

Wilson Duff
+ Mike

Phratric Organization of the Carrier
Indians at Babine Lake

The phratric organization of the Carrier Indians at Babine Lake can best be understood when compared with two studies on surrounding groups. Diamond Jenness studied the Carrier at Hagwilgate in the winter of 1924-25 (Jenness 1943), and Wilson Duff made a survey of the Carrier to the east around Fraser Lake and as far east as Prince George in 1951. (Duff 1951). In 1956 the phratric organization indicates that there had been five phratries corresponding to those at Hagwilgate with different names for two of them. They are: Laksamasyu, Tsayu, Granton or Cumbewotin, Jilserhu, and Laxibu or Jitumten. The Laksamasyu and Tsayu phratries act as one at the present time as they do in all of the surrounding Carrier tribes. My informants said that they were, "just the same, but a little bit different". Some of the older men say that long ago they were separate phratries. This agrees with the amalgamation that took place among the Carrier on the Bulkley River about 1865.

One old woman said that at one time the Tsayu phratry was called Tsomilli. It was very difficult to understand her through the interpreter, but one might speculate that a Tsimshian word like Laxsamillix (Jenness pg. 483) may have been used at one time.

The Granton or Cumbewotin phratry provides material for comment. Either name is acceptable and both are used. Granton is pronounced Glanton by the older people. The younger men who can pronounce the English "r" use Granton. Cumbewotin corresponds to Kwanpe'hwotenne, "People of the Fireside", which Jenness claims is the same as Laksilyu. (Jenness pg. 482) Indians at Burns Lake, Stella, and Fort Fraser recognized these names and agreed that they were the same as Laksilyu.

Laxibu comes from the Tsimshian (Dr. Viola Garfield of the University of Washington, a specialist on the Tsimshian, checked through my field notes and identified elements that came from the Tsimshian) and has crests which are very similar to the corresponding phratry among the Gitksan - Laxgibu (Jenness, pg. 482). The other name for this phratry, Jitumten, is just as acceptable. My informants agreed that either name would do and that both were used with no preference being given to one or the other. This name is similar to Gitamtanyu of the Hagwilgate (Jenness, pg. 483) and Tamtanyu in those subtribes further east (Duff, pg. 31). Since we find so many Tsimshian names among the Babine Carrier, it is obvious that they were in close contact with the Gitksan at Hazelton or Kisgegas.

One informant from Stuart Lake (Tachie Village) said that there were only three phratries at Stuart Lake: Lsamasyu (not Lak-samasyu), Granton, and Jilserhu. She said that the Laxibu or Jitumten phratry was not found there. This woman also said that these phratries were not exogamous; however, this Jilserhu woman was married to a Jilserhu man. A Laksamasyu man also said that Stuart Lake phratries were not exogamous. He was married to a Tsayu woman.

An informant from Takla Lake said that three phratries existed there: Laksamasyu, Jilserhu, and Laxibu. Granton was not found at Takla Lake nor do they claim to have any trapping or hunting grounds in the north western part of the lake where most of the villages and hunting grounds were.

A comparison between the phratries of the Gitksan and the Carrier villages as they spread eastward, may be interesting. (Gitksan and Bulkley River from Jenness, Ft. Fraser from Duff)

Gitksan	Bulkley River Carrier	Babine Lake Carrier	Fort Fraser Carrier
Gisra'ast	Laksamshu	Laksamasyu ¹	Lsamasyu
Laxsemillix	Tsayu	Tsayu	Tsayu
	Laksilyu	Granton or Cumbewotin	Laksilyu and Tsuyaztotin
Laxse'l	Gilserhu	Jilserhu	Jilserhu
Laxgibu	Gitamtanyu	Laxibu or Jitumten	Tamtanyu

¹According to Dr. Garfield the prefix Lak means "on top of" in Tsimshian. An informant from Stuart Lake called the phratry Lsamasyu. After comparison with the information gathered by Wilson Duff it seems that Laksamasyu is found only among the Carrier at Babine Lake and on the Bulkley River.

Seating Order of Individuals
According to Rank at Potlatches

The following seating plans are only approximate and incomplete since my informants did not always agree on the most important title in the phratry and could not remember many of them. No doubt many other titles existed at one time, but since the population has decreased and the prestige factor involved in holding a title is not as important many titles are no longer used.

Laksamasyu Phratry combined with the Tsayu Phratry

Rear Row	10 9 5 2 1 3 4 6 7 8
Second Row	11 12
Third Row	13

X

| | Doorway at opposite
end of hall

1. Deo-tsum-tsak. Sam Patrick. This is the "biggest name" in the Laksamasyu phratry. The holder of the title has not only been the chief of this phratry but the chief of the entire Babine people. Although most of the people recognize Sam Patrick as the holder of this title it is also claimed by another man, Paddy Leone.
2. Aqueesah. Isaac Tom held this title before he died. One informant said that it was taken recently by Mrs. Antoine Williams. This was denied by another.
3. Neh-dat-dee-yeX. Julian Patrick.
4. Bsh-dee-dee-ahk. Leone George. This is the biggest Tsayu title.

5. Tchee-axen. Moses Dennis.
6. Hatzeksget. Jimmy Donald. Dr. Garfield identified this as Tsimshian.
7. Tsintee-ay. Antoine Williams. The present holder of this title is from Stuart Lake, but has lived among the Babine since young manhood. This is a Tsayu title.
8. Sabuck. Lezell Charley.
9. Duke-la-al. Henry Williams.
10. Noksdene. Mrs. Antoine Williams.
- X. Wijet. Mrs. Daniel Leone. Evidently Daniel Leone, a Granton, had a disagreement with members of his phratry. At any rate he has purchased a new seat for himself and his wife at the side of the doorway. Wijet comes from the Tsimshian and is used for Raven and Giant. "Wi" means large. "Jet" means person.
11. Gootserhyu. Mrs. Donald Dan.
12. Ax-deeligatah. No one has taken this name since the owner died.
13. Gnow-michyon. Joseph Leone.

Granton or Cumbewotin Phratry

Rear Row	8	6	4	2	1	3	5	7	9	10	11	12	13
Second Row		18	17	14	15	16	19	20					

X

Doorway

1. Kwistah. Donald Pierre. Although the majority of informants indicated that this was the major title, there were others that choose Oodah-kwats as number one man.

Ts

2. Oodahkwats. Alec Williams. (Grizzly's Big Dung and/or Bowels Moving) On page 493 Jenness lists Widak'kwats (Grizzly's Big Dung) of the Laksilyu phratry.

3. Nescooten. Charlie Michele.

4. Oodah-honune. Old man Cassimir Williams.

Ts

5. Xlome or Schlome. Alec Joseph.

6. Lijer. Donald Dan.

7. Kislayjee. Abraham Williams. Also holds title Layjeebu, number 13. Dr. Garfield identified prefix Kis as Tsimshian, meaning "people of".

8. Tsetlash. Big George Joseph.

9. tSergort. Sylvester Joseph.

10. Dumats. Paul Williams.

11. Tsuxnen. Nobody uses it now.

12. Goo-het. Mrs. Esther Plasway.

13. Layjeebu. Abraham Williams. See number 7.

14. Stellup. John Plassway. On page 493 Jenness lists Stalo'p (Rain of Stones)

15. Hakus. Old Mary who lives with Antoine Williams.

16. Goo-howt. An old lady at Old Fort.

T

17. Wheedahjet. Pius Charley. On page 493 Jenness lists Widaxkyet (Big Man).

18. Yi'ch-teh. Joseph Mathew.

19. Kokumsas. Daniel Leone. See number X.

20. Tzuee-yet. Mrs. Jimmy Donald.

T

X. Jedumskanish. Daniel Leone. (Higher than Mountain) On page 493 Jenness lists Gyedamskanish (Mountain Man). Evidently Daniel Leone disagreed with members of his phratry and purchased a new seat for himself and his wife by the doorway. This title was probably one of the most important ones at one time.

Jilserhu Phratry

Rear Row 9 8 7 5 3 1 2 4 6 10
 Second Row 11 12 13

1. Chusbeen. Louie Zalway. Lives at Old Fort. All agree that this is the number 1 title of the Jilserhu phratry.
2. Whay-ahss. Adonis Adams.
3. Ahtleesh. Frank Williams.
4. Pitzenahloo. Robert Abraham. On pg. 492 Jenness lists Gwitsin'alu.
5. ~~Xtlewee~~. Sebastian James. (Packing Hay) *Xtlo-woc*
6. Lootsah. Old Jimmy Joe.
7. Ahteets-eh. Enoch Whess.
8. Zak. Mrs. Leone George. (Ear)
9. Skalayet. Plasway Whess.
10. Tsoc-maht. Mrs. Alec Williams. On pg. 492 Jenness lists Sama't.
11. Mas-chibu. Willie George. (Ma is yes, Chibu is Wolf). On pg. 492 Jenness lists Mas'gibu (White Wolf).
12. Towness. Ted Williams.
13. Hbleh. Gordon Joseph.

Lachibu or Jitumten Phratry

Rear Row 10 7 4 2 1 3 5 6 8 9
 Second Row 11 12 13 14

1. gNeetzogreece. Alec Cassimir. (pluck with two large sticks)
 One informant said that while most of the names in the Laxibu phratry come from the Hazelton Tsimshian, this one is definitely Carrier.

2. Bax-john. Willie West. (War Boss) On page 492 Jenness lists Baxchan (War Leader).
3. Skaleesh. Mathew Alec. On page 491 Jenness lists SkaliX.
4. Amargarh. (Sea Lion). Dominic West. Informant says this is from Hazelton. Dr. Garfield feels that this very likely came all the way from the coast Tsimshian.
5. tChibu. Adam Williams. (Timberwolf)
6. Goo-walk. (Sleep). Duncan Michele. On pg 491 Jenness lists Guxwoq (Sleepy).
7. Sahmon-galucks. Jimmy Joe.
8. Lax-höll. Christine Zallway.
9. Glow-wah. Dorothy Alec.
10. Senay-hate. Mrs. Josie Antoine. This resembles the name of a chief at Port Simpson.
11. S-ahsh-kahsh. Charlie McDonald.
12. Lasch. Bear Lake Charlie.
13. Mah-teek. Michele Charlie. Informant says this name means Grizzly Bear in Hazelton language. On page 491 Jenness lists Medi°k (Grizzly Bear).
14. Skalay. Michele Charlie. I do not know whether Michele Charlie holds both titles or one of my informants was mistaken.

Seating Arrangement of the Phratries at Potlatches

The seating arrangements of the phratries at potlatches seems to follow a definite pattern, but the logic of that pattern is not clear to me. The Laksamasyu phratry always sits at the rear of the hall except when they are giving the potlatch. (Figure 2 and 6) The phratry giving the potlatch forms in the center of the floor and presents their gifts from there. Some informants place Granton's normal position against the left wall, others place it against the right wall. When Granton is giving the potlatch Jilserhu is usually on the left and Laxibu is on the right. (Figure 3 and 7) However, others say that Laxibu sits on the left when Laksamasyu is giving the potlatch. (Figure 6) A few informants said that although the back of the hall is the most important position, the side locations are not significant and that either of the three companies can sit on either side. The majority of informants state that there was a definite pattern, even though I was given several variations.

The following patterns resulted when the Granton phratry is normally seated on the left. Figure 1 shows the position of the phratries when Laxibu is presiding, Figure 2 when Laksamasyu is presiding, Figure 3 when Granton is presiding, and Figure 4 when Jilserhu is presiding.

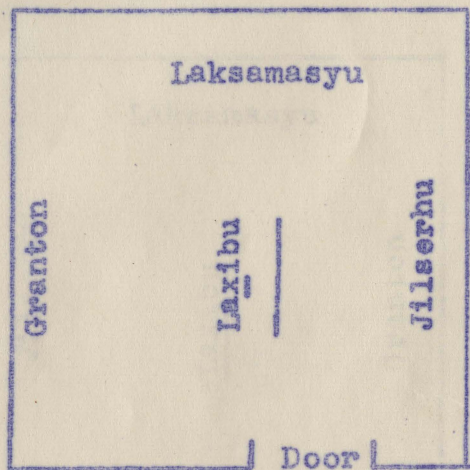


Figure 1

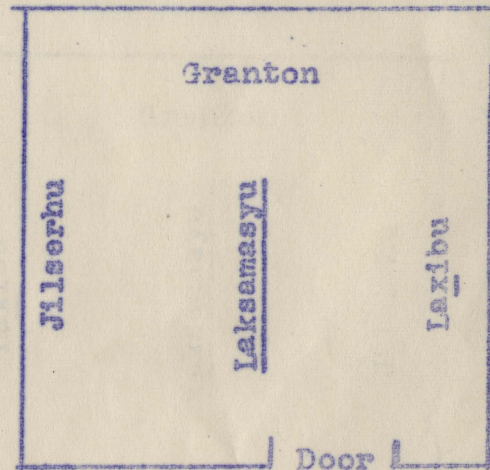


Figure 2

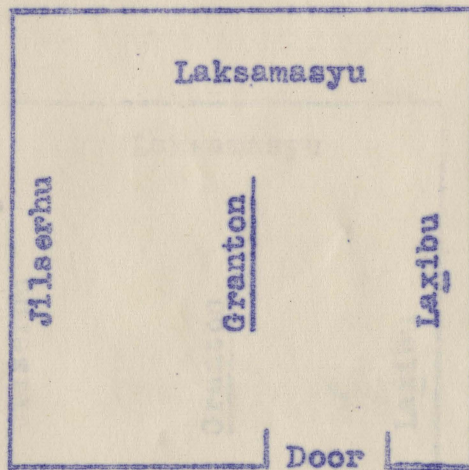


Figure 3

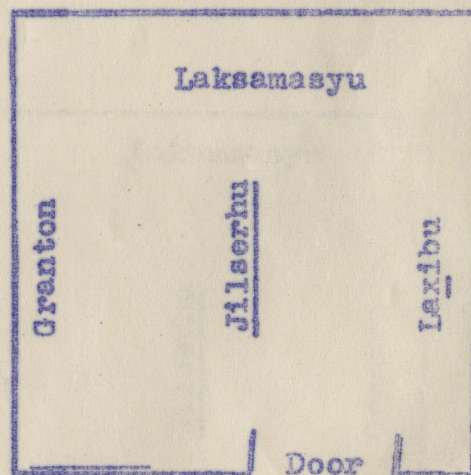


Figure 4

The following patterns resulted when the Granton phratry is normally seated on the right. Figure 5 shows the position of the phratries when Laxibu is presiding, Figure 6 when Laksamasyu is presiding, Figure 7 when Granton is presiding, and Figure 8 when Jilserhu is presiding.

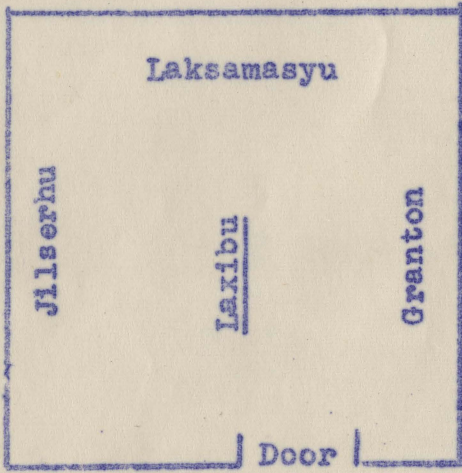


Figure 5

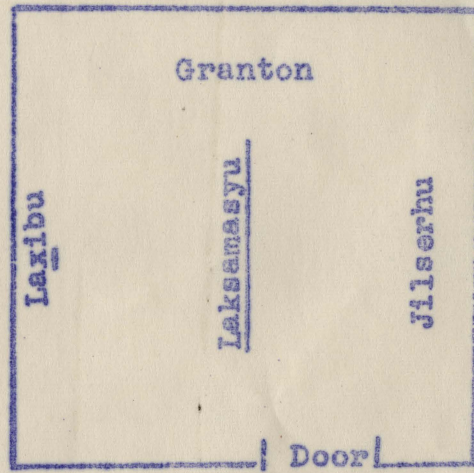


Figure 6

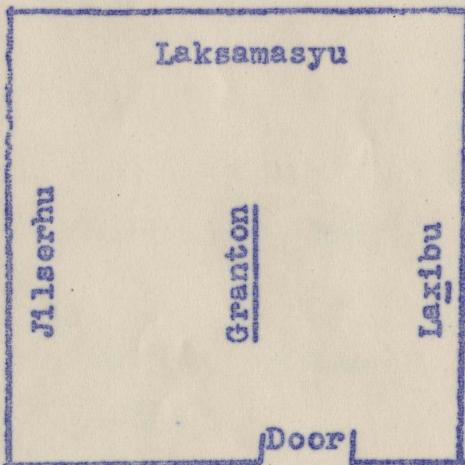


Figure 7

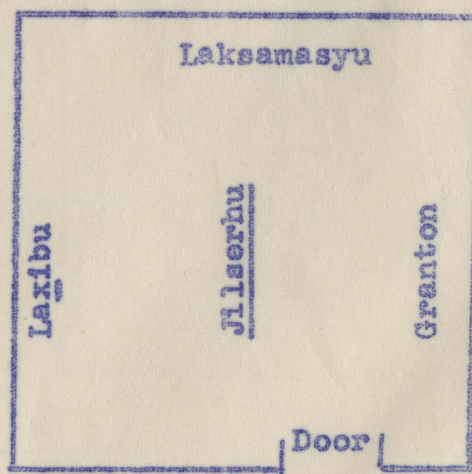


Figure 8