

① Kitwanga

Pole of Sgayaen

spʔsemux

The-Bear Den (Hrpe-soemik) Pl. XXXIII, Fig. 1

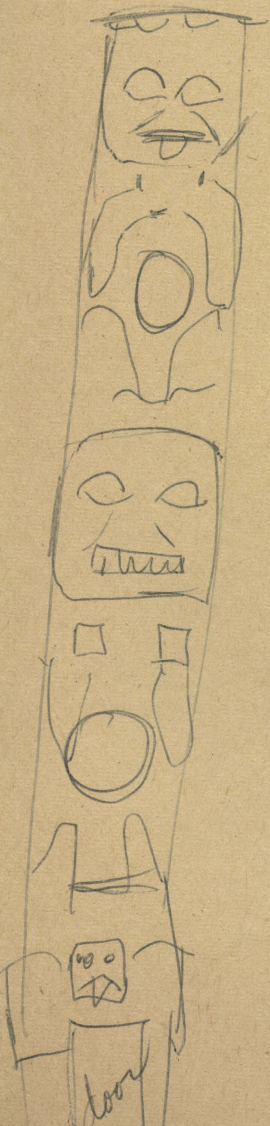
1. Eagle (missing) xskεk
2. Human Fig. with hole xʔsemic
3. Human Fig. with hole xʔsemic
4. Split-Eagle palxumxskεk

"one of the most valuable relics
of this kind of the Skeena"

p. 142

house-front pole about 15' high

Carver:







Bear Mother myth of Kitwanga laxkibu.
Martha Sewich, Kitwanga, 1924.

This ada'ox is the property of 'axtix and
to'ts of Kitwanga and liq, 'a'algex of
Kitsumkalum.

From laxgitxanda'kt at the headwaters of
the Kitsumkalum River, some women went far
into the hills to pick salmonberries. One
stepped on some bear excrement, and cursed
the bear. Starting home, her carrying strap broke,
and she had to stop to pick up her berries.
Four times it broke, and she fell far behind
the others. Two men in bear garments approached,
she thought it was her "brothers", and she
gave them her basket to carry. They greedily
ate the berries, which she considered very
strange, so as she preceded them along the
trail she broke twigs and hung bracelets on
the branches to mark her path. She came to
a large house and was seated at the rear.

The next day she went outside. Seeing a
mouse, she followed it into the woods until
she came to a small house. She knocked.
"Come in, if you are the woman who was captured
by the bears", said the Mouse Woman. The Mouse
Woman explained how she was to act: to accept
the bears' food, consent to marry ~~them~~ one of them,
and to bury her excrement and place a copper
bracelet on the spot. In return, the woman
burned her ~~wool~~ earrings on the fire, as a
gift to Mouse Woman. A young bear found
the copper bracelet where the woman had
defecated, and all agreed that she was justified
in scoffing at their inferior type of excrement.

The chief gave a marriage feast to find a husband for the woman. (He had assumed the position of her father). "Who will marry *naxs ma's*?" ("mother of red - a dog's name). One man said he would. "Where are you going to keep her?", he was asked. "I am going to keep her at *faux'anksasga'n*" The chief refused him, underneath place of ^{back} _{mata}

because that was a place from which she could escape. Another suitor spoke up in the same way, saying he would keep her in the ground, and was refused. Many others were also turned down, as they suggested places where the woman's dog would find her. Finally a large man satisfied the chief, saying he would take his wife to *wulaxl'sl'sl'sl'i'mt* (precipice like the side of a bucket). All the people set off together, dropping members off one at a time at their winter dens, until only the woman and her husband remained.

He sent her to gather boughs, and when she returned with small boughs he threw them out angrily. She gathered whole tree tops; they settled into the den, and the snow covered them over.

The girl's brothers fasted and ate devil's club, then set out to find her. Each day one would take her dog *mas* and search for her tracks. Finally the youngest brother approached the mountain. The Bear husband composed a dergé for his wife to sing, knowing that she would soon be taken from him. Something broke through the door; it was the roots of the devil's club - a sign that the youngest brother was near.

The woman made a snow^{ball} and rolled it down the slope, and the brother saw his sister's handprint on it. The dog 'mas' sniffed it, and they started up the mountain to the den. "Wait" called the woman, as she gave birth to two cubs, ^{one black, one grizzly.} Then the hunter came in, and the bear husband insisted that he be killed. As the bear died, he gave his wife instructions as to how his body was to be handled: "When you skin me, lay my body on boughs and not on the ground; when you carry my skin along the trail, always let me face backward; do not let my head fall on the ground." The woman sang the dirge song.

The hunter took the two cubs and the woman the body of the bear and they made their way down the slope. They skinned the bear, and the hunter led the way along the trail. (Unknown to him she wore the skin of the bear and made her way easily over the snow although she had no snowshoes).

They reached home; the hunter entered the house with the two cubs, and the woman followed, singing the dirge. She was naked, and she had grown fur on her arms to the elbow and on her legs to the knee. She roasted her husband's heart and liver (as he had instructed). From then on, the people were able to kill many bears.

The next fall the people went to the place where she had been found and erected a plain pole called 'anba'x

"pole for up running" (the play pole of the bear)
They proclaimed the name her bear husband
had given her: xpisunt "half furred (hubs)"
The cubs, finally, were killed.

tenongel

Origin of xaxtix (laxkibu, Kitwanga) and xpaxon
(gitsang.e'lam).
Mr and Mrs Stephen Morgan, 1924

At a place about 2 miles this side of
tam gitsang.e'lam stood the village of xpisunt,
who was the grandmother of xpaxon and of xaxtix.
From that village they moved about 15 miles further
up the hills from the lake. They used to gather
berries opposite the village, to the east.

xpisunt, berry picking, stepped on bear excrement
and cursed. She was taken to the bear village.
Mouse woman (u'undzi'ts) advised her to
pretend her excrement was copper. She learned
the bears' faces burn wet wood, not dry. The
bears consider who is to have her in his
den for the winter. With her bear husband she
prepared the den. Her three brothers searched
for her, and in the spring the youngest found
her (she rolled a snowball bearing her hand
front down to him). She had 2 cubs. The
Bear husband gave her dirges and instructions.
She took her husband's skin and the cubs
and used them with magical effect.

So the bear cubs have been taken as crests.

xpilaxs as now
ganda'do

This happened at the village xpilaxs', a subdivision
of the house of xaxtix. This house stood between
the Pass and Kitsumkalum lake, at
gitsaks'o'l "people of visiting to and fro"
(maybe Lava Lake). The other lake right nearby
is tam gut'a'l'a'l "round lake". A fish trap
there was engraved with human like beings.

One night the water rose and flooded them out of their homes.

xpilaxε

witɔ'ts "big trout"

g.a.la'.gwɔ' "great nursery"

went up

toward the upper Skeena.

xpənɔn

went down the Skeena.

n'i'ialgəx

They [^{xpilaxε}who?] went up the river and across the mountains, then down another river, across, until they arrived at skwɔ'lakstɛ't (two miles above minskinisht)

hunt | outwards island

Here they found tenəmget and amalgamated with him. That is why there are two ~~houses~~ ^{chiefs} in this group now.

Origin of hawa'ō crest (mountain lion)

It was here that they killed the hawa'ō, a monster that had eaten many women along the Skeena. When they cut it open they found abalone labrets inside. A member of the house of tenəmget had been killed by it, so they took it as a crest.

The territory xpilaxε' had travelled over was now his own.

The people of skwɔ'lakstɛ't now decided to join neqt on the taɔ'dzəp near Kitwanga. At that time 4 houses stood on the taɔ'dzəp:

1. neqt laxse'1

2. gɔg laxskik

3. tenəmget ^{20th say} laxkik !!

4. 'axg.ɔ't laxse'1

The house of tenəmget was called yaxyaqawilp (Tsim) as it hung over the edge of the hill. ^{suspended house}

Later, a hunting party under g.a.la'.gwɔ' revisited

their former village on the Kiteumkalum. They shot a caribou and in a dispute over who had killed it, g.ala'gwə' killed wɪtɔts. Saddened, he composed a dirge. The territory, tsuwidzi'x ("plentiful caribou") became his.

Another time, galagwə returned there during a famine, carrying his aged mother. She died there of hunger.

At a later time the house of tenəmget was subdivided into 2:

1. xpɪlaxɛ
2. tenəmget

Lately, axtix has been used as the chief's name instead of tenəmget.

Originally tenəmget and laxpan were at skwɔlakstɛ, and they were joined by xpɪsu'nt [xpɪlaxɛ']. They may be related to mədɪgəmget of the house of nɪ'syɔq (qɪtlaxdəmks), as they own the same crests and use them in a similar way.

ts-ts

(laxkiba)

men

1. ts-ts "smelt" (fish - oolachan?)

wit'wi-ts-ts-it neqt

like large smelt blackfish

2. alsme'neq

alsmeneg tit neqt tsa'gwask

leaving part of its blackfish its kill

The blackfish does not eat all of its prey.

3. ksiwan'o'nt "outwards, hands" (of the small frogs)

Women

1. #. 'uks-ag-a'nuxs "out from shore gathering sticks for its nest" (the raven)

2. #. lada'ix "bad skin" (of frog)

3. #. witwix tsa'n

wit'wix tsa'net neqt neqt

like large ptsan the fin of blackfish
totempole

4. #. 'wi-na'dzaks "large tail" (of blackfish)

Boys

1. #. uxs la'.ux "out from shore, trout, (the frog)

The frog swims out from the shore like a trout

2. #. t'selamtxiwa'n "in towards downward sits" (the frog)

3. #. kis-tama's

kis-tama'sut tist> t'xs

one side red half moon

4 #. tɔm dɪ nɛ x t "will be blackfish" (the frog)

5 #. kwɪ kɛ'

gam kwɪ t kɛ' t g. ana' ɔ
only by itself the frog

6 #. kɛ qɪ pɛ' ik

ɔ x t i kɛ qɪ pɛ' ik x s kɛ qɪ m lɔ' p
never out flies eagle of stone
The stone eagle never flies out

to. ts

Names

Origin

Costs

Origin of t's ts
Jim Laranitz, 1923

Gitxanda'kt

The gitxanda'kt village was situated at the head of gitsang,ε'lon creek. There were two chiefs of the village, tenamget xpilaxε'.

Bear Mother

This was the village from which the bear captured their sister xpi'sunt (Follows story of woman cursing bear, capture by bears, marriage with one, hibernation, found by brother, twin cubs, bear husband killed in den, diver, recorded - she took the skin home)

A flood came and they abandoned the village. tenamget and t's ts came to Kitwanga. Some members of tenamget family also come from Hagweligate. Before the flood some of the family came from Hagweligate to stay with them at kwinzkstat (near Woodcock). Their fish camp is still there.

Relatives: 1. At gitxanda'kt, nia'alga, xpanson, and xpi'sunt

2. Hagweligate: 'wo'su, kux'wo, 'axtim, t one house in Hagweligate (laxqibu) that is all.

Crests

1. mauxum'o'l or mas'o'l white bear, ^{on tobit} laxptsan _{in Totem}
 2. kibu wolf on pole
 3. hawd'o cougar There are no cougars in this country. These people had come up the Skeena from the seacoast
- xpi'sunt is also shown on pole - the face in the dish -

Origin of hawa'o (Jim Larametz)

It is from the seacoast, a very fierce animal. Some people were camped out and it killed them all except one, who came and warned his tribe, who fled. Some of them came up here, to Kitwanga. Some time later that big animal reached skwunikstait (close to Woodcock, one mile above Cedarvale)

The people saw it. One old woman sitting on the river bank, was killed by it. The hunters tracked it with dogs and drove it into the river and killed it. They took it as a crest. They composed a song about it.

"The lion runs into the river. Like a big grizzly bear it is not afraid of the people in the war canoe"

(The words are in Tsimshian). ~~The~~

ts. ts

Harris: Oregon from q, tsomg. elom. "q, t x and a kt is the name of the property of q, tsomg. elom".
Relative at q, tsomg. elom is ne' es, under w a ti wi' ye. (chief).

Mother Oregon: (a x t i x)
local Oregon, skw > laksta't was the name of
blunt outwards island

the village. It was 2 miles above minskinish.

Relatives: Related to xpanson of Katsomge'lam (Peter Nelson). Same names, crests and (partly)

xpans'ntk as a
large name because of
xpilaxe, ganhada,
q, tsomg. elom
CHANGE of Phratry!

myth as xpanson. Only the xpanson house are
ganhadas now but were formerly lax kibu

Crests:

1. leg e' nsu naxnagom lege'nsu. Bear robe, complete skin
from myth [of xpisanb?]
2. tenomge't, also called 'mas' s' l. white bear
used as robe. with human face.
3. t x a x k i t k u m s m a ' x used on pole.
with "offspring bear"

This was given to this house ^{long ago} by tsil'e'g. om of
Kuzagas (lax kibu) for the murder of a member of
house of axtix.

4. kibu. on robe & pole
5. hawa'o mountain lion on pole myth.

tenngjet (æxtix)

Names

Origin

tenəmget

(lax kibu)

See Mrs Stephen Morgan's list of names - this house
Informants

Men

1. tenəmget, naxnəg name. teni was the term applied to a bear that had no den, but roamed about all winter. The performer, dressed in a bear robe and emitting the cries of a bear, went about the house, and the master of ceremonies announced him as tenəmget ("teni peam")

2. 'axtix

'axti·ix tku pistɛ'·i
without fat little grouse

3. axti'mit "never burns" (the frog)

4. ni'endəpxant "on stump" (the grouse)

5. wa'dzəp name from house of 'wəs, Hazelgate

Women

1. t. paxɛldesɛ't "up from the water many days" (small frogs)
It takes many days for the small frogs to come up from the water

2. ʔ. lax'wəl

mum lax'wəl g.ana'·o
ears on eyebrows frog

The eyebrows of the frog are its ears

3. ʔ. t'sigum nɛg "out of water the fin" (of blackfish)

Boys

1. ʔ. ligi'oyax

axti ligi'oyax tkwə g.ana'·o
never about ceremony of little frog
assuming name

2 to.

sga tiye' tu

lu-sga tiye' tu maq.ont ksa'n
ⁱⁿ across thunder headwaters Skuna
(sky)

The thunder goes across ⁱⁿ the sky at the headwaters of the Skuna

Birds

1 #

tsixsta'oo (large) "haughty ice"

2 #

sawigant

gam sawigant kupagana'oo
only frightened stick small frog

The small frog is frightened with only a stick

Origin
Crests

tenamge't

Hanna (1816)

Origin: house of wos, hagweldgate. They
separated after the deluge