

Accounts of naxno'x performances on the house of ni'snawé'  
 (q'isp. q'iludzanó)  
 Sidney Cambbell to Beynon, 1922.

Note: Campbell (ni'slu't, q'iludzanó) had been taken into the royal house to be trained in magic lore and other shamanistic practices. For many generations all of the medicine men and sorcerers for the royal house had been taken from the house of ni'slu't. He was a child, just started on his training, when Duncan arrived. (ni'snawé' and his people, including Campbell, were among the first to become Christians.)

1. The Supernatural Arrow (naxno'qəm hakwətək)

crest display

This bow and arrow were supernatural, so that when shot, the arrow made a groaning, humming noise and returned to the performer. It was also a crest called li'mim hawel "singing arrow". The shooting of the arrow was done by the performer, seldom the chief himself.

Before the guests arrived fine lines of bear gut were strung tightly to the far corners of the house, and the ends of the arrows were strung through these. When the arrow was shot, the taut string would vibrate with a humming noise.

2. "Blackfish"

In this instance, a visit of the "Blackfish" to the house of ni'snawé' was shown. This chief wanted to give a great halait performance to all of the Tsimshian tribes. Messengers were sent to the q'itxa'ta, q'itg'a'atə and all of the tsamsy'en, inviting them to the great feast. When the guests

assembled in the house they saw nothing unusual, although they had been told that the  $na \times n \times x$  to be shown would surpass anything ever shown before. The singers began to sing that the  $ne \times t$  was a brother of  $ni \cdot snawe'$  and was going to pay him a visit (the  $na \times n \times q \cdot am$  " $ne \times t$ " "supernatural blackfish" was ~~the~~ an individual crest of his).

Members of the household ~~announced~~ <sup>entered and</sup> announced that a blackfish was coming up the bay toward the house, then went out again. The <sup>lead performer</sup> master of ceremonies shouted: "That is he, that is the chief's brother. ~~It~~ We have been waiting for him a long time". Soon the guests heard the sounds of splashing and ~~blowing~~ <sup>spouting</sup>, first from outside the house, then right under the fireplace! The fireplace caved in, with its large fire, into a large pool of water, and a "blackfish" emerged. It swam and splashed about in the pool, spouting "foam" into the air. Then the people realized that the "foam" was really eagle down ( $p'alkwa$ , when scattered on the guests, it is a symbol of peace). The members of  $ni \cdot snawa$ 's household sang several songs about the  $ne \times t$ .

Then the blackfish sank in the water and disappeared (a tunnel had been dug under the house deep enough to hold about four feet of water). The hosts placed blocks across the hole in the floor, and the fire was rebuilt. Food and gifts were given to all the guests, thereby confirming  $ni \cdot snawe'$ 's ownership of this special display.

$na \times n \times q$  also a crest

Note: It was claimed that more *naxnax* were shown in ni-snawe's house than in any other Imschian house. The *giludzau* were the most populous tribe, and therefore the wealthiest.

See also ni-snawa's assumption or showing of the *kukwelkskam medisk crest*. in Feasts file