

QALDO RAIDS AGAINST THE TSETSAUT

(Informant: Simon Gamanoo^t called Gunanoo^t by the white people, the former outlaw. He learned this story from his father and mother. His father Naran was raised at Qaldo. Interpreter: Mrs. Constance Cox. Narrative recorded in shorthand, in 1923, at Hazelton, B.C.)

The Qaldo Indians were out hunting ground-hogs, a long time ago. They travelled along to the point past the present 4th Cabin. It is the route they took. They crossed at Galanhlgit, at the headwaters of the Skeena. The other side of the headwaters, there are mountains, and these are the mountains they reached. A Qaldo man and his son were hunting ground-hogs. And they were attacked by the Tsetsaut Indians. The father of this young man was a very good shot with a bow and arrow. There were no guns at that time. And he had a very good supply of arrows in his arrow bag. When the Tsetsaut killed his son, he took his canoe, and placed it as a kind of screen and stood at the back of it, and shot the Tsetsaut from behind. Those in the camp were anxiously waiting for the return of father and son. And they had set a date for their return. That date had long past and they had not returned. His house-brother was beginning to be very anxious, wondering what had happened to his brother and nephew.

He could not stand the anxiety any longer. So he went out with some other young man. They started out as a research party. This man's name was Suwiraushl-Kanao, Away-jumps-the-frog. He guided the research party. His brother's name that they had shot was Qayais.¹ The search party started out and looked for tracks. They found the tracks and followed them. And in their search, they came upon the dead bodies of some Tsetsaut Indians. Then they found the body of the dead brother.^{ir} The uncle was so grief-stricken at the sight of the dead body of his nephew that he picked it up and held it in his arms. And there was a great number of the arrows, those¹ Qayais, Walking-beforshand; which means, the action of the bear walking round seeking a comfortable place where to lay^{ie} down and sleep.

of the Tsetsaut near the bodies of the brother and nephew. Then they went over to see on the other side, and they found as many Tsetsaut dead, and an equally large number of arrows from the dead brother. And they also found some of the dead Tsetsaut in the lake; their own companions had taken them to the water. The brother took his dead brother's body and brought it back to the camp. And the nephew too; he brought his body back. And they cremated them, burnt them all, as they always in the old time. That was the custom in the ^{past}, always to cremate the dead. After this was done, they went back to their village.

Then they started in to eat the bark of the devil's club, and washed themselves, seeking better success. They were doing this in their hearts, that they may be able to conquer and defeat more Tsetsaut. They were a whole year preparing themselves for the war against the Tsetsaut. Then, a large number of all the relatives of the village of Waldo started out.

They travelled on, and found the place where the battle had taken place. They travelled up and reached the top of the mountain. There they looked down into the valley below them. Looking down into the valley, they saw smoke. By the smoke they knew that there was a large gathering of people down there. So many fires were burning. They looked down and they could not make up their minds as to who must go down into there. As they were still looking down, they saw a great number of people coming to this camp where they saw the smoke.

In the old times, when the Indians went to war, they made themselves arrows of the heaviest moose hide they could get. They took off this skin, and they placed themselves along the mountain side, so that at a distance, they may look like rocks, so that at ~~a distance~~ the enemy might mistake them for rocks. The Tsetsaut thought they had seen people, but when they looked up again, "No, that is only rocks that we have seen." When they got near the mountain they looked around and said, "It is only pieces of rocks, otherwise they would move." Another said, "No, those are men that we have seen. They were moving. And they began pushing themselves back and

forth. Some of them were cross and the others laughing in their dispute. And those that pretended to be rocks had to keep perfectly still until dark. They could not move, and they remained there, until just before the break of dawn. Then they went down and surrounded the camp below, and then they attacked it. Suwiraus, who then had prepared himself for this war for a year by eating bark, was so sure of success that without fear, he entered the camp, and they began to slaughter the Tsetsaut. They attacked six camps before the rest were aroused. Those who tried to escape out of the camp, were killed in their attempt to escape, by those who surrounded them. Everybody in the camp was killed. There was not a soul left, except the children. These they used as guides to show them where the other villages were, that is, where they were from. It was a great big piece of country. There were no houses there. But the people lived underground. The smoke came from out of the ground. They could not get at them.¹

Suwiraus said, "Who will go out and kill some grizzly bears first?" So they killed grizzly bears and skinned them. Then they gathered a lot of pitch. After this, they covered the grizzly bear skins with pitch. They got sand, and rubbed sand in it. They took a grizzly bear skin and put a man inside of it, and sewed it all up. As he was walking about the Tsetsaut would shoot at it, but the arrows had no effect. They could not penetrate the skin, the gum and gravel. The arrows could not have any effect on the grizzly bear²⁵ skins. The the attackers placed themselves all round the underground camp and sent the grizzly bear walking round and inside the circle. When the people in the holes saw the grizzly bear, they immediately all came out of their holes to attack this grizzly bear. Everytime they would shoot at this grizzly bear, the arrows would break. Then they called out to the rest in

¹ These were semi-subterranean houses, dome-like, with entrance or exit through the smoke hole at the top. These were common in eastern Siberia and down the Rockies.

the holes, to all come out. They were determined to kill this grizzly bear. As they had sharp spears, they began to chase the grizzly with their spears. The grizzly bear inticed them on, and they kept following him, right near where the Qaldo kept in hiding. They could not make out what was wrong with the grizzly bear as the spearing and the arrows had no effect on him. As they got right near where the people were in hiding, these raiders sprang at them, and killed them as they were unaware of an attack. There was no means for them ^{to} ~~for~~ ^e escaping. They were surrounded and killed.

After the Qaldo had killed all the men, they went down into the holed^s where the people had come out of, and found the children down in the huts. The young women they took as prisoners, and made the stronger children pack the small ones. The Qaldo Indians were quite surprised and interested to find out what kind of dwelling the Tsetsaut had lived in. It looked like the burrows of dead rats. They ^{were dug out,} ground-squirrels.

After this was over, they went back to their won village, Qaldo. The Tsetsaut children could not eat the dry fish. It sickened them. Those that were able got out and killed rabbits which they could eat. The rabbit meat was the right food for them. And as they grew up and became stronger, they ran away from the Qaldo and went back to their own country of the Tsetsaut, towards the Stickeen country. After these children had run back to their own country, the Qaldo village was attacked by the Stickeen.

Qaldo village attacked by the Stickeen

The Qaldo village at one time was a very large one. The Stickeen retaliated. They almost cleaned the Qaldo out. They left just a few. Then they figured that they would have peace, as they had both had destructive raids on each other's villages.

The Nass River Raid

The people on the Nass, thinking that the Qaldo still had a large

village got ready to attack them. They were coming over to wage war upon them. When they reached Qaldo, as they were sneaking out to the village, two young men thought that they had heard queer noises. And they fled and left their uncle alone. He was named Wae'ae.¹ One of these young fellows was called Kaese. The Nass people already had flint lock guns. And they shot Wae'ae as soon as they reached his house. And it frightened the others very much, when they heard the sound of the gun, and the children began to scream. The Nass people were in Wae'ae's house. They opened the door, but nobody would come in. They were afraid of the noise of the gun. The Qaldo would not come near the house. A Nass man laughed at his own people, and said, "You are making a great fuss over your own abilities. You are like the Haida, you can scare the people." And he laughed. Then he stepped into a house and he got two Qaldo children, holding one under each arm. As the children were screaming, he came into the house with them. And the children called unto their uncle, who was hiding, saying: "Come here!" While the children were calling their uncle, two more Nass raiders came into the house. And as the man was leaving the house with his two children, ^{Kae} Kaese, unobserved by the other people, stabbed that Nass who had the two children, and the spear went right through his body from the back. Another Qaldo Indian pinned a Nass Indian right to the wall. But a Nass came in, and shot these men. Then the battle began in earnest, and they saw that there was two Nass killed. Then they all came into the house where the Nass were and the battle went on. The Nass came in and began the search around the house for whatever they might take. They discovered the young man, ^{Kae} Kaese's younger brother, who was hiding. He jumped out from where he was hiding. In his hands he had a great knife, and he attacked the Nass raiders and he stabbed them, as they tried to kill him. Then he ran around the house, and he ^k kept stabbing them. He killed seven Nass raiders, and wounded six besides. There were only three Qaldo men killed. And there was seven

¹ Kaese' the hair, ^k Daese' ^f pisae'i, the visible head of the grouse (a Larhkitu Wolf name).

killed of the Nass and six wounded. The Nass Indians got ready to leave, but before leaving, they set fire to the Qaldo village. That is the reason why Qaldo is now so deserted. There were such a few people left. The few remaining in Qaldo after that war never cared very much to stay in the village. Some came down the Skeena to Hazelton, and others went to Kispayaks.

Nass and Kispayaks

After that war, the Kispayaks got an invitation from the Nass who wanted to make peace at a feast. And all the Kispayaks were invited. They all went down to the Nass, to Gitlarhdamsk; also the Gitenmaks and the Kiskagas. They went down to the feast, for the peace dance. As the Nass people met their guests, they blew white (eagle's) down, meaning peace. The war was over. They promised not to fight any more. That is the end, not so long ago, since this last battle has happened. William Jackson was fourteen years old when it happened. Now he must be sixty (which means 1877).