Pecos indians follow the trail and look for the gigantic serpent. Before long they found the place where the serpent had slithered into the river and had apparently vanished forever. The loss of this avanyu by the Pecos indians is believed to have led to its downfall, as the pueblo, which is located near Santa Fe, NM, was abandoned sometime in the eighteenth or early nineteenth century. Perhaps the serpent is still in its lair, a mountain cave somewhere in the hills near Santa Fe.

As you travel along highway 30 towards Los Alamos from Española, NM, you enter the reservation of Santa Clara Pueblo. On the left hand side of the highway, about a mile from the boundary sign for the reservation, there is a small stand of cottonwood trees that are extremely old. They surround a natural spring, which, about eighty years ago, was once the residence of a young, or smaller



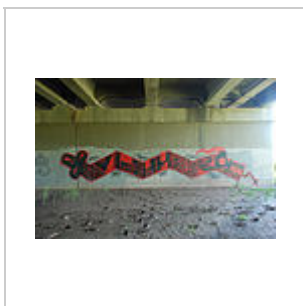
Bowl from Santa Clara Pueblo depicting Awanyu

avanyu. It was described to me, by my grandmother, as being a juvenile, or baby. It was around fifteen to twenty feet long and had a single horn growing out of the back of its head. The color was the same as the one which my great-grandmother saw in the early 1920's, although much smaller. It had lived in this spring for a long time and suddenly, overnight, it vanished. Several weeks later, in Nambe pueblo, just west of Santa Fe, where many of the descendants of Pecos pueblo had migrated to and live to this day, it was reported that the indians there had "captured" a baby avanyu and were keeping it in a kiva within the village. Could this be the same serpent which formerly resided in Santa Clara? Either way, it is believed that the Nambe Pueblo indians still keep this horned serpent to this very day, hidden away and fed regularly, to be revered and displayed during very sacred, and very secret ceremonies.

It has been scientifically proven that many species of reptiles can age limitlessly, given they do not succumb to disease or injury. It is also been accepted that size is directly related to age in most reptiles, therefore the logical deduction would presume that a serpent of extreme age, should be quite large. Rattlesnakes in the southwest United States, have been rumored to grow over fifty feet in length, not to mention the enormous size of other species, such as boas and anacondas(100+ ft.) Therefore, would it not be plausible that a serpent of such size be in existence, able to hide very well, and has a regular appearance in the histories of humanity? Much like the Loch Ness Monster, Mokele Mbembe, Bigfoot, and other cryptozoological creatures that have yet to be proven real, the Avanyu is legendary and very real creature that has become a centerpiece around which the pueblo beliefs and traditions keep their roots. The old people say that not believe in the avanyu is likened to not believing that the sky is blue, or the wind that blows through your hair. Not only does the myth of the creature teach our children of morality and symbolism, but it also teaches them that in the deep and remote parts of the world, there are still wonders, waiting to be rediscovered. Just hope that you run faster than your friends."

—Ryan Roller-Kha'-Po' Owingeh, *Santa Clara Pueblo, NM*

2014 sightings of the Avanyu are in the form of spray painted renditions on and around the cement walls and tributaries of the Rio Grande in Albuquerque. New Mexico. Hikers, bicyclists, and urban explorers have located several of these updated images of an ancient animal. The beginning of the year in New Mexico was one of the driest yet, according to the National Weather Service (<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/abq/?n=drought>). At one point, the continuously flowing Rio Grande was completely dry. Around May 2014, these graffiti style Avanyu began to appear around the South Valley, so much in fact some young people in the area now refer to the area around Rio Bravo Blvd and the Rio Grande as "Serpent City." Correspondingly, the rainfall in the Albuquerque Metro reached catastrophic proportions in May 2014. The rest of the year has experienced adequate rainfall.



See also

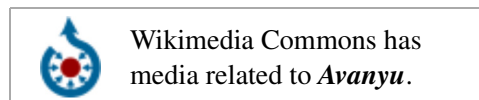
- Coi Coi-Vilu

- Gukumatz
- Horned Serpent
- Kukulkan
- The Great Serpent
- Cryptozoology
- Mokele-mbembe

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- Horned serpent, feathered serpent (<http://altreligion.about.com/library/glossary/symbols/bldefsavanyu.htm>)
- San Ildefonso pottery (<http://www.sanildefonso.com/>)
- Roller, Ryan A.-Santa Clara Pueblo. Seventh generation traditional potter. Great-Grandson of Margaret Tafoya

External links



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Categories: Deities of the indigenous peoples of North America | Hopi mythology | Legendary serpents | Feathered serpent deities | North American mythology stubs

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