

## 125. A M'o:ho:l'ath Youth Visits the Thunderbird (Tyee Bob)

An individual was very unmanly, unable to do anything; he had not been properly taught. The youth began thinking that he should begin looking for a place where he could bathe ritually. He set out on foot from his home to the falls of Tl'a:s'a'a:l.<sup>2</sup> It was summer. He began bathing, rubbing himself. He had ten different things for rubbing; he rubbed himself. The first time he stayed away for four days, rubbing himself ritually. It was his sole occupation to rub ritually from morning till evening, all day from end to end. He went to sleep. Then daylight came and again he was rubbing from morning till night, scrubbing himself. After three days of rubbing his skin became raw. Then he was using the finer, softer needles for one more day. On the fourth day he went home, and the next four days he remained at home allowing his skin to heal. Then he set out walking again, and continued bathing and rubbing with his leaf rubbers in the same order of use as before. In the evening he again went to sleep. He would stay in the woods and sleep there. **For two days** he rubbed himself again morning till night, from dawn to dusk. He would rub himself in the morning, than again at evening. For four more days he rubbed himself.<sup>3</sup> Then he went home and stayed in again for four days. Again he set out to bathe and rub. Four times he went on a four day bathing and rubbing trip. Then he went to sleep and dreamed:

"Let's go," an old man was saying to him. "Go to where the Thunderbird lives."

He woke up and stored away in his mind what he was dreaming of. He went and told<sup>4</sup> his mother, saying that he would go walking in the woods.

"Don't think that I died. I'll be gone ten days," he said to his mother. "If I don't come back in fourteen days, then consider me dead and say, 'I guess he died'."

The youth set out for the place he dreamt he was supposed to go to, and began to rub<sup>5</sup> himself again on the way to the Thunderbird's house. He was climbing a mountain for four days, the mountain called To:ta:.<sup>6</sup> He would bathe ritually whenever he came to a creek, then he would walk on again. His skin became hard and tough after he was walking for four days. **Then he** arrived where there was no trail. It was sheer cliff way up all around: he could not climb any more. He turned home and came down, taking a day to descend. He now stayed home, having been gone for eight days. Then he told his mother,

"I went," he said, "To the house of the Thunderbird."

He knew now that the Thunderbird's house was at a mountain

called To:ta:. His mother started counselling him.

"Bathe ritually for a long time. Don't have intercourse with anyone," the mother said to her son.

She counselled him for a long time, the mother did. She did not tell her husband what their son was about because he never really did counsel his son. Then she finished talking to the youth, and he went into the woods again. Before he left he told his mother that he would be gone ten days. He began bathing ritually again. This time he really tried in earnest,<sup>7</sup> now adding four more bundles of tree needles. He went to sleep. Day came. He bathed ritually that morning. This time he had ten bundles of needles and four extra. Another night came. He bathed ritually for a long time and prayed that he might have a way, a trail to where he wanted to go. He was saying just that, only that when he bathed, asking for a trail. In the morning, in the evening, all the time he was saying only that, asking that a trail be given him. After ten days he went home. He had now reached ten days just as his mother told him to do when she taught him. He arrived that night and let his mother know that he had come home. His competitor found out, the one who was a Getter of hair seals. He stayed home again for four days; none of the other people ever saw him. His mother was teaching him all the time now. Then he went into the woods to start to bathe ritually once more.

There is a little creek in the woods straight back from Tl'a:s2a2a:l called Ma2itqnit.<sup>8</sup> The little creek got dried up all along it on account of his ritual bathing.<sup>9</sup> He bathed for two more days out there in the woods at Ma2itqnit at evening, asking that he might have a good trail to go to where he was going. He was now praying to the "Chief" on high, that he would take pity on him and give him a trail. He started saying this all the time, that he be given a trail so that he would be able to walk up there at the steep cliff where he was unable to proceed any farther the last time.

Daylight came on the sixth day. This time he tried extra hard speaking, and the words now came easily.<sup>10</sup> It was as if someone told him, 'Say so.'<sup>11</sup> For two days he stayed at the cliff, then set out on foot. Again he began bathing and found a bird. He found the bird in the river where he bathed. He took the bird. It was dry.<sup>12</sup> Where it came from, the little bird, he didn't know. He took it. The little bird was pretty; it had a pretty head, the little bird. He bathed that evening, and when he finished he went home to his mother.

"I'm going to the place I went to, Mom."

Next day he arrived at the foot of the mountain. He had some shredded cedarbark, lots of cedarbark. He set out and went up,

travelled four days and arrived at the cliff. This time there was a trail there, a good trail; he found a good trail. The cliff disappeared. Now he had gotten past the ugly place on his way. He saw a house and went in; he went inside the Thunderbird's house.

"Sit down over there," he was told.

There were lots of Hi'itl'ik Lightning Snakes. They were afraid of the shredded cedarbark. The chamberpot called out:

"He's come into your house...!"

The chamberpot was the one who called out. Then the chamberpot called out again:

"He's come into your house... a human being!"

Again the chamberpot called out:

"He's come into your house...!"

Four times it called out.

"Ho:::"

Thunder sounded from afar.

It thundered again: this time he heard it distinctly. Again it sounded, really clearly now as it was nearer. It thundered once more from afar. The chamberpot now spoke:

"Go hide over there."

The man went and hid. Then he gave his cedarbark headdress to the chamberpot.

"Ho:::"

It thundered again outside. A man came inside.

"I lost my head. There's a human there on the floor," said the chamberpot.

The man took off his clothing and put it there near the door close to the Hi'itl'ik, that's where he put his blanket. The man sat down. His legs were very thick. He was a huge man.

"Come on out," the man who was hiding was told.

He came out and sat down on the floor. There was a fire in the fireplace.

"You will eat."

The huge man went out. He was not gone long, then came in with blubber, the man did, with a big piece of blubber. He took his box, a big one. Two rocks were at the fire, rocks which were hot all the time. Now he put water in the box and put in a rock with tongs.<sup>13</sup> As the broth pot began bubbling, the blubber was put in. With the big tongs he took out the rock. The other rock was tonged in, and the water began to boil. The broth pot was covered, the blubber inside. He waited until the rock cooled, took it out, took his other rock, put it in with the tongs, and it began boiling again. He had two rocks. He waited a while, and it got cooked.

"You've done well," said the Thunderbird as the man brought the cedarbark and gave it to him.

"I am always in a poor state. My father thinks I'm no good. I want to improve myself and that's why I came to you, O Chief! I am not a Getter of bears," he told the Thunderbird.

The Thunderbird man didn't say anything, didn't speak. He took his blubber, took it out of the pot.<sup>14</sup> His blubber was cooked now.<sup>15</sup> The man received and ate the blubber. The man was not afraid to eat. He ate a big chunk of blubber and finished eating. The Thunderbird man spoke:

"I am going to give you the old<sup>16</sup> Hi'itl'ik."

The man accepted the Hi'itl'ik the Thunderbird gave him. The Thunderbird also stated,

"I am always looking for the remains of cedarbark when people move. All right, you will go home now."

He went out of the house, and there outside was a Humpback whale!

"You will take this with you."

"All right!" said the man.

He took his knife, a black knife which might have been of stone. The man began cutting the Thunderbird's whale. His knife was sharp; he split the whale in two.<sup>17</sup> The Thunderbird cut a hole in it and lifted up a half of the blubber.

"It's light now," said the Thunderbird, taking it up with his little finger.

The man did not speak, afraid that it might be too heavy. Then the Thunderbird cut the piece of blubber in twain and again took

up a part.

"It's light now, see?" he said to the man.

The man still did not take it, saying it was too heavy.

"Your piece might be too small. Very well, I'll take it in my teeth although your piece of blubber might be too small."

The Thunderbird man went into the house. He was gone inside a while getting ready, getting dressed in his flying outfit. He came out of the house as a bird.

"You will be here," the man was told, meaning under the armpit of the Thunderbird. "You keep your eyes closed. Don't open your eyes or we will die."

He took hold of the man and put him under his arm.

"All right! Close your eyes!"

The man closed his eyes. It was as if thunder was sounding from afar, not loud: the man could hardly hear it. It was not doing what the birds do to fly but only making a slight rocking motion through the air, flying seesawing. Now he stayed steady. He came down at Tl'a:s<sub>2</sub>a<sup>2</sup>a:l. The man got on the ground. He was told by the Thunderbird not to open his eyes for a long time.

"I might die," the Thunderbird said before he left to fly home.

It left the blubber at the place called Nanimxsh.<sup>18</sup> The man did not go home to his mother. He stayed in the woods four days. Then he went home at night to his father and started telling him that he had gone to the Thunderbird.

"He has blubber for me on the ground at Nanimxsh."

"We are still eating," said the father. "You have something supernatural."

Early next morning they set out on foot to where the blubber was. The father inspected the blubber: he didn't know what it was, had never seen anything like it before. The father made medicine of it, gathering the baleen and making spirit medicine. Then they went home. He told his wife, but she already knew since she was the one who made her son do that to make a man of him. Then the news went out that the unmanly youth was alive, for they thought he had died after not seeing him for a long time.

Three old persons wanted him to give a feast of bear meat to them.<sup>19</sup> He went bear hunting to a lake.<sup>20</sup> He came in, came home

with two bears in his canoe. They cut up and started cooking the bears. He gave a feast, and the people came as guests, all of them. They started eating the bear meat. They finished eating and went home, the people.

The hair seal hunter began competing with him. He did not go to the feast but went instead down the beach to the saltwater. The man came home with three hair seals. He gave a feast also, and all the people came again as guests. The many people ate the three seals. The whole bunch went home. The one who went to the Thunderbird did not do anything for a long time. Then he went bear hunting and got two bears. He got ten bears in two days, butchered them and dried the ten bearskins. He invited all the men, women and children to a feast. At the time he was inviting<sup>21</sup> the bear hunter went home with two more bears and was cooking them a way over there on the ground outside. The great quantity of cooked bear meat was brought into the house. The guests were served and the many people ate. The father told them that there were ten bears altogether. And then, it is said, he fed his father a lot of bear meat and also much fat, bear fat. He was taking revenge because he was not good to him. The father ate that night.

"You will eat all," said the young man to his father. "I might not get anymore if you do not eat all of it."

He got full just as the dish which had been full got empty.<sup>22</sup> He just fell over and died.<sup>23</sup> It was not known that he had died from overeating. He wrapped up his late father with two bearskins. He buried him at a place below the falls. Then they found out that the father died of the one who went to see the Thunderbird. The one whose father died did not do anything now. But the Ts'o:ma<sub>2</sub>as<sub>2</sub>ath seal hunter went hunting and came in with four seals. He gave a feast of the four seals when he came in.

The one whose father died did not do anything for a long time. Then he went to Nanimxsh where the whale was. He put leaves over it and went home. It was rotten now, having been left there for a long time. It was my late father who knew of those which must have been the vertebrae at Nanimxsh. And then he distributed sixteen bearskins. Inside he had six vertebrae to show the people when he gave out things. He went about the village inviting. He was prepared to do the dance of the Thunderbird which he saw, one year later. Then he distributed his things. All were his guests there at Tl'a:s<sub>2</sub>a<sub>2</sub>:l. He sat there on the rocks at Tl'a:s<sub>2</sub>a<sub>2</sub>:l. He had a likeness of the Thunderbird in cedarbark made into a headmask. He copied the appearance of the head of that which he saw, the Thunderbird. Nobody knew what his "thing" was. He finished, then went inside into the house. He distributed bearskins to the Ts'o:ma<sub>2</sub>as<sub>2</sub>ath and the Ho:pach'as<sub>2</sub>ath. The one who did this was the youth who went to the Thunderbird. His sister received a name, and the name was

To:ti:s?a?ato?ags.<sup>24</sup> There were many names coming out of this affair. The youth's name became Sintsit. The name Wi:wimta?i:k<sup>25</sup> came about, a name he made for himself. He finished again, having distributed more goods. Then the seal hunter came in with ten seals and also gave a feast. He gave a lot of uncooked Cha:ʔo food.<sup>26</sup> At that time when my father used to go, there must have been lots of rubbing leaves. He became a Getter-of-Many from the rubbing leaves from one who went to get the Thunderbird. That's from where I know how to hunt bears without too much effort. It is on account of the four kinds of ritual rubbing leaves which were obtained at the time he went to the Thunderbird.