

## THE WOLF

**Kamlugyides and the Wolf (Nass River)**, explaining the pole of Towq. (Informant, Mary Phelan, of the family of Towq, aged 69. Recorded by William Beynon, 1947.)

Before the family of Towq moved to the upper Nass River, these Wolf people lived at Larhwelgiyæps, on an island in the Metlakatla passage at the sea-coast, in front of the present town of Prince Rupert. Every night the people heard the beating of drums and singing from the point across the channel just opposite. They were frightened, for they did not know the cause of the noise — there was no village there. This continued for so long that curiosity could no longer be restrained. They had wanted to go over at once to see who was holding these *halait* dances on the other side, but the older people had prevailed on them not to do so as it might mean disaster. They suspected that something was wrong. But hearing the drums and the singing was finally too much for the young men. They forgot the warnings of their elders and went over with their young prince Kamlugyides.

When they were across they saw a big village, in the middle of which stood a large house. It was from here that the drum beating and singing was coming. So the young men went to this house and, looking in, they saw a great crowd around the singing platform on which squatted a great number of women. These women all wore bright garments, and the man who was dancing had on a great mask which looked like a huge skull, and a very bright robe. The others all wore death costumes and skull head-dresses. When they danced there was a noise of rattling bones.

The women were very beautiful as well as good singers, so the young men from Larhwelgiyæps decided to approach them. As their attentions did not seem to be resented, the young men became even bolder, and went underneath the singing platform, which was only breast high. When they were under the women of their choice, they shoved their hands under their garments. When all they felt was bones, however, they withdrew their hands and found them nothing but bone too; all the flesh had been taken off. They now knew that these were ghost people, and as it was the practice of the older people to carry urine with them in small containers, they all poured it out and scattered it about, thus defeating the ghost people. Kamlugyides, who was braver than the others, ran to the chief dancer, tore off the large skull mask and the beautiful garment that he wore, and showered him with urine, which at once put him to flight. Now in possession of the ghost mask (*luleq'æmilk*) and the weasel garment (*gusmeksihkk*), Kamlugyides returned with his companions to their village. While in the ghost house they had heard the following names announced: Ghost-walking-towards-the-rear, Hollow-elderberry-bush, Hollow-roots, Moss-in-eyes-on-one-side. These were names of the figures he had seen at the dance. With the mask and head-dress they were assumed as the exclusive property of Kamlugyides.

Now the people were starving. There had been a great famine and they could not find any food. Every day they heard a wolf cry away back of the village. The people were afraid to go and find out why it cried out, so Kamlugyides set off to investigate. When he entered the woods some distance from the village, he came upon a huge wolf pacing to and fro, whining as if it were in agony. As soon as it saw Kamlugyides approaching, it laid back its ears. Kamlugyides spoke, "Come, brother, what has happened to you?"

Don't hurt me, and I may be able to help you." The Wolf came near and Kamlugyides examined its mouth, and behold! A deer bone was stuck in its throat. "Do not be afraid, brother," said Kamlugyides, "I will take the bone from your throat." He opened the Wolf's mouth and reached into the throat to extract the bone. At once the Wolf was relieved, and jumped about licking Kamlugyides' hands and feet. Then, letting a great howl, it disappeared into the forest with the rest of the pack.

A few days after, the people at Larhwelgiyæps heard the call of the Wolf in the woods. It seemed to say, "Kamlugyides, come here!" and kept repeating this call time after time. Finally, Kamlugyides and some of his young companions set off to the woods, and behold! Here was the same Wolf that he had befriended. As soon as it saw Kamlugyides it began to jump around joyfully and led Kamlugyides to a deer carcass. The next day and every day the same thing happened; there was always something, and soon the people of Larhwelgiyæps had plenty of food, though the other villages were starving. Kamlugyides began to give great feasts at which he brought out the head-dress and the robe that he had taken from the ghost people, and also assumed their names.

Now he intended to give a final feast at which he would assume the crest of the Prince of Wolves. He went up into the woods to meet the wolf that he had befriended, and said, "I am going to call together all of the Tsimshyan chiefs and their people. Please help me!" For many days the Wolf and its pack were busy bringing game, as well as mink, marten, and groundhog, which were to be distributed as gifts. When all was ready, Kamlugyides called together all of the chiefs and people of the Tsimshyan, and assumed the crest of the Prince of Wolves.

Some time after, strife broke out within the Wolf clan as to who also had the privilege of using the *lu'lerh* mask that had been taken from the ghost people. So in the end Kamlugyides left the coast group. With his own folk and those of his wife he went to the upper Nass to settle down under the Towq group of the Wolf clan.