

Reception

Fireweed

Second Day: Halait of hana'amux and tsa'wals (q. sg. a he'st)

These two brother chiefs were both going to erect totem poles, but they held just one halait, jointly.

Invitation

Midnight

whistles

ghost

The halait procession came around the village in the middle of the night. As it came to each house, the whistles were sounded and attendants went in and warned that a terrible, destructive being was coming. In this case ~~the~~ all lights in the house had to be extinguished, and the naxno'x was dressed in a death mask and a ghost costume, and was revealed only dimly by flashlights. It rushed around and finally fell at the feet of te'ngwax, who sang his ksonε'tk to revive ~~the~~ it and then "fed the halait" with a two dollar bill. The halait then spread white dust, representing mold, on the chiefs and left.

At the house next door, Beynon heard, the people were eating and neglected to extinguish the lamps. The halait doused the lights with snow and upset the table, and then went on with his performance. "The house owner was not angered, but was apologetic and did everything possible to appease the anger of the halait."

guests

no trouble

In the late afternoon the greeters came in, called out the names of the chiefs, and announced that they were to come in costume. Later the final greeters came in and said "My master is now waiting to entertain you in his house." The guests made their preparations, went to the hall, and were conducted to their usual seats.

An Incident: The ceremonies could not proceed until all the guests were in, and one was missing, a Kitwancool chief. A messenger was sent to find him and he was brought in, obviously under the influence of liquor. He elaborately saluted all of the people, much to their amusement, but had ~~broken~~ ^{violated} the sacredness of the halait house, a ~~fairly~~ serious offense. Later in the week, the Kitwancool were to make amends for this offense.

The naxnɔ'x performances:

Five naxnɔ'xs were displayed, and they were more complicated than those of the previous night in that there was more participation by the guest chiefs. These performances reveal a good deal about the order of rank of the chiefs. They also reveal much about the nature of these "naxnɔ'xs". In the first, the guest chiefs use their halait powers to cure the performer, in the fourth they merely try to move a supernatural creature, and in the fifth they not only sing their own halait songs but act out in pantomime the characteristics of their naxnɔ'xs

1. Sleeping Across (sq. a wɔ'x). As the guests came in, they saw a figure lying on the floor covered with a bear skin so that its identity was not known. hana'amux came in attired in his halait costume which included a headdress (ʔamhalait) bearing the grouse crest, and walked slowly around the figure. The singers sang a lament:
 - Oh, this has happened to me,
 - Oh, this has happened to me,
 - Happened to the person of the hills.

The master of ceremonies called upon the attendants to find out what it was that was lying on the floor. "It seems to be a person, and it is lying right across the pathway", they reported. "Then we shall have to see what the halats can do to restore it to life." He then called on the ~~the~~ quest chiefs in turn. The first was te'ngwax.

"Come, great te'ngwax, you will try your powers on this poor person". te'ngwax came forward with his rattle, and said: "I can do it, I will cure him, I know what happened." He sang his ksa'netk song a number of times but the body on the floor did not move. An attendant said: "You were nearly able to do so, it very nearly moved," and te'ngwax retired. One by one the other chiefs were called out and went through the same ritual.

First came ~~the rest of the~~ a number of other Kitwanga chiefs in their order of rank :- 1. te'ngwax (above), 2. ksg.og.am.hig.ox (E = laxski.k), 3. ta'wal'ask (E), 4. lεlt (F = g.anha'də), 5. gil'awə (E), 6. ha'lus (F), 7. ʔaxtiye'x (W = laxkibu'), and 8. xpilaxε' (W). Then came the Kitwancool

chiefs in order of rank: 1. wixε' (W), 2. mali (W), 3. sindit (F), 4. g.alsəmgiget (?), 5. gwa'astam (W), 6. g.amnaxye'ltk (F), 7. wiskimsum (W), 8. g.amx^{g.amgε'xmo/mu}mimu (), 9. sg.anisəm tšəwi'nxɬ (). Then the Hazelton

(git'ammarks) chiefs tried their powers: 1. gedəmg.a'ldə (F), 2. lutkudziiw's (F), 3. spox (W), 4. ha'xku (), 5. nix'at'en (F), 6. t'ε (), 7. wudiwiye'i ().

Then unexpectedly, the master of ceremonies called upon Beynon: "We should now try the halait from gitlaxda'mks. Come, gws.g.a'i'in and try your powers." As Beynon went forward

the Kitwanga laxkibu without being asked struck up a ksonek song and he danced with a rattle around the body, then announced: "I am unable, it is really serious". The Hagwilgate chiefs were then called, and they^{too} were unable to bring about a cure.

The g. anha'do chiefs of Kitsyukla were then called, leaving the one of highest rank until last: 1. g. axsqaba'x, 2. wist'is, 3. sono'is, 4. nist'o, 5. mo'lxan. As mo'lxan danced and sang his ksonek, the body began to move, and finally the figure sat up and was led away. The master of ceremonies shouted out: "It is well that you are now cured, sq. awo'x". Thus was this name and naxno'x ~~belonging to this house dramatized.~~

As each chief played his part, he was compensated by a young nephew or niece of hana'amu'x. In all, four nephews and nieces ~~took part~~ participated, and this constituted part of their elevation, ~~as having participated in a halait.~~

2. Stone Thrower (ona. lo'p). The singers started a new song, ~~and~~ the naxno'x whistles blew, and a shabbily-dressed, half-witted individual came in. "I can be a halait just as well as you chiefs can", he boasted, and went about throwing handfuls of pebbles (brown beans) into the audience, thus dramatizing the name "stone thrower"; until he was led away.

3. Woman Raven (ksom g. a'o g. a'o). There was a commotion outside. The attendants rebuked each other for having ejected the halait, because now a strange monster was on the rampage

a curing
halait

outside and everybody would now have to be ready to run for their lives. Then the being came in, wearing a beaked mask, cone-like headdress, and feathered cloak. It carried a spear, with which it threatened the guests. The song was sung continually:

"Woman raven, who lives away in the distant mountains:

The creature then touched the guest chiefs one by one with its spear, and a nephew or niece compensated them. The order was much the same as in the earlier performance, although there were minor changes in the order of the chiefs, and a larger number, ~~were~~ touched. This performance consumed less time than the first one because the chiefs were not required to perform.

4 Sitting Being (g.a.o-a.m.e't's) In the rush of getting rid of the raven figure, another figure, completely shrouded to hide its identity and surrounded by attendants, was brought in and seated on a chair near the seat. Then the performance began of trying to budge this being from its seat. A bit of humour was introduced when it was suggested that a C. N. Railway section gang be called in to move it. Three appropriately-costumed men with picks and crowbars came in and pried and pried without success. They conferred, and decided to blast it with powder. One brought out a stick of dynamite (actually a carrot) and attached a fuse, then lighted it and ~~the~~ ^{everybody} set themselves for the blast. When it fizzled out, the gang foreman announced: "We give up. This is something beyond our knowledge."

The Indians are much ^{more clever} ~~smarter~~ than we Italians".

chief with
canes

The singers began to sing, and the master of ceremonies called on the guest chiefs, one by one in order of rank, to come out with their canes and use their halait powers to move the chair. First g.ox came out and while his Kitwanga people sang his kson'itk song he tried to move the being. In all 33 chiefs came out, finishing off as in the first performance with mo'lxon of Kitsegukla, who was the one who finally succeeded in moving the being off its chair. [The order once again was Kitwanga, Kitwancool, Hazelton, Hagwilgate, and Kitsegukla. Of course no g.1sg.ah'e'st chiefs were called as this was a g.1sg.ah'e'st affair - at any rate there were no ~~g.1sg.ah'e'st~~ at Kitwanga, Kitwancool or Hazelton g.1sg.ah'e'st ^{as far as} ~~for~~ potlatching was concerned. Within each tribe the order could therefore be phrased as "roughly in order of rank excluding members of the ^{phratry of the host.} ~~host phratry~~"]

It was announced that g.ao'am'e'ts had been moved. This was a being that had appeared in hana'amux's house while the people still lived at Temeleham, and had seated itself directly on the fireplace so firmly that nobody could move it. hana'amux put on his robes, took his ceremonial cane and finally pried it loose, and ever since, it had been ~~the~~ ^{his} exclusive property, and had been used as a name.

5 Person of the Hills (g.edomgilhaoli). The next na'nox was a small figure with a large mask carrying a bow and arrows. It went to each visiting chief in turn and fell down before him in a trance. This time in order to revive

the being, the chief not only sang his k^sane'tk song but danced or otherwise acted out the powers which his nax'ox was supposed to have. For example t^e of Hazelton had the power of 'isa'x's (laugh). He rose and began to laugh loudly. Everybody in the house took up the laughter. He would stop abruptly and the others would have to do likewise. They kept this up until the performer arose from the ground, and, ^{then} of course added much mirth to the festivities.

After the performer had stopped before all of the chiefs, his name was announced as g^r'e'd^m gⁱ'ha'oli.

Chiefs' Dance and Speech:

hana'amux and t^sa'wals came out adorned in their gwoskhalits and 'amkhalits (robes and headdresses) and danced before the guests, scattering eagle down on them. Then hax'pogw^m'tk spoke:

"Chiefs, chiefs of the great village downriver (Kitwanga), of the great village toward the hills (Kitwancool), of the great village upriver (Hazelton), and of the great village of Hagwilgate; also chief coming from t^x'e'msam (Nass River; that is, Beynon). You have seen all of the things which are the possessions of my nephews hana'amu'x and tsa'wals. Do not be confused into thinking, chiefs, that they have only a few possessions. It is just that only a few people remain, and it only appears that they are poor. Well, they will really do their utmost to make you happy in what is ahead."

As on the previous night there was very little speech-making. Only one chief voiced the

feelings of the guests. It was te'ngwax:

Chief hana'amax and Chief t'sa'wols. We have seen and heard the many ^{important} and valuable things you have shown us. You have privileged your nephews to bring them out from where they were hidden and unknown, and you have done so in the knowledge that these things are yours. That is proper, and shows your wisdom, great chiefs. I voice the approval of the Kitwanga people and I am certain I also speak the thoughts of the people from all places."

A spokesman for gwaxsa'n announced: "Tomorrow my master will endeavour to entertain you. But let me warn the chiefs that there will be many halaits roaming about all night long."

Without formality the guests flocked out.

Third Day: Halait of gwaxsa'n (g'isq.ah'e'st)

The house of gwaxsa'n was the most powerful of this phratry, although second in ranking to wig'e't. mo'lxan (g.asha'da) also outranked it in the tribe.

Invitation:

About 1:30 in the morning the halait procession visited all the houses where guests were staying. gwaxsa'n himself was the main figure, dressed as a ghost warrior known as gidzax. He danced before the guest chiefs, and each time he actually touched one, the latter would have to sing his kson'e'tk song and if he wished "feed the halait". This appeased, the halait went