

gitsolas Tamlaham migration
myth.

~~Abstract of the~~ Origin Myth of ni-shaiwe'xs and ni-sdax'ig.
of the gitsola'sa tribe. In effect, it is a history of
this tribe from the gispawudwa'da point of view. Narrated
by Walter Wright (ni-sdax'ig.) to William Beynon in 1926.
(Wright told the same story in somewhat more detail to
Will Robinson of Terrace, B.C. in 1936, and the manuscript
"Men of Medek" is in the files of the National Museum.
A few details have been added to this account from "Men of
Medek".)

In former days the gispawudwa'da people lived in
Tamlaham a large village at Tamlaham, and ni-shaiwe'xs was
their head chief. Some la-x'ibu' lived there too.

One day the children tormented a young mountain goat
until it was near death. One youth rescued it and
nursed it to health and set it free. Soon after,
messengers came and invited the people to a feast.
They were led up Stekyawden (Rocher de Boule Mountain)
to a large house, and entertained by a dancer ~~was~~ wearing
the costume of a one-horned mountain goat. After the
dance the goat people led them out of the house, and all
except the youth fell to their deaths. The youth was
guided ^{down} by the goat he had saved. From this revenge
of the goats comes the crest galkmati' and the place
name wil-lulgitat mati "where the mountain goats
had a feast".

Some time later the girls of the village again showed
disrespect for the animals by making imitation headdresses
from trout skeletons. A supernatural grizzly bear
emerged from the lake at the foot of stag'dan,
crossed the river to Tamlaham, and wreaked havoc
in the village. From this incident the grizzly
(mxdigom dzao'aks) became a crest, as remembered
in a dirge.

Still later a man showed disrespect to the first

salmon of the season. No more salmon came up the river, the animals disappeared, and the people suffered famine. A nephew of ni's hai we'xs underwent a long purification ritual and set out to find new hunting grounds. He discovered the Zymoetz River, and there one morning saw a huge fireweed growing out of the snow. On his return the single fireweed (gil he's) was assumed as a crest. Because of the famine, the people decided to migrate downriver.

Famine

The Single Fireweed

They migrated down past Kitwanga to git wan lakstet, where the laxski-k chief qox had his village. Conflicts over hunting grounds led to open fighting in which a nephew of ~~ni's~~ ni's hai we'xs was killed, and the people fled downriver.

Migration

Conflicts with Eagles

They came down the north bank to klu'iyu "hiding place" (now Usk), ^{where} ~~and were~~ laxkibu' under kstiya'ox and ganha'do under xpilaxε' shared a village. Here they stayed until more conflicts developed. tamnu'anx, a brother of ni's hai we'xs was killed by the laxkibu' and his body impaled on a stake. The gispawudwa'do moved once more down the river to the canyon, and there on a flat place called tsamiyao on the west bank they made a village.

Conflicts with Wolf and ganha'do

Settle in the canyon

At that time a large ^{dam} ~~dam~~ blocked the river at the mouth of the canyon, forming above it a lake which abounded in beavers. Below the lake, salmon could be caught in great numbers. The men explored the rich hunting grounds in all directions, and up the Zymoetz River they ever found old camps they had used in Temlaham days. They settled here on the canyon and became the gitssila'sso people.

Not far downriver lived the giludza'o.

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ni-snawé and
the qilodza'u

The laxski'k chief of that tribe, ni'sqamdzi's, married a niece of ni'shaiwé'x's, and they had a son, who became ni'snawé'. ni'sqamdzi's gave a feast and relinquished ~~the~~ ^{the} chieftainship of the qilodza'u to his son, and in this way a branch of the house of ni'shaiwé'x's became dominant in that tribe.

Attack on
klu'iyu

To avenge the murder of tamnu'snx the people attacked ~~kstiya'ox~~ klu'iyu. The Wolf chief kstiya'ox was driven away to the Nass River and the q. anha'də chief xpilaxé' to the canyon of the Kitsumkalum river.

Raid to the coast

Kitlope

The q'ispəwudwa'də became proficient at making canoes and decided to raid other villages down on the sea coast. Ten canoes (Robinson says 20) set out and eventually reached kitlop, which they burned and plundered. A nephew of ni'shaiwé'x's returned to the burning village for more loot and was killed, but the raiders could not catch any more kitlop people to retaliate. The raiders continued down the

Bella Bella

coast to Bella Bella. They encountered first a group of girls undergoing their puberty initiations in underground shelters some distance from the village. These were being supervised by a high-ranking woman who had a small son. After taking the girls captive, and on the way to attack the main village, one of the raiders pointed to the boy and demanded his name. The woman answered

gunaxnu'tk

uks gwəna xnutkə / gəx "the raven's voice re-echoes from out of its nest". This is the origin of the name gunaxnu'tk. The wətsta did not fight but ransomed their people, and the q'ispəwudwa'də started homeward with much

wealth.

They were met by a fleet of Tsimshian canoes, and when they stopped to parley, they were told they were just imitating the Tsimshian in making such raids. To avert a fight, ni'shaiwé'xs took the taunt and assumed it as a name: 'umhaiyam "imitator" (also g.amaiyé'm). They proceeded on and near the mouth of the Skeena came to a large village of the gitxá'ta. (Robinson says they followed the Tsimshian canoes back to Kitkatla). Here they stayed in peace for some time, and some of the young men, impressed by the wealth of the sea coast, decided to stay (tsyebasé' and cé'ks, according to Robinson). The gitxá'ta chief was lutkadzémenti, laxski.k., and he later relinquished his rank to tseybasé'.

The name
g.amaiyé'm

Kitkatla

ni'swé'xs and
the ginadzi'iks

On the way up the Skeena, ni'swé'xs was impressed by the riches of the ginadzi'iks valley, and stayed to found another house there. Home at the canyon, ni'shaiwé'xs assumed his new name g.amaiyam.

Revenge on the
Eagle chief

To get revenge on the upriver chief gox, they built a great excavated house with a heavy door called miyeskan "mbs of monster". When ~~the~~ the upriver guests arrived they were ushered into the house one at a time, ducking under two successive grizzly skin doors, and struck down. Only one escaped and reached home. Two years later the new gox came to the village, negotiated for peace, and asked for a daughter of ^{g.amaiyé'm} ~~ni'shaiwé'xs~~ as his bride. On the way back to his village he burned her alive. The next fall, ni'shaiwé'xs g.amaiyam went upriver to lax'antki'is to

strangers near the door said "this is the arrow of bələmgwe", and took it away with them.

They were pursued to the lake, where they dived in and became beavers. The people decided to destroy the huge beaver dam across the canyon and drain the lake. (Robinson says as a self imposed punishment for alienating the beavers).

The gitsəla'sə
split up

They split up into two groups; kwən'əx (^{ni:s}~~git~~
~~na~~gwəl_l), ~~nɪsɪ~~ ni:sdəx'g, and sɛdzan

crossed to the west side; and gitx'ɔ'n, nɪsɪhəiwɛ'xs and g.ɔ'm remained on the east side. The dam was broken and the beavers were killed as they came through the opening. The last to appear was bələmgwe, the supernatural beaver with^a human figure on its back. It was harpooned by sɛdza'n, g.ənha'də on one side and a laxskik of gitx'ɔ'n's house on the other. sɛdza'n's harpoon came out, and the Eagles retrieved the monster beaver, which they have since used as a crest.

Origin of
Beaver crest

Recent movements

The people moved away from their villages in fear. Those on the east side went upriver and became the gitlaxtsettɛ "people on the edge of the lake" (since abbreviated to gitx'tsett'xt).

Those on the west side moved to the top of a hill and made their village laxgəlwɛlp (right above the first tunnel on the railroad. Later all of the people moved to a flat place below the canyon. Here the beavers dug under the village and men fell through the surface and were drowned. This place was ʔəndudu'n. The two groups moved again, the gitx'tsett'xt up above the canyon to ktsəm'ənahu'sk, and the others to the top of a precipice ^{above} the canyon, called gitwəlmɛ'x "people of falling leaves".

Still later, to protect themselves from raiders,
the two groups moved back into the canyon. On
the west side qitx'o'n, ~~ni~~ ni'shaiwe'xs, ~~ni~~
qom and their people moved on to the rocky
knoll known as the tsolom t'odzop "beaver
fortress" and became known as the qitlaxdzo
"people on the edge of the precipice". On the east side
ni'snagwelk, ni'stax'o'g, and sedzan moved
back to their earlier site.

A III niashaiwexs

(gispawudwa'da)

B II niashaxxiy

Walter Wright: Relatives

niashawe (giludzan)

hel and tsibese gitzaga (gitxata)

gwuxsan, hax pagwat, wiget gitsagukla.

gel gispayaks

haotz gitsamgalum

niashwexs ginadziiks

See long story in notebook.

A II g > m

(g. anha'da)

Simon Wallace : local?

Relatives : niasy a'ganet (gitsis)

nias h>t (gitzaxtet)

In Walter Wright's history, g > m comes from the coast

Summary of Origins

1. A^{III} B^{II} ~~B~~ came down from Temlaham, drove out laxkiku to Nass and ganhada to Kalum.
2. A^I, B^I, B^{IV} came from Kitimat (g. it x 2 m) group.
A^{II} g. 2 m from Coast (and n. 175 km's A^V?)
B^{III} sedzan from Upriver

The B group: made up of a branch of A¹ and A³ (ie. gisp. and laxsik split). But the ganhada group sedzan is separate from the A group (g. 2 m). This is apparent in territories.

Origins of g, t s'ala'sa houses

A I g, t xən (laxskik) Kitimat, Haida

A II g, əm (ganha'da) Coast?

A III niəshaiwə'xs (gispəwudwa'də) Semlakam

A IV iyo'əs (laxskik) ?

A V niəskine's (ganha'də) with gəmə?

A VI tsəm ha'otks (gisp) ?

B I niəsnagwelk branch of A I

B II niəsdəxəj " " A III

B III sədzan (ganha'də) Kupron or Hagwalgate

B IV gaga'otskən (laxskik) with g, t xən

B V tax hayə (gisp) g, lodza?

B VI laxtiif (laxkibu) g, lodza

Abstr. Narr: How the Kitalas went to live at 'Endudoon
Albert McKenzie to Bynon, 1947?

(Another version of what is already recorded, so given only
briefly).

The beaver dam was near gita x dz ex, and a
laxkibu man built his house directly on the beavers'
pathway so that he could get more beaver. He was shot
with a strange arrow, finally taken by two men who
escaped in form of beavers. For revenge the people
destroyed the dam (each of the 4 phratres dug a section,
which left the islands now seen). Laxkibu first to
spear chief beaver, then laxski'k. (It still had
chewed maple in its mouth, giving origin to crest
g. an nag, a ig. usk "only remnants of chewed wood")

In fear of retaliation the people moved down to
'endudun (now Vanarschol). They heard a wailing
woman mourning (beaver woman) and made fun of
her. She dug a channel undermining the village
and many fell through. Reduced in numbers, the
people moved ^{back} to the d dz op for protection.

Abstr. Why gitxw'n had trading privileges on the Skeena.
Sam Bennett to Brynon, 1951.

di'ks, niece of gitxw'n (taxskik chief at Kitselas), went into the hills to pick berries. She wandered away and got lost. Four strange men took her to their village, git'wongax, and the ganha'do chief lε'lt took her as his wife. They had a son and a daughter. Although she was treated with respect and kindness she wanted to go home, and she cut an ^{large} old canoe in half and drifted down the Skeena to Kitselas.

gitxw'n welcomed her and after a time took her back to her husband, and lε'lt gave him the privilege of trading with his tribe. gitxw'n has proclaimed this right at a feast and it was not challenged.

[conflicts with legex later].

607 lax t i t (lax k i bu)

Agnes Hudson

All lax k i bu here are of one group.

relatives: same house as l e o i s (g i l o d z a y), same myth, names, crests, etc.

: have relatives at g i t x a t a.

B V taxhaye

(gispawudwa'ds)

Agnes Hudson.

Related to niostax > 18.

Relative of niaspins (gilodzay), lived with
him at laxkels (when he was royal?)

Origin

B IV gagootsgən (laxskik)

Agnis Hudson: same origin as niʔsnaɣwəlk, but a
lakak̄iɣət. They are practically of Kitimat origin.
Many of their names are Kitimat names. They are assoc
with house of niʔsnaɣwəlk (Kitimat)

Origins.

B III sedzan

(gan ha'da)

Agnes Hudson.

Of Hagwylgate origin, of gabz'gan (Hagwylgate)

or Keprox?

[Myth of origin is still in shorthand, in file.]

B II niastaxiy

(qispawudwa'da)

Wm Brown : from Lamlaham

Relatives : In Alaska, wiseks.

same in gitxata.

kwiyet (Kupox)

Summary of:

Men of Medek.
by
Will Robinson

Prologue.

Neas-D-Hok [niastax'ix] is my name, and I am the head chief of the Grizzly Bear People [gispawudwards] of Kitselas. I have power on both sides of the canyon, my own chieftainship niastax'ix and that of Neas Niwas [niashaiwe'xs], for no one of my generation has that name. When I was a boy, my grandfather niashaiwe'xs chose me to carry on our history, and many times he told it to me, until I could repeat it without missing any of its parts. I tell it now so that it will be preserved.