

The Seven Wise Men

Told by Chief Bob Red Hawk
Translated into Lenape by Amira Silver-Swartz
Edited by Louise St. Amour

At one time there were seven wise men who lived among the people. They were so wise that the people would constantly come to them, day and night. It got so bad that the seven men decided, "We have to get away. We need to have some peace. We can't have people coming to our wikewams everyday and asking us myriads of questions."

So what they did was they decided, "We'll go away from the village a little up into the mountain and turn ourselves into boulders, big rocks " And everything was fine but one day this one young man was out hunting and he happened to see these seven boulders that were a little different than any rocks he had ever seen before. So he started coming back to them every day and eventually he found that if he whispered to the rocks, the rocks would talk back to him. He was shocked. But, the rocks were answering his questions. Well, it wasn't long before he went back to the village and told the people about these seven wonderful stones that they could ask questions to. So the people started leaving the village and coming up the mountain to the seven rocks. So soon the seven wise men said, "We've got to change. We've got to get away. We've had no peace here now. So they went up on top of the mountain and turned themselves into seven beautiful cedar trees. And there they stood and they felt the winds blowing through their needles and just felt at peace. But it wasn't long before the people started noticing that these seven beautiful trees had beautiful songs coming from them. And it wasn't long before the people realized that these were the seven wise men that they could go to for their answers. So then the seven wise men said "What do we do? We need some time away from everybody. We need some time in the stillness and peace." And then they looked up and they thought "Let's turn into seven stars, so that we can still look down on the people, but the people can't come and bother us too much." So they turned themselves into the seven stars that some people call the Pleiades and from there they stand today and look out over our people.

Kweten	ahpuwak	nishash	lepweinuwak.
<i>once</i>	<i>there were</i>	<i>seven</i>	<i>wise men</i>
Wikuwak	lenapehokink.		
<i>they dwelt</i>	<i>in the land of the Lenape</i>		
Somi lepweyok	ok nek	lenapeyok	nachihawwao
<i>very they-are-wise</i>	<i>and the</i>	<i>lenape-people</i>	<i>they bothered them</i>
piskewenink	ok kishkwikink.	Nek	lepweinuwak luweyok,
<i>by night</i>	<i>and by day</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>wise men they said</i>
"Kwunikishukw	xaheli	awenik	wikewamink peyok. Notuxtuwak.
<i>every-day</i>	<i>a-great-many</i>	<i>people</i>	<i>to-the-house they-come. they-ask</i>
Mata weletuu.	Kench	ntalemskahena.	Nkata chitawsinen."
<i>not it-is-good-neg.</i>	<i>must</i>	<i>we (exclusive) leave</i>	<i>we want we live a quiet life</i>
"xu	ntalemskahena	ahchunk."	ok ahpuwak lamunkwink nelahsena.
<i>fut</i>	<i>we-go away</i>	<i>to-the-mountain</i>	<i>and they exist inside the rocks</i>
Ok	wemi keku	welet.	Shek kweten skinu alai.

And every thing it-was good but once a-young-man he-hunts
Wenemena nel ahsena ok chipinakoteyok.
he-sees-them(inan.) the rocks and they-look-different
Kwunikishukw na skinu kwetki. Kwishwtunhemena nel ahsena,
Every day the young man he returns he-whispers-to-them the rocks
ok nel ahsenapemetunhawoo. Kanshelintam. Shek noxkumu.
and the rocks they-talk-to-him he-is-surprised. but they-answer-him
Xuniti kwetki utenetetink ok tokenutamena nel ahsena.
soon he returns to-the-little-town and he-tells-about-them(inan) the stones
Nek awenik tolemuxweneyo ahchunk ok wenemeneyo
the people they-all-started-walking to-the-mountain and they-see-them(inan.)
nel nishash ahsena. Xuniti nek nishash lepweinuwak luweyok
the seven rocks soon the seven wise-men they-say
“Yukwe lapi kench ntalemskahena. Nkataluhenamen welankuntewakan.”
now again must we-(exclusive)-leave we need it peace
Pemeskeyok xkwitahtene ok ahpuwak lamunkwink nishash
They-walked to-the-top-of-the-mountain and they exist inside seven
weseli pepxokwesak. Ika nipuwak ok kwetenemeneyo keshxink
beautiful cedars there they stood and they-feel-it wind
w’t’huhonink ok welankunteweyok. Kuliteheokan.
through their branches and they-are-peaceful it-was-a-good-feeling
Asuwak nek pepxokwes. Xuniti nek lenapeyok penawwoo
they sing the cedars soon the lenape-people they-see-them
yuk nishash weseli pepxokwes ok Pwetameneyo ne asuwakan.
the seven beautiful cedars and They hear it the song
Pexu nek lenapeyok uwahawoo nek nishash lepweinuwak.
by and by the lenape-people they knew them the seven wise men
Nek nishash lepweinuwak yukwe litheyok,
the seven wise-men now they-think
“Keku hech xu ktelsihena? Kench ntalemskahena.
what ques. fut. what-we do must we-go-away
Kench kchitawsihena.”
must we live a quiet life
Pwenameneyo ne mushhakw ok litheyok,
they-look-at-it the sky and they-think
“Alemskatam ok ntapihena lamunkwink nishash alunkok.
let’s-go and we-exist inside seven stars
Xu wenutemawao nek lenapeyok
will we-watch/guard-them the Lenape people

shek lenapeyok takuu xu nachihkunanak.”
but the-lenape-people not will they-bother-us
Yukwe ahpuwak lamunkwink nishash alunkok. Wihelameneyo nek “pleiades”.
Now they-exist- inside seven stars they name them the “Pleiades”