

Origin myth of halait.

"It looks like an adax but it is not, it is a tradition:"

How the house of kwiye't (gisg.a'st, Kispayaks) acquired their halait.

John Brown (kwiye't), 1920.

g.anaumtsəmwiłp, ticeks and uxsg.auxs of this house lived together at gitxaidən. They had no halait and wanted one, so they went to a lake in the hills [in quest]. One brother was frightened and climbed to the top of a tree, tying himself there with cedar rope. The other two found a village in the lake where there were many halait and sorcerers. They were led to the rear of a house.

The great halait of the house began to sing. A fire was built in front of the brothers, and when the fire was "thrown" at the spectators, they fell dead. A young man came into the house with a garment, and one of the brothers put it on. It gave him the power to disappear into the fire and then ~~to~~ reappear through the door. The other brother donned the garment and performed the same feat. The young man then gave them each a charm (a'txə'su, in Imskian it is əal.a'k); one a stone, the other a stick. The brothers left the lake and returned to the tree in which their brother was tied. They found that he was dead and the martens had eaten his flesh. Lowering the skeleton to the ground, they covered it with the garment, and using the stick charm, returned it to life. They told him he would be a great halait because he had returned from the dead. They returned to the village.

The three brothers became the leaders of all the halait. The one who had been devoured by martens took as his halait name (wamhalait)

tsahet ha't ; the one with the stone charm was lu.g.alam.g.andam dzamg.i's "inside continual noise (of children) in his head" ; the one with the stick charm was sam tkunε'εxs. These were the original halait names in this house and have been passed down to this day. Not all houses had halait names, but most had one or two.

"These halait powers were only for swa'nasu purpose, i.e. doctoring. They had nothing to do with the nutim which is another thing"

Origin of crest tsona'nux, house of kwiye't, gisga'st,
Kispayaks. John Brown, 1927, (Interpreter Arthur Hanken).

My great grandfather ni-stax-wik of Kitselas took the tsona'nux as a crest. He sent word to Kispayaks that he was giving a feast, and my grandfather kwiye't loaded a canoe with 100 groundhog skins and took them down to assist his brother in his feast. ni-stax-wik was highly pleased. The upright posts of his house were carved with this crest (which the Tsimshian pronounce sona'ne "crazy"), and during the lele'gat feast the day before kwiye't was to return home, he announced that he was giving his brother the right to carve the same images on his own houseposts to show that they were united.

Later, kwiye't had a xtsan pole carved and set up in front of his house to serve as the entrance. The tsona'nux was shown on this pole. When leg'e'x destroyed the village he spared the house and pole of kwiye't because he recognized a relation with his own crests [??]. The pole lasted a long time and was finally taken down and placed on the graves of the family. It had been about 12 feet high, (the tallest of several in the village at the time), and had a hollow back. It has been replaced by another.

Old Totem Poles: In the old days, the trees were felled by stone axes, and the carving was done with bone tools (bear and caribou legbones) and finished with hafted beaver tooth knives.

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Origin of crest ma·swat·sx, (kwiye't, g'isq.a'st, k'ispayaks)
Jimmy Williams

tsiksala'lgax of gitwintku'l origin
was living at git'angwa'lk village, forty miles
above k'ispayaks on the canyon of the Kispiox
river. These people used to come all the way
from gitwintku'l by way of the maxta gel
trail, to get salmon. It was at this place they
saw the ma·swat·sx.

between version
of name gaw'w'

Said to be myth of xantu although Brown didn't claim
it. Not too clearly tied in with the house

The sqau'wō' myth of the house of x'a'ntu (kwiyε't)
g.15g.a'st, Kispox.
Isaac Jens, Hazelton, 1920

On the Nass River, about 20 miles above
gitlaxda'mks, two villages stood opposite each
other, gitkimi'ε' on the north bank and
gitkinyo'q't on the south. Four brothers in
the first village were great hunters, who
caught many beavers in t'amg,ina'mō'k
[Kwinamuck L. ?].

One season they failed to get any beavers, and
the oldest brother was drowned when a beaver
dam collapsed under him. These misfortunes
were caused by the unfaithfulness of his
wife, who was having an illicit love affair
with a chief of the opposite village. The three
brothers told no-one what had happened, but
the night after they returned they found the
lovers together and the youngest brother (after the
others had lost their nerve) killed the man and
put his head up over the door. The woman
wept and buried the body of her lover
beside her sleeping place.

The next day a slave came from the opposite
village on the pretense of getting fire, As he
left the house a drop of blood fell on his
foot. He stumbled purposely so that he would
have to re-enter to relight his torch, and
saw the head of his master over the door.
He cried out, almost as in a doge song,
"last night they killed my master"
and spread the alarm to his village. Fighting
began. The brothers hid their sister-in-law

and her daughter in a hole, covered with a copper shield, and they were the only survivors in *qitkimile'*. When the enemy had gone, the mother and daughter walked down to a rapid above *qitlaxda'mks*.

The mother sang dirge songs, and cried out "Who will marry the daughter of *sgau'wo'*?" One by one, the animals offered to marry her: the excrement of dog, the squirrel, the rabbit, ^{*qax*} beaver, ^{*tʂame'ix*} caribou *wudzix*, grizzly bear *leg'i:ns*, and others. To each she asked what powers they had, and each she refused. Then the ground shook and a man appeared, wearing a Chilkat robe (*gwushalzit*) and carrying an umbrella (*tʂa'xu*), and offered to marry her daughter. "What can you do in war?", she asked. "I can fold my umbrella and make the earth turn over", he said, and demonstrated this power. He was accepted.

The man took the woman and daughter under his robe, and warned them not to look out. They started into the sky, with strange noises. Three times the mother looked out, and they fell back to the ground. The man pulled a tree branch ~~from~~ out, put *sgau'wo'* in the hole, and replaced the branch, then rose with his bride into the sky.

They entered a single large house, in which they found only the young man's huge slave. That night the young man slept beside the fire rather than with his bride, but she noticed that a shaft

of bright light like a sunbeam (tise'to'qs) came and rested upon her stomach. In the morning they went to another part of the house and bathed in a spring of creamy (like soapy) water, kcom'o'-daks. The man took a large canoe like vessel 'ma'andza'k and sent the slave, armed with a harpoon, down into the spring or "well" to get food. The woman saw tiny humans in the well, one of which the slave harpooned. They washed, disembowelled, and barbecued the body, and set it out to eat. The chief took only a taste, the girl none, ^{and} the slave ate the whole thing. The chief was simply showing how richness, represented by his slave, could attack any person without respect or favor. Other foods were prepared, and they ate.

The woman became pregnant - as a result of the rays of light - and gave birth to a son. Its father named it 'lignu'zon, he bathed it in the spring, stretched it, and made it grow miraculously fast. In a short time they had another boy, then a girl. The father stretched one of the girl's legs longer than the other, so that she would be lame. They called her ksom'to'qs "woman of the sun". The father taught the children to gamble (xsan) and to fight. He made them weapons, including the t'sa'ux, a magical stone club which made the ground turn over when waved. The girl received a box full of small spoons (a g.a l'o'e'ng). When the children were full-grown, their father built them four houses, then

opened the sky and lowered them to the site of the deserted village. It was night, and in the morning a heavy fog obscured the sight of the new houses. The people across the river heard noises, and scoffed:

"They make noises in the village of *git gimile'*, noises for no reason."

The fog lifted, and they saw the four beautiful new houses (there were no roofs on them).

Astonished, they argued over what they saw. They saw a lame woman, and laughed at her awkward movements. Two of the brothers came towards *git kin yo'kt* in their canoe, and challenged the people to gamble. They returned home later with great winnings.

The next day the *git kin yo'kt* went over to the new village to recover their losses, but again they lost heavily. One started a fight, he ~~was~~ was killed by one of the brothers and his body thrown in the river.

The others fought, and the brothers killed them all. All the ~~was~~ men of *git kin yo'kt* attacked, but they were defeated, and *liq'u'un* turned their village over with his ~~to~~ *t'sa'ux*. Only a few escaped, to spread the news of the terrible warriors of *git kimile'*. Other tribes came to the attack, but were also defeated.

Now animals came to fight the people of *git gimile'*, and were defeated. Then a fleet of small canoes appeared, each carrying a dwarf woman. These were the *gan's-dzat*. They tried to entice the brothers out of the houses. *liq'u'un* waved his club and their canoes sank, but when he lowered it they reappeared. The sister then

invited the g-anz'dzat to eat. She brought out her box of spoons, and served each guest with a wild crabapple in eulachon grease. These were poisoned, and the g-anz'dzat were destroyed.