

Palomar Mountain's High Point and *Taakwish Pu'shappila*

Peter Brueggeman, 2010

Eleanor Beemer wrote “My Luiseno Neighbors, Excerpts from a Journal Kept in Pauma Valley Northern San Diego County, 1934 to 1974” [Ramona, California: Acoma Books, 1980] about her extensive experiences with the Luiseno people. Beemer thoroughly references the work of John P. Harrington, who wrote on their linguistics and ethnography. Beemer presents personal and detailed observations on Luiseno folklore, places, objects, rituals, attitudes towards death and their memorial services, and many other interesting facets.



One interesting Luiseno place Beemer discusses is High Point, at left, the highest peak in the Palomar Mountain range.

The Luiseno knew High Point as a *Taakwish Pu'shappila*. The Luiseno's *Taakwish* is a devil, meaning ‘ball lightning’ or ‘fireball,’ assuming various forms, and is bad luck to see.



Beemer says the principal house of *Taakwish* is Lily Rock on Taquiz Peak in the San Jacinto Mountains. Lily Rock is the promontory at right below Taquiz Peak at left, with Palomar Mountain being the distant ridge line. The peak's name Takquiz

comes from that Luiseno word *Taakwish*.

A *Taakwish Pu'shappila* is a “pounding up place” for *Taakwish*, and High Point is one. *Taakwish* ate his fat victims at Lily Rock, and he ground up their bones at several pounding up places, including High Point. On your next visit to the Observatory, look up to High Point with a new perspective!