

Hence the two words look somewhat as if they might be independent developments of a common Wakashan prototype. Could we be sure of this, we would have to assign a very great antiquity to the Wakashan belief in the supernatural power of flying quartz. At the very least, the word must have been borrowed by Nootka before the *x-h* shift, whence we may infer that it belongs to the oldest stratum of Kwakiutl ritualistic influence.

Another example of this type is afforded by the Uto-Aztekan word for "metate, grinding stone," *mella-(l)i*; this appears in Nahuatl as *mella-ll*, in Huichol as *mata*, in Luiseño as *mala-l*, in Southern Paiute as *mara-tsi*. Linguistically there is nothing to show that these correspondences do not rest on dialectic development from a common Uto-Aztekan source; should this interpretation prove sound, we would be dealing with a very old culture element antedating the tremendous movements of population that have scattered the Uto-Aztekan peoples from Idaho to Central America. If, on the other hand, there should be other than linguistic evidence to show that the metate was gradually diffused from an Aztec centre of distribution to the Sonoran and Shoshonean tribes to the north, the linguistic evidence would still prove a great antiquity for this diffusion, as it must have been consummated before the operation of a number of distinctive phonetic laws of considerable geographical distribution and, therefore, age (assimilation in Sonoran and Shoshonean of *e-a* to *a-a*; spirantization of intervocalic *-l-* to Luiseño *-l-*¹ and Southern Paiute *-r-*²).³

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF LINGUISTIC STOCKS.

Concept of Linguistic Stock.

Probably the most valuable service that linguistics can render ethnology is the setting up of groups of languages into linguistic stocks. The concept of a linguistic stock is of ₂par-

¹ This applies to all Luiseño-Cahuilla dialects, also to Tübatulabal.

² This applies to all Ute-Chemehuevi and Shoshoni-Comanche dialects.

³ It would not be necessary to assume that Uto-Aztekan *ll* had not yet become *t* in Sonoran and Shoshonean, as *ll* of a borrowed Nahuatl word would in these languages be replaced by its nearest phonetic equivalent, *t*. Compare such Castilianized words as *metate* and *ocote*.