



# Myths and Legends of the Pacific Northwest

*Katharine Berry Judson*

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From the preface: "IN the days of the first grandfather, when the earth was young, the Indian, armed only with stone knife, stone hatchet, and bows and arrows, found himself confronted with the work of Some One far greater and stronger than himself. This Power, or Powers, for there came to be many of them, had uplifted snowy mountain peaks, had cut deep canons through the solid rock, had carved out mountain passes, and had blocked the passage of mighty rivers by great rocks and bowlders. These Powers were strong and brutal. They had enormous strength and men of only human size were their prey, as helpless as " flybug " under the heel of the Indian. Tatoosh, the Thunder Bird who lived in the sky, was one of these Powers. He shook the mountains with the flapping, of his wings. The flashing of his eye was the lightning. He caught great whales instead of salmon for food. Only by crumbling a rock into powder so small that he could not even see it, could he secure a piece small enough for the Indian to use as a salmon spear. Because Tatoosh is so terrible and the enemy of red men, his picture is painted and carved on their houses, their canoes, and canoe paddles, indeed everywhere, to soften his anger. Often Tatoosh, as shown in the photograph of the Chilcat blanket, is represented by a single eye—the terrible eye that flashes fire. There is no beneficent deity among these Indians of the Northwest. Sahale does not represent the same idea as that of Manitou, the Great Spirit, among the eastern Indians. Yet Tyhee Sahale, along the Columbia River, and Old Man Above, among the California Indians, represent the clearest idea of a single governing spirit living in the sky. But they are not sure of his friendship. Among most of the tribes, on the other hand, there is an utter lack of any friendly deity, as among the Blackfeet, of Montana, with whom Old Man is simply a trickster, half human, who nearly always gets the worst of it in his encounters with Coyote."

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