

Myth of name gwaxski'k, house of hawa'o, laxk'bu',  
Kispayaks.

Jimmy Williams, 1920.

The men of the house of hawa'o were expert gamblers, and the family was very wealthy. The oldest nephew, [who was to become] gwaxski'k, once had a run of bad luck and lost all his possessions, all his relatives, and even his own freedom to his opponent. Despondent, he left the village and walked a great distance to a creek where u'u'ms (devil's club) grew. Here he stayed four years, eating the stalks of devil's club and bathing in the creek.

One night he heard a splashing noise as of salmon mating, and taking his torch, found a salmon in the stream and brought it to his hut. In the morning the fish was surrounded by copper shields, which had been its scales. The following night he heard, and caught, a second salmon, and the next morning found more copper shields. The next night a beautiful woman entered his camp. He took her for his wife. She told him to make a set of gambling sticks (xsan) from the stalks of the devil's club. Then she taught him how to gamble with them, giving him special power to guess the correct stick. She told him that several naxnəqs (supernatural beings) would attempt to beat him in gambling, and that he could always win by throwing his gambling stick bag in the air and singing:

saqit a q.e'it gile'lost      naxnəq      nide'yəm 'an'in  
pull out      my gambling stick      on top of the house      supernatural being      on sitting you

gile'lost  
on the roof

"Pull out my gambling stick, you supernatural one, sitting on the roof of the house"  
and she (she was the *maxnoq*) would pull out the proper stick so that he would win.

The man returned to his village, taking all his copper shields. They arrived at night, and found his uncle's house in ruins and all his family ~~at~~ slaves. They made a house of the copper shields. In the morning the people were amazed at such a house, and the man who had defeated him before was anxious to gamble again and win all the coppers. They gambled for two days, and [*gwaxskik*] won back all his former wealth and all his family, then won all of his opponent's family and even his gambling sticks. Angered, the opponent for revenge covered the bottom of a canoe with a thick layer of gum, caught ~~the young~~ [*gwaxskik*] and stuck him to the gum and set him adrift down the river.

After drifting a long time the canoe landed on a beach, and two young men approached making funny sounds: *xu, xu, xu*. They carried the canoe with its passenger up the beach to the house of the village chief, and after some time freed him and clothed him in a robe denoting his high rank.

The newcomer watched the young men of the village every day, who could change into eagles and capture sea mammals. Finally they gave him a *gwusxskik* "eagle robe" and taught him to fly, and he learned to capture seals <sup>and sea lions</sup> and bring them to the village. One day the chief (who had adopted him as a nephew) sent him with the other young men to catch a

whale, and they were successful. There was a pole (g-an) sticking out of the water in front of the village, which they had never been able to pull out. Now, with the help of the young man they pulled it out and carried it to the village. They found that it had a human figure at its base, and they gave this to the young man as a crest.

When the time came for the young man to return to his village, the eagle chief gave him a white headdress and white tail as crests. The young man transformed himself into an eagle and flew to a large tree near his village. An old man of his enemy's house came out, and the eagle swooped down and grasped his head. A relative saw him being carried away and grasped him by the feet, then another and another until the whole household hung below the eagle. They were carried out to sea and dropped to their deaths. This is represented on the totem pole at  $k_{15}$ payaks.

The young man removed his eagle garment and prepared a great  $iyuk$  (potlatch) to which he invited many tribes. He distributed the coppers he had obtained from the salmon, and assumed the name  $gwaxsk'i'k$ .