

Iumshian Social Organization

Part I Structure

Geographic divisions:

The Iumshian "nation"

Linguistic divisions

The Iumshian tribes

(+ maps ?)

(a) Iumshian

(b) Githsan

(c) Niska

Kinship divisions:

Phratries

Clans

"Houses"

The Iumshian Tribes

1. g'idzstsu

Name

General statement on geography and structure

Structure (table of ranked houses)

The Houses:

I n125125

(a) General statement

(b) Names

(c) Crests

(d) Territories

(e) Traditions

II - - etc

History and growth, a summary.

2-30

The Iumshian Phratries

The Isumshran Phratries

1 The gispawudwa'da Phratry

Name

Chart of tribes

"Clans"

(a) Isumshran

- Abstracts of traditions (several, showing variations)

- Membership

- Customs

- Analysis and Summary

(b) Kitnuqunaks

(c) etc.

Relationships with other ^{nations} ~~tribes~~ phratries.

Summary

2 Iaxskik

etc.

Isumshran ^{Rank} Social Classes

Statement

The Royal Class -

The Iakakiget Class

Slaves

Summary.

Tribal Chieftainship vs

Clan Chieftainship

Iumshian Secret Societies

Formal societies

Informal influences of *naxuys*

Part 2 Analysis of Iumshian Social Structure

The Naming System

The Crest System

Rank

Part 3 - Function in Iumshian Society

Marriage

Social Mobility ^{How}

Social Control

Kinship

The most important concept underlying Iroquoian society, and the one which has contributed most to the growth of the social units as they now exist, is kinship - the extension of relationship ties.

Kinship is expressed in ① knowledge of common origin (a long memory of ^{actual kinship} relationships when they did exist and similarity of origin myth when the relationship is ^{purported or possibly} fictional) ② crests, names (There are usually evidence or results of similar origin - the important thing - but far from proof of that, crests and names themselves were accepted as indications of relationship.)

Kinship is the ^{main bond} cement that has cemented the social units ^{and political} together. The ~~tribe~~ phratry - are essentially catch-all units which happen accidentally to be 4 in number, made up of family lines that when they met felt they were related, either by virtue of actual relationship or fictional - as shown by similar myths and crests.

Eg: Why do Iaxmon, Tomlax'am, gitksadzo, and gitnugunah all belong together? Ans: ~~similar crests~~ diff origins, most crests diff, but one crest same

Iaxmon ~~diff~~ ^{admits} tomalaham ~~diff~~ ^{admits} gitksadzo
gitnugunah

How do you know 2 families are related? $\frac{1}{2}$ Tradition $\frac{3}{2}$ Crests, names

The tribes: Wandering family groups were invited into tribes by their relatives. Once established in a tribe, a phratry could easily grow. It was another matter to bring a new phratry into a tribe - this was done by: (at top) - a chief naming his son as successor.

The importance of kinship may be seen when it comes into conflict with other concepts

eg war: War captives from another Tsimshian tribe or even from the Haida, if of your own phratry, were often regarded as kinsmen to be protected or redeemed.
: Tsim Eagles feel kinship for captured Haida Eagle chief

succession: search for successor to he! went far afield along all possible lines of kinship
[same applies to rank]

marriage: a woman's own family is more important to her than her husband. (This is partly because her own children ^{always} go back to her family, not his). This theme constantly appears in traditions: a woman marries away, or is captured, or drifts, etc to another place (supernatural or natural), has sons, who grow up and go back to their mother's tribe - often to become chiefs (eg Leg'ex, Haimas). A man who is taken away returns himself, sometimes with his wife; a woman may not return at all, but her ^{sons} children do.

latz marriages.

Charles Mark, Kitagukla 1923 (Mrs Cox, interp).

The feeling about marrying in the same phratry is still quite strong. It was a law made at the beginning of the world. No matter how civilized a man is, or if he goes to church, he still may not marry inside his own house. He cannot overlook the phratric taboo.

Even though Moses Jones has taken ~~so~~ such trouble to fix his latz marriage he has no peace. He is of ha'amau'x house (q.159.a'.st) and married a girl of the same house. He ~~th~~ was thinking that the old rule had been done away with in the house of wi'get [wi'get had committed a latz marriage]. They were married in the white man's way, but had no peace. So he was adopted into the house of ha'g.asu (laxse''), gitsozukul'a). In spite of that, people still made fun of him and he had no peace.

A year ago in May, a girl of Kitwanga committed suicide after marrying a man of her own crest. Her mother had threatened to kill herself because of the shame, and the girl said, "no, I'll do it myself", and drowned herself in the river.

Another man shot himself. He wanted to marry a girl of his own crest. His mother was weeping in shame because her son was going to disgrace the family. He told her to stop crying, and that only death would prevent him from marrying the girl, and shot himself. He recovered in hospital and was put on trial. The judge said, "~~But~~ Are there so few girls in Kitwanga that you should marry your own relative? Is there no other village where you can get a bride?" He agreed to give the girl up. But the law is so strong that the disgrace remained as bad. His name was Elija (he had no Indian name) and he was a grandson of 'yo''', laxk'ien, qal'do'. Her name was Martha, a granddaughter of (house of) wix'e'' of Kitwancoob.

Story of a Kat's marriage.

Mrs Cox. Hazelton.

Two chiefs were going to "stand up" their children (one a boy, the other a girl) at a feast. Unknown to them, the boy and girl had married each other, although they were related by crest (not by blood). When the warping whistles were blown to invite the guests into the feast house, nobody came in except close relatives. The people stayed outside and sang I'm K'a't's songs in ridicule. Who would ^{go to a feast} enter a house where Kats was involved?

Mortified, the parents tried to make the best of it by announcing they were going to put up a new totem pole. The son-in-law was to be represented on the pole in an attempt to wipe out the disgrace.

But the couple felt the disgrace so keenly that they went up Rochede boule mountain, sat down, and turned to stone. To this day, if they see a girl flirting with one of her own crest they warn her she may turn to stone.

Mrs Cox (white) terminology "parents" etc is modified into white mans terms. She said the two chiefs were related. Actually the boy and girl would be related.

Story of a Kats marriage.

Mrs Cox, Hazelton.

Edward Clark's daughter Helen had been away for 7 years to the Industrial School at Metlakatla. When she got back she thought herself too good for the Indians, and thought she had been absolved from any of the Indian laws and customs. She married her own cousin (though not a blood relative he was a "brother" according to the crest).

The Indian boys and girls gave them no peace, whispering as they passed. Their parents were talked about for allowing such a thing to happen. They were afraid to go to either home. I have seen them at 2 o'clock in the morning, arm in arm, with no place to go, in winter. They wandered around homeless, staying occasionally with her mother. [Sometimes they stayed] "on the top of the shoot in the graveyard". Then a bunch of girls would go out and shout and sing at them:

ɔndat d.wi'n g.andiwin lipkamxti'n andiwi'n hoha'c
what do you mean what are you doing it's your own brother you have Hoha!

She made a song in reply:

ɔndat diye'n g.andiye'n gapgamciwe' ni' g.andi'wile hoha'
what do you mean that is why you say it I am a white man that is why Hoha!

That winter she caught a cold, not having a warm house to live in, and died in her mother's house of lung trouble. When she was too sick to live with him, he left her.

Cited in Totemic Atmosphere?

sea-gull

ge'wont

kwadag-a's mountain variety

gagum Lanchuan

✓ Charles Mark

Kitsagukla

Inukshuk call the sun *gimk*. It means "warm"
and applies only to the sun

gimk is used for the sun and the moon both.
To distinguish, it is necessary to say
"sun of day" and "sun of night".

Adoption

Mrs Sudoward, 1915

The children adopted by Mr Sudoward form part of the Eagle family. Once adopted they could marry into the ~~mod~~ok family; Rufus has done it.

The children of my adopted daughter will be Eagles, unless I adopt them. In the next generations these children will belong to the Eagles, without any ceremony....

Group Suicide

kwiləksq.əx or gwunaxəgəx
to tie themselves together and drown.

In myth of haizəmxs, kitwəncol, it is mentioned that
after the slaughter by Mta-gosta opposite Tuleham, the survivors
wanted to commit suicide in this way. But they couldn't. They
took the name gungəq.ə'x (wəpəname) from this.

~~Informant~~ Interpreter Barton told of an instance at
Hortley Bay.

Some ^{performance} pines died in a naxəg in the
water. As a result the others tied themselves together
and a strong man went in first and dragged
all the others in. They all drowned

Spouting Wale naxəg device mentioned in g'itəg'a'ta
stories.

Nature of he.1's house g.1 tra ta

In giving house names of he.1 Beynon 1916 wrote

... the following house names which were used by all the various royal sheeps of this house, who lived all by themselves as independent houses but were all under the chief he.1.

Nature of House of la.3'i gashida, g.1 tra ta.

Beynon 1916. In former days this house was divided into two independent [?] 1. la.3'i, 2. w. d. na x s.

Fr "In saying independent here and elsewhere regarding subdivisions it does not mean that they had nothing to do with each other; but in former days these subdivisions each had his own house with names, priests, and standing the same as the chief 13 ka get of the group."

Marriage
(in mythology)

A story told to explain why women must be careful whom they
spurn and must allow their elders to choose their mate.
Emma Wright to Beynon 1952 X.

It was formerly the custom that all marriages
were arranged, even while the children were still
in infancy.

Once a great chief kept his daughter from the
company of all boys except a cross cousin whom
they all wanted her to marry. But she spurned the
youth and would have nothing to do with him.
Finally he went to his aged aunt, who told him
to purify himself for 10 days and then she would
tell him what to do. After his purification she
told him to gather a certain plant, grind it to a
paste mixed with urine, then boil it until only a
powder remained, and to sleep with this in a
small bag close to his privates for four nights,
thinking always of the girl. Then he was to wave
the bag at a raven (as the girl was of the raven
clan) to see if it would be attracted to him, and
if it was not, he was to sleep another four
nights.

Love charm

Putting it on a
raven, her clan
bird

The young man made the love potion, and
after 8 days it attracted a raven to him, cawing.
He waved it at the proud girl, who ^{then} desired
him so much that she humiliated herself
by following him and calling out her desire.
He married her, but her humiliation was
the result of her haughty attitude in resisting
an arranged marriage.

Privileged sex relations (lucky women)
One way of obtaining good luck. Bygon 1952 XI.

Another way of getting good luck is by associating with a lucky woman before undergoing the purifying baths and training ritual. Certain women had this reputation, and earned large fees. These women were often married, even chiefs' wives, and this was another source of income for the chief [this is a possible precedent for the prostitution which became rampant soon after the arrival of whites]

One such lucky woman was an outstanding woman who became chief *nistkumi'k* of the *giludzans*, and ~~as such~~ in this capacity was addressed as a man. She never married. Her tribesmen paid her huge fees to associate with her before going on their hunting trips (this was in the fur trading period when furs of seals and sea-otters were much in demand)

No stigma of shame was attached to these sex relations. The wives of the men would even add their gifts to those the husbands gave the lucky woman. The latter's husband would absent himself from the village during the period when his wife was bestowing her luck powers upon other men. Often her fame brought men from far distant villages.

"These indulgences were not enjoyed in an ordinary manner." After proper overtures had been made and a satisfactory payment arranged, they would cohabit in each of the four corners of the house, going clockwise, and remaining in each corner from one to three days. Then when the circuit was completed the man left and underwent his long purification ritual. If his hunt was a success, he would give an added tribute to the woman from whom he had acquired his luck.

Two men holding one name
in same house

Baynun, g. b. x a' ta, 1916.

House of ni. s. d. i. s, g. i. s. p. a. w.

" There is at present a case of two men having assumed the name of ni. s. d. i. s. Informant (ni. s. d. i. s, Norman Spencer) said there were two first cousins who wanted to assume the name. He assumed it and gave away lots of wealth then the other cousin ("brother" in Samoan) assumed it and gave away even more wealth. Informant says other should have taken name t. x. a. g. e. t. k.

Not a rule; done in this case by jealousy.

Terms of Relationship

Those who belong to a ptex call each other wul'ε'isk "relatives". i.e. all the laxkibu are wul'ε'isk to each other.

Within the laxkibu ptex are a number of houses who are more closely related, those who have the se'mi as a crest. These call each other wε'kyεyot "my brothers" and tam'kti'tkw "my sisters". Thus /ε'ic calls nistεlex wε'kεt (wε'kət, wε'cət) "brother".

səlwe'ltk "to be together and help each other". The councillors (lekakiget) of a sem'igət say that they are səlwe'ltk to each other. Within the gitsi's for instance, one man from each house, lekakiget, are səlwe'ltk to each other; because they help each other. The head chief has all his səlwe'ltk (lekakiget) around him in a council. There is another word for the other people of the tribe who are not on the council, termed 'ε'ə/kus "messengers".

When many people have the same myth of origin they term each other wε'kεt (brother). In other cases they term each other wul'ε'isk (relatives, but not blood relatives).

✓

How the Imshean know that Animals have Clans
John Tate to Beynon II 1954

Some Imshean hunters were out to sea hunting sea otter and they sheltered by a small island, at the home of a giant octopus. They saw a blackfish with a hole through its fin (the prince of blackfish) dive down and then come to the surface dead. Another blackfish saw the body and told the chief blackfish.

Soon the hunters saw a great many blackfish approaching, to battle the octopus. They were in four groups, each with a leader. It was then they realized that these were the four phratries. One by one the warriots among the blackfish dove down to the attack.

The laxski-k had several white rings around their dorsal fins to represent the stick gnawed by the beaver; the gispowudwad had short fins with holes through them, the laxkibu had long fins like a wolf's tail; and the gankhada had ^{dorsal} fins shaped like a raven's beak.

Finally the giant devilfish was killed. That is how the people knew that animals as well as human beings have clans.

Criteria of relationships (perfect statement of related houses)

At Lembeh lived three brothers, tsipase, ra/m'axe' and ni'shaiwaxs. Each was a chief; each had his own group, his own house, and his own hunting territories. But all had the same myths, songs, ^{to} nursery songs, and crests in common. Each had his own individual maxax's.

separate { family house hunting territories

common { myths songs crests
songs nursery songs

Origin of Niyukos, Kwoot and Auckland

Char Mark ✓

Ketaigukela

1923.

Attitude on declining use of Totem poles

Mr Loring (admired the carving on Totem poles, and for this reason the Indians liked him and welcomed him).

But Mr Hyde [Hyde?] sent them a threatening message, so they were afraid. They have to let the Totem poles fall. These poles were to be carved and erected last year, but the agent threatened them with jail and they left the poles there to rot. It is a shame. Simon Turner, Stephen Morgan, and Gok's wife planned to have these poles.

Now when a chief dies, no one knows, because the raising of poles is forbidden. There is nothing to mark his end and the coming of a new chief. Their deaths seem to be of no consequence.

Nobody knows where the chiefs live now because there are no poles. The grandfather guysan was the last one to erect a pole, about 6 years ago.

Breakdown of exogamy at Kitsugukla

At g'idzagu'kla both the g'isg.ahé'st and g'anha'do have broken up the tabu of intermarriage. The result, at a g'isg.ahé'st potlatch, is very strange (wise'ks potlatch). The father (in one of these endogamous marriages) was taking a part in wise'ks feast. The mother and children (also g'isg.ahé'st) "instead of contributing to the paternal origin paid hawé! tributes as g'isg.ahé'st members of the family. Blood is more important than marriage.

justification "This is the only g'itksan tribe who have openly defied the old system of marrying outside the clan, and they argue in this manner: "Look at the ravens in the hills; you do not see them mating with other birds, they always choose a fellow raven as their mate. The same with a grizzly. You never see a grizzly mating with a wolf but always with a grizzly. So why can't we do likewise and still be real g'isg.ahé'st or real Ravens?"

Why can't we have phratric without exogamy?

While nothing is said openly by the others, it is often ridiculed by others in private.
"but never in the open"

Social Units

1 Household (presumably, - we don't have much data)

2 "House" or family
nature of subdivisions ?

3 There is no significant social unit necessarily formed by all the members of a phratry in a tribe.
Eg the qitksadz and qitnagunaks don't unite with each other, but with their relatives in other tribes

3 Clan

4 Phratry - for marriage regulation and to some extent for relations with other tribes (nations)

5 Tribe - among Iroquoian becomes a social unit.

Terms of relationships