

Gitxa'ta crests

I hɛ:l

(gispawudwa'də)

Joshua tsiyibese

- (1) tkuwelkskəm mediək - prince of grizzly bear.
prince of grizzly

Belonged to royal t'əm lax'am gisp., never ləkagiget; shared by a'implaxɛ, niɔswɛxs, saxsaxt, niɔstkumi:k. When used as house front painting it was shown sitting; when carved it was sitting, with abalone in forepaws, ears, eyes and nostrils; also on robes worn in assuming names.

- (2) bɛlham hawk'tək pearled (abalone?) bow, also exclusive to t'əm roy gisp chiefs 5' long, ^{decorated} inlaid with pearls, held in hand when assuming name. Informant used it

- (3) mɛsəbaxs a special crest used by t'əm roy gisp when assuming names, never by ləkagiget.
red leggings leather, painted red to represent blood.

- (4) galkmati mountain goat headdress used by all t'əm roy gisp hat mountain goat chiefs when taking name or receiving important guests. Made of real head of mta goat to fit head. On one occasion suhal'ait (gispaxlɔts) used it and got into trouble over it.
[Copy this story - Vol 1 p. 22]

- (5) biyɛls stars, painted on house fronts and robes. Had its origin in g. a o'ɔ' myth.

- (6) maxai rainbow, painted hf, robes, face. Used only by t'əm roy gisp, never ləkagiget, from g. a o'ɔ' myth.

- (7) gɛmk sun, painted hf, robe used in assuming names, also on poles. from g. a o'ɔ' myth.

- * (8) gaidəm nɛ'xɪt : hat of blackfish, carved of wood. Exclusive to hɛ:l only. Informant wore it on assuming name.

- * (9) lanəm g.ait : layer type of hat. This hat had in all 19 layers and was the largest of its kind, and exclusive to hɛ:l. Basketry, alternating red and green all way up.

One time niɔstkumi:k visited hɛ:l and wanted to use

I contd.

Wallace (qitsis file) gitxata and gitwilgots have special names for their next coasts (which they adopted when they came to saltwater). Tebasa calls his qilkse't'sa'ntk (meaning?)

Johnson:

'nextom gwushal'e'it it was a robe made for tsiboss' by his wife ntsi'tsho'stk (qitsis, q.anka'ds) and given to him as a gift.

this hat in assuming his name. Although of same origin,
he was refused. Then *niss tkumik* made a representation
of the same thing in wood.

In purchasing this from the Haida, *hɛ:l* gave in all two
coppers, 10 slave men and women, and 5 canoes loaded with
food.

(10) *galkmedi:k* hat of grizzly, hat worn by all *tomroggiap*
chiefs in assuming rank or name
Informant says more, forgotten.

x (11) *belham bel:ɛ'n* "pearled belt" made of leather upon
which was fastened mother of pearl, worn around waist
when assuming a name. Exclusive to this house

x (12) *belham ɪyo'd'ɛsk* : pearl necklace" made of leather
upon which was fastened mother of pearl. Exclusive.

see
below { (13) *dayəm ga'ine* : "excavated house, road" An excavated
house built as having a road through it. Used by *hɛ:l*
(others in his house used other types below)

see
below { (14) *dayəm sahaw'k'ɛk* - the boards lining the steps were
step-house yew of yew. Used by *'nisswɛxs*
here and also taken by him to the *gina do'iks*, and used there

(15) *miqəm 'amhalait* : shower head dress (describes what
an *'amhalait* is, and how down indicates peaceful intentions)
represented as a human with 'pearl' eyes, teeth, ears.

(16) *lax'ɔ'm* : sky above, general to all *tomgisp* chiefs.
over above - head dress, a human being with a long nose.
(It was the property of *hɛ:l* and was presented to Duke of
York on his world tour, by *nisswɛxs*.)

(17) *gusdzadzɛmti* : lightning robe. Carved of wood, a huge
robe of lightning bird with outspread wings, used as
entrance to house. When mouth (door) opened it emitted
noise of thunder. Exclusive to *hɛ:l* among *gisp*. but
'nagap't (*ganhadɔ*) had one exactly the same. It was disputed,
but he had a different myth for it, so *hɛ:l* couldn't
interfere. [Myth]

mi'ogom ham hal-a'it "black amhalait"
a dzepk of tsibase house

The square wooden plaque of the amhalait was charred and rubbed with grease until it ~~was~~ very black (mi'ok - the blackest colour)

It was worn at halait feasts.

II se:ks

(gispawudwa:da)

Sam Lewis: Crests and house names similar to he:1.

(1) tkuwelkskem medi:k : prince of grizzlies. still represented by a stone monument over a former se:ks. (J. Langbese said se:ks could use only the head of grizzly:

dəmg.aosəm medi:k "head of grizzly"

Tradn used in
Haida Myths
pp 224-6

x (2) asiwe|git : a thunderbird with a grizzly head, long beak, outspread wings. Painted on housefront with door through its body; also on blanket used in potlatch or name assuming. Exclusive to this house.

(3) galkmat : mountain goat headdress. Informant says this house is direct descendant of the man who was saved from the feast of the mountain goats in the myth. The other royal chiefs have been granted its use by this house.

(4) mes:abaxs : red leggings, also originated with this house

(5) galkmedi:k : war headdress of grizzly, the real bear's head, or carved of wood, and in war was supposed to be supernatural, protecting wearer and giving him strength

(6) lagax'wase "to each end monster" : a double headed monster of the deep waters, more like the next than anything else.

carved house beams

[Myth]

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Carved on the large beams running the length of the house, also on poles and ~~housefronts~~ ^{house paintings} (painted)

Houses:

(1) maxai'əm welp : rainbow house, of se:ks at gitxata.

(2) dayam sahakwtək : da'ax of yew, at kimo'də (Lower Inlet)

Although this house did not use as crests (1) maxai, (2) lax'əm (3) biyel's (4) gemk, (some of them above) were used as house names.

Classic gitxa'ta gitnu'gunaks myth

Myth of house of ni's'ois, gispawudwa'da, gitxa'ta.
Norman Spencer (ni's'ois) to Beynon, 1916.

Long abstract.

The men of the house of ni's'ois the chief of g'adastu' were great hunters. One day ni's'ois and his nephew txagetk, along with a laxski.k man, went away out to sea to the island of nu'gun'aks (where waters go against) to hunt sea otter. They reached the island at night, and put over the anchor so that they could sleep in the canoe. In the night, txagetk in the middle of the canoe was awakened by something slapping against the canoe. It was a small cod fish. Angry, he cut off its fins, threw it back, and returned to sleep.

The men had dropped their anchor on the roof of the sp'na'x'n'ix (monster of the place), and the fish (gome) had been his slave woman whom he had sent to investigate. She returned in her human form with her hands cut off, weeping. Angry, the sp'na'x'n'ix made a whirlpool which brought the canoe and men, still asleep, into his excavated (da'ax) house and set it down on the top step of the house. The men were awakened by Mouse Woman, who cautioned them to be still and asked them to give her fat. They saw that the house had sea urchins (dag.a'ao) on the ceiling and sea slugs (k'le'n) on the walls. Seated at the back of the house near the fire, eyes shut, were the monster and his wife. Mouse Woman burned the fat in the fire, and the monsters seized the flames and ate them. Mouse Woman explained to the men why they had been captured.

The next day (it was actually a year), the men were again wakened by Mouse Woman, who asked for more fat. She put this in the fire and it expanded into a large amount, which she gave to the monster as a gift from his "nephews" so that he could give a feast for all ~~the~~ his brother monsters. The next day he called a "next" (blackfish) and sent him as a messenger to invite all the other sponaxnong (pl.) to the feast to meet his nephews. The blackfish went to each (listed, see below) and said "The nephews of nugun'aks invite you". It was gone one day (actually a year).

The next day, the men secured their canoe to the top step of the da'ax (it was by now filled with sea animals) in preparation for the arrival of the guests. The following day they stayed in the canoe, and one by one the monsters appeared: - First, that of qitg'a'iyu (Prince of Wales Island), a large octopus-like creature with many limbs, in bright, shiny, red and white colours. Then the monster of qwo'k (Work Channel), with a body like a grizzly but a blunt head ~~to~~ resembling Work Mountain, emitting loud growls. Third came the blackfish with fins all around it (txatku ne'eks) of hatkst'axt (Cape Fox). Then the monster woman of gidamna'x (Point Lambert) dressed in a blanket of seaweed and shellfish. Next came the sponaxnong of sqadzila'oso (Nass River rapids), and many more, from as far away as Vancouver Island. The only sponaxnong not invited was that of Kp'ext (Kennedy Island), who the nugun'aks monster feared.

The host threw small bits of fat in the fire and all the monsters feasted on its "incense" or smell. While they were eating they heard the

voice of the monster of $k p \varepsilon x t$: "Release the men, you selfish one." The host announced that his nephews had provided the food, and they would take many crests from all of the guests. Mouse Woman told the men to secure their canoe, water rushed into the house, and when it receded all the guests were gone. The host and his wife sat, eyes closed, by the fire as before. Once again the thunderous voice of the monster of $k p \varepsilon x t$ was heard: "Release the men, you selfish one." With the aid of Mouse Woman, the men sent the blackfish with a gift of fat to this monster, and again and again it demanded that the men be set free.

The $s p \eta n a x n \eta ' x$ of $n u g u n ' a k s$ told the men he would free them, and told them they could take everything they had seen in the house as crests. The next day (year) he gave them their main crest: he told his wife to open her eyes. Moving about in her eyes and mouth were many humans (these were the people who had drowned). A rush of water carried the canoe out of the house and the men found themselves on the surface ~~of~~ of the sea.

They were lost and were in a sort of indifference or lassitude ($l \eta k s g . \eta ' t$). They paddled almost aimlessly for several days, until they came to an island. $t x a g \varepsilon t k$ climbed the highest tree and saw that they had been going toward the Queen Charlotte Islands, and he directed ~~his~~ them back to China Hat. Their canoe was covered with sea creatures, but $n i \cdot s \cdot \eta ' i s$ would not clean it as he planned to take the canoe

as a crest. When they reached the village, still in the grip of lassitude, they found that they had long been given up as dead. Their wives had remarried and they were looked upon as ghosts. But little by little they told their story, sang derye songs, and told of their new crests.

ni-s'>'is and all his nephews and nieces decided to move away, and the laxski-k man and his family accompanied them. They went north into gitxa'ta country to a place on Pitt Island called kta-ol, and built a village called k'na dzo-ts ("towards the birds"). Later they moved again and joined the gitxa'ta. Much later they had increased so much that their territories would not support them; they quarrelled and separated. dzagamsagisk went to gitg.a''at and became a chief, and others joined the Iumshian.