

SHARP-NOSE AND SPLIT-PERSON

The Long-Sharp-Nose Monster (Nass) (*dzærohlaw*) at Gitiks, presumably belonging to the Wolf clan of Hhlabeksk, chief of the Gilarhwanks Wolf clan of Angyadæ, and erected by Hladerh, the Wolf chief adopted by Sakau'wan, the head of the Eagles, in the fight for supremacy over Sispagut, of the Gispewudwade. This tall and remarkable pole was put on blocks after it had fallen and someone broke it up into firewood shortly before the author could see it and make a full record of it. W. A. Newcombe, however, took two photographs of it in 1903, which are reproduced here.

Description. At the top stands:

1. A Person with the tall conical hat with cylinders (*lanemræt*), her right hand raised and resting on the rim of the hat; on her stomach is a small human face; at her feet, across the pole, is her child lying down, his feet to one side, head on the other side;
2. An unidentified Person sitting up with hands raised to the chin, with two human faces in the hands;
3. The headdress of Long-Sharp-Nose (*dzærohlaw*), the human face of which (without a body) is surrounded by a number of small faces;
4. Another Person sitting up with hands raised;
5. A second Long-Sharp-Nose (*dzærohlaw*), with smaller human face and nose, here with a body, and two other human faces on each side, formerly with similar long sharp noses;
6. Grizzly-Bear Mother and a cub (their faces only), at the bottom of the pole.

Its meaning and explanation.

I. The Tall Conical Hat is one of the most distinctive crests of the Prairie-Wolf clans. Its origin is traced back, in the family traditions, to the northern Tahltan country of the interior, up Stikine River, as follows:¹

Before Kalowt, in the recent past, had occupied the upper Stikine — or perhaps after — another band of like blood, belonging to the nomadic Tahltans in the interior, drifted down from the north to the same headwaters and also hunted wild game over the grassy plains of the high prairies. Among them a child grew up whose name was Doubtful-Chief (Labaræt-Sem'oiget). His odd trait from childhood was his wearing a conical hat woven out of spruce roots and topped by ten flat disks strung together in a pile, a hat claimed to this day as an exclusive family possession.

Now a family crest, this hat is a reminder of the days long ago when the child, trying to keep up with his elders, would stumble and cut his face on the sharp blades of the tall grasses on the prairie. To protect his head, his mother had fashioned for him a hat with a wide rim all around, shielding his eyes and cheeks. As he grew up she kept weaving larger hats to suit him, until he became known by his headgear, the shape of which went back to an obsolete style. This hat after a time was considered a mark of high rank, and its native name alluded to its large size — so large, indeed, that it was also "He-Walks-Toward-His-Hat," as if he had been smaller than his hat.

After these people had settled and lived for a time at Dehlden on the upper Stikine, Doubtful-Chief quarreled with an elder on the opposite side and, suddenly blinded by anger killed him outright. In the feud that flared up, his tribe, quite outnumbered, had to seek safety in flight and to hasten down the river in six canoes, chanting mournful songs on their way.

¹ Alaska Beckons, *loc. cit.* above, pp. 96-98.

These Wolf fugitives journeyed together downstream until the huge glacier, spanning the river, seemed to block all avenues of escape. Other Tahltan fugitives — the Na'as and the Kalowt factions — at other times were also confronted with the glacier barrier of the lower Stikine.¹ They stepped out of their canoes and stood on the shore, wondering in their distress what to do.

Training their eyes upon the narrows, where the seething waters seemed to dive under the glacier, they saw an arch cut through the ice in the manner of a bridge. To probe their chances of a safe passage under it, they took a small tree with all its branches and dropped it into the swift waters, thinking, "If the tunnel is too narrow or too low, it will break off the branches."

The tree sped down and came out intact, on the far side, with its green boughs swaying in the air. Some fugitives who had crossed the glacier to look for it reported their observation to the others standing on the shore above the ice cave. Doubtful-Chief intoned, in the manner of a dirge: "The ice bridge is safe for us," and led the first boatful past the barrier. The others followed, one at a time, all of them to emerge safely, and soon to reach the salt waters below. Doubtful-Chief's dirge, commemorating the hardships of their flight, is still sung in Tlingit, even among the Tsimsyans, after the death of his leading descendants who remember him as the bold leader who took them through the terrific passage of Stikine Glacier.

They halted at a place in the estuary of the Stikine and, finding it to their liking, they decided to live there. They gave it the name, in the Tlingit language, of Chief's-Hill (Garawns) to honour Doubtful-Chief. And this new name has since become the leading name of the highest Wolf chief, through the following generations, among the Tlingits and the Tsimsyans.

The Tall Conical Hat here, on the Dzærohlaw pole of Gitiks, is a plain allusion to the above ancestral myth of this Wolf clan.

II. The Long-Sharp-Nose (*dzærohlaw*) is explained in an independent myth which originated at the headwaters of Nass and the Skeena Rivers, and is quite familiar among the Wolves of the interior plateau. As recorded in 1916 by William Beynon for the author, from old Frank Bolton (*tralarhæt*), an Eagle of Gitiks, it is, *in extenso*, as follows:

Long ago, the people lived on Skeena River, fished salmon, and gathered berries. Every spring they migrated to the mouth of Nass River, for the *oolaken* (candlefish) season. After harvest time, that is after they had gathered the candlefish grease, the salmon, and the berries, they would give huge feasts, then proceed to their winter quarters.

The children were not allowed to attend the celebrations in the large communal houses, but stayed at home with the old people. To while away the time, they one day began to play at camping-out. They went off a little way and built a hut with branches. In the hut, pretending to give a feast, they sang and danced, as did their elders elsewhere. In their mock celebrations, they made much noise. And this fun went on from day to day, during the autumn and winter seasons.

The Chief of the Sky (*Sem'oigidemlarhæ*) could not sleep, or was awakened, because his dwelling above stood close to the children's hut. In those days, the sky was much closer to the earth than it is now. The folk were, for this reason, far more careful in their behaviour for fear of offending the Chief. Annoyed at the children for their disregard, he sent down a slave, saying, "Go and see why it is that the people never stop their disturbance". The slave did as he was bid, and after he had seen the children in their games, he went back to the sky and reported, "The children are playing

¹ See Franz Boas, "Tsimshian Mythology," 31st Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology, p. 354.

among themselves. They are giving a feast." Angry, the Chief ordered, "The next time their noise reaches up here, you go down again and bring them all up."

He went to sleep. But very soon he was once more awakened. Even after dark, the young folk in the hut continued their sport until they were so tired that night that they stayed there to sleep. The slave came down and, without awakening them, lifted their lodge with trees and all in its neighbourhood, into the sky. In the morning, they woke up, and again thought of nothing but their favourite pastime, shouting and clamouring. The Chief of the Sky awakened and, angry, told the slave to bring one of the revellers to him. As soon as the slave walked into the hut, the children looked at him. Frightened, they ran away and tried to hide, but the slave — a monster — caught one of them, a boy, and took him out. Standing in the doorway, he turned back and said: "The noise you make is deafening. It keeps the master from sleeping". The children then grew aware that they now were in a strange country, away from their home. All of them, excepting one girl, broke into cries and tears.

The slave, leading the boy away, came to the Chief's back door. He walked in, leaving the child outside. To his master in the house he said, "Outside now stands one of the young noise-makers in the hut". "Take him to the front of the lodge." So the boy was brought there, in front of a huge totem pole. This pole was very bright and had a long shining nose, like a very sharp knife. The glossy nose moved up and down, splitting the body of the boy open. Women walked out of the house, took the body, and spreading it open as they do with a salmon, cleaned it and hung it up to dry in the air.

This was a means of frightening the other young rioters into silence and tractability, so that the Chief of the Sky could sleep. While he slept, the other children broke into cries of terror. Their clamour was so great that the old man woke up once more, and said to the slave, "Go out and bring another to me. Tell them that soon will be their turn, one by one." So did the slave take one more of them to the front of the house, and said, "The Chief has invited you." He went in first and said, "Master, another one is waiting outside." "Take him to the front." The slave led the boy to the totem pole. The sharp nose again slit the body into halves; the women appeared, took the split body, and hung it to dry, like the first.

The Chief went to sleep. When he woke, he spoke to his slave, saying, "Go and tell another that I invite him." When the slave found all the other boys crying and shedding tears, he said, "The Chief invites one more". Now it was a little girl that followed him to the lodge. She was left outside while he walked in: "One of them I have brought." The Chief answered, "Take her to the front." The long nose of the totem cut her body open, and the women stretched it and hung it to dry. So it went on, with more children being invited to the totem pole, to be treated like salmon after they are fished out of a river. Only one girl was now left. Before she was escorted to the totem, in the morning, the little Mouse Woman trotted up to her and said, "The monster totem pole has killed your people with his sharp nose. And now it is your turn." She was frightened, and did not know how to escape. The Mouse Women came closer and said, "Be indisposed, and the monster will not be able to cut you open, for he cannot smell blood."

The slave stepped out of the lodge and said to the child, "The Chief has invited you," leading her to the totem. No longer frightened, she did not try to run away as the others had done, but said, "Yes, I am going." She followed the slave to the Chief's house. When left outside the door, she heard the slave inside say to his master, "Here is the last of the children. She stands outside." The Chief replied, "I never heard her cry." The slave replied, "No, she is brave." The Chief said, "Take her like the others to the totem pole." The girl stood close to the sharp blade, which began to move up and down. As it grazed her body, a drop of blood fell upon the grassy surface. The nose broke to pieces without hurting the girl, and fell down with a rattling noise. The Chief of the Sky now came out in person, and said, "Bring my daughter in here!" The slave led her inside, and the Chief said, "My child, you are very brave. That is why you will marry my son. Nothing can frighten you." Reassured, she knew that she would survive the ordeal. Then the Chief called his son, saying, "Son, sit down alongside your wife!"

The son sat beside the brave young woman. The Chief bade the slave, "Take the best salmon out of the box! My daughter is hungry." The slaves — for there were now several — brought down the dried and smoked salmon. When the meal was ready, the Chief said, "Fetch the berries!" The gay couple feasted on salmon and berries. They were truly married.

After a long time, a male child was born to them, and the Chief of the Sky was happy. He took the boy in his hands, and stretched his limbs. This happened every day, so that ere long the boy had grown quite big. The time had come to learn from his grandfather how to shoot and how to hunt. This child was very smart. Satisfied, the Chief said to the mother, "Soon you may go back with your child to your people on earth." Meanwhile he went on giving the boy advice, and showing him how to do useful things — build a canoe, how to kill the wild animals in the hunt.

One day he said to his son, "Take your wife and child back to where her people live on earth. The young woman, your wife, longs to go back to her uncle. Follow her and stay by her. But never let the boy eat seal meat (*erle*)." As soon as the Chief's son had made ready for the voyage, he took his wife in one hand and his son in the other, and said, "Hide your head. You must not look out." When all was ready, they sank down to the earth. The place where they landed was Metlakatla, in the midst of the people's village. When the young woman recognized the house of her uncle, she sang the family dirge (which is still remembered), and her uncle came out and took his niece and her family within. The feast he gave was the greatest he could afford. While lavishing gifts upon the guests, he said solemnly, "My nephew is being raised into my place, and Dzærohlaw, the monster totem pole with long sharp nose, shall be his crest."

This nephew's name from that moment was Hlæbeksk, his uncle's ancient name. And the emblem of the Long-Cutting-Nose has remained the possession of Hlæbeksk's family to this day.¹

The Pole of Hanging-Across (Nass) (*tsirh-yarhyak*) at Angyade, the property of a Wolf clan whose identity remains in doubt — Kindsaderh or Hlkuwasan. It disappeared before it could be studied, but it appears in two photographs taken by W. A. Newcombe, about 1903.

¹ Andrew Jackson, a Tsimshyan present at the time when this tradition was dictated, remarked: "This *adaorh* is the origin of the Wolf (Larhkibu) people — of all those people."

Description. 1. The figure with a long bill is Person-with-a-large-nose (*git'weedzarat*) or Split-Person (*kaodih-gyet*), both being characteristic crests of a Wolf clan tracing back its origin to upper Skeena River and the headwaters of the Skeena. It was also used by other chiefs of more than one Wolf clan at Angyadæ and Gitiks on Nass River.

2. Hanging-Across or Half-Man (*tsirhs-yarhyak* or *rapagyet*), placed head down here, and elsewhere shown with his body cut in two, the lower part placed under his inverted head.¹

3. The Grizzly-Bear crest.

4, 5. Two figures in similar position, the upper one human-like, the lower one showing fangs like a bear. These are presumably the Bear Cubs.

The Hanging-Across emblem, with head down, is found in two forms: one of them a Person (*git'weedzarat*) holding a child or human being in his hands or his arms; the other Half-a-Man, whose body is cut in two, the lower part being placed under his inverted head. Double-headed or Split-Person is at times shown (on the upper Skeena) with two complete beings on his head, or on both sides of a head-dress or mask; the human figures on the head of Split-Person are large in size, and each holds a child in its arms (Cf. Poles of Weerhæ, Gitwinkul, in *Totem Poles of the Gitksan*, page 116). Hanging-Across (*loc. cit.* pp. 82, 83) was the crest of Weemenawzek on upper Skeena River. It was said to have been painted on his house front and boxes, and carved on a totem pole. It consisted of a man whose body was cut in two parts, with feet upwards and head turned upside down next to his feet. Some informants believed that it illustrated the adventures of Næqt, a famous warrior who established a fortress behind Kitwanga village, and a native of the Nass (*loc. cit.* The Poles of Hlengwah). A human head with protruding tongue was intended to represent that of the Haida father beheaded by his Nass wife, the mother of Næqt, who had taken to flight in a dugout, and travelled from the islands to the mainland.

Function. That the very tall poles, in the old days, were the privilege of the Wolf clans on the Nass River, was the opinion of informant Charles Elliott (a Wolf of Gitrhadeen). About another pole of a Wolf clan of Angyadæ, informant Charles Barton (1927) stated: Kinsaderh put up an extensively-carved pole which is still standing at the upper part of Angyadæ — the pole of Kinsaderh (presumably the Crane pole), explained elsewhere. Another family of Wolves, that of Hladerh, objected to Kinsaderh having such a long pole. But the other Wolf families would not tolerate Hladerh's interference, although he belonged to the same Wolf phratry as themselves; they encouraged and helped him. Nawradzæi, who was Hladerh's own nephew, went into partnership with Kinsaderh, and lived in his house until the pole was up. At the time when the Gitrhadeen and the Gitanwilk tribes were raising it, Kinsaderh and his men walked around day and night to keep Hladerh from causing damage. The trouble over Sispegut's pole, some time before, served as a warning. Hladerh later was succeeded as chief of his own household and clan by Nawradzæi, who did not follow in the tracks of his ambitious and troublesome uncle. The uncle would have prevented not only the Killer-Whales from putting up tall totem poles, but also the other chiefs of his own Wolf phratry.

¹ Cf. *Totem poles of the Gitksan*. Bulletin 61, National Museum of Canada, pp. 82-3, 117.

The Pole of Long-Arms (Nass), chief of a Wolf group at Gitlarh'aus, Nass River. It bore the name of Where-the-Bear-plays (*'an'mæsemrh*). This tall pole, in 1927, stood by itself in a cottonwood grove near the river, a very short distance above Angyadæ on the same side. The author purchased it for the Canadian National Railways, and had it removed to Prince Rupert, where it was kept in a railway shed for some years. During the war it was lost sight of, but may still be in Prince Rupert.

Description. The figures on the pole (photographed before its removal) could not be precisely identified, but most of them are recognizable.

1. At the top, a human figure with tall headgear.
2. Under a long uncarved section of the pole, a bird with very long bill, straight, and turned downwards, presumably Cutting-Nose (*dzaraohlaw*), a familiar crest of this clan.
3. A human being with a crown of grizzly-bear claws and a long cutting nose like a bill (fallen off), holding a child in his or her arms (the smaller figure, except the legs, was decayed), presumably Person-with-long-nose (*git'weedzarat*), also a typical crest of this clan, on the upper Skeena and the Nass.
4. Bear Mother, here represented as a human being, with one cub on her body, erect between her arms. This crest was foremost, and the most frequently used by this inland group.

Origins and connections. The remotest remembered ancestor of this clan belonged to the Tahltan nation, at the headwaters of Stikine River to the north, and was born on the Larhwiyp (Prairie) plateau, still occupied by the Tahltan.

After a war between the Wolf and the Raven phratries, at a place named Dehldaan, he took to flight down the Stikine with his relatives, embarked in six canoes. These fugitives spent a winter at a place named Hlaranus, a Tlingit term, and then proceeded to Stikine, a point where one of their members settled with his family. The others joined another party of fugitives at Na'a (near the present Port Chester), and travelled southwards until they reached a stronghold of the Wolf people at Tongas, among the west coast Tlingits. Some of their members decided to join the Tongas tribe in permanence; others, in four canoes, continued on their migration southwards. Two canoe loads proceeded up Nass River, and the last two journeyed down to the coast Tsimshyan country, where they became members of the Gitlæn tribe.¹

The two households which the Nass River branch of this clan established on the upper Skeena soon encountered adversity through a feud between Ka-ugwaits and Keeshæ, their leaders. Ka-ugwaits, after his house was destroyed, took to flight and ascended Kispayaks (Kispiox) River² to its head. Thence, he went beyond and founded a new home at the-Dry-prairie (*gitangwalk*). One of his successors at a later date joined the tribe of the People-of-the-foothill-trail (*kaksparh-skeet*), now the Gitwinkul, then living much farther north on the Grease Trail than at the present time. His direct heirs now are Malee of Gitwinkul, and Kleem-larhæ, and the subsidiary houses of Kispayaks.

¹ The traditional account of these migrations was recorded among the coast Tsimshyans. The following, which concerns the Gitksan and Niskæ branches of this clan, was obtained among the Gitksan.

² A tributary of the upper Skeena.

Keeshæ, the head of the opposite household, meanwhile sojourned at Place-of-Snat,¹ (a small shrub), on the Kispayaks River. One of his nephews, Mukweluks, after a time migrated to the Nass and settled at Gitlarhdamsk. Skateen, the present head-chief of this tribe, is his foremost descendant. He himself moved down the river to Temlaham; and his heirs now live at Gitenmaks (now Hazelton). Thus we have, roughly, the course of events which, according to tradition, have led to the present diffusion of the clan. Some of the families within the clan became further split up in modern times and spread to other tribes.

The Negwa'awn group of Gitrhadeen consisted of twin elements, both of the same clan. The first came from the upper Skeena, and was closely related to Neesmotk of Gitenmaks (now Hazelton). The second, headed by Kla'u and Pedæhl, was a branch of a salt-water clan (Gitsees, of the Asaralyæn group) among the Tsimsyans at Metlakatla. These Wolf people, quite numerous then, travelled up the Nass to Antegwalæ and settled there. After a while discord broke out among them, and they moved down to Larh'enhlaw and to Gitlarh'aus, when the largest tribe inhabited Angyadæ. To show their independence and pride, these newcomers stayed somewhat apart from the others. It was at that time that the up-river section, under the leadership of Neesmotk, arrived from Gitenmaks on the upper Skeena.

Carver, age. This pole was carved by Oyai, of the canyon of the Nass, a little before informant Lazarus Moody (of Gitrhadeen, 70 years old in 1927) was born. It bore the same name as another Negwa'awn pole, very old, which had fallen and disappeared. The carver Oyai, the most noted of all on the Nass, was described by Moody as "a big man, heavily built and strong." His hand measured the double of his (the informant's, when young). This carver died when the informant was ten years old, that is, about 1867.

The Glass-Nose of Tiyawlek (Wolf Phratry), Tsimsyans. Informant, Herbert Wallace; interpreter, William Beynon, 1915.

(Extracts from a long text:)

"... There is something wrong here. We have been moved to another country. Everything is new and strange to us." Then the Prince and his party cried and were afraid. When they had finished crying, a large man entered (he was the slave of the Big Chief), and said, "I ask of you." After he said this he went up to one of the young Princess' companions and picked out a girl and took her away with him. Now in front of the house of this "Big Chief" was a large totem pole through which a passage was cut, and right above it extended a long nose made of glass. Engraved on this pole were figures of human beings. The slave took the young woman up to the pole and the long nose reached down and split her in half. Then the slave returned to the Princess' party and spoke the same words again. Another girl of the party was led up to this totem pole, and she too was cut in half. This was kept up until all of the young Princess' party were killed. Only the Princess was left. She was left alone for a period. Finally the slave came to us and said, "I want you to come with me." The young Princess replied, "Agreed! Come in and sit down. I will get ready." She then took some water in a little box and washed and painted her face and put on her mink robes.

² Sransnat.

Then she was led by him up to this totem. They took off her robes, and when the glass nose touched her body it broke into pieces.

That is why the Wolf people use a similar pole, which they call Glass-Nose (*dzarorhhlaw*).

The Split-Person Pole (Gitrahla) (*tsekaogem-gyet*) of Mawdzem-larhtæo, a Wolf chief of the Gitrahla tribe of the coast Tsimshyan. This pole fell many years ago. A section, about 12 feet long, was cut off, and taken inside the house. It is said to have been purchased later by a white man.

Description. It was a tall pole, reputed as the best at Gitrahla; the informant saw it complete as it stood. The figures on it were:

1. The Crane (*qasqaws*) (here with a straight neck);
2. The Prince-of-Wolves (*hkuwælksem-gyibæo*), with abalone-pearl insets at the ears, nose, eyes; the Wolf was shown growling;
3. The Split-Person crest (*tsekaogem-gyet*).

Carver, age. It was carved by Qurhsqus, a Wudstæ (northern Kwakiutl) craftsman, chiefly a canoe-maker, about 1870, at the time when the informant, still young, was present. This carver was not selected for the work just because he belonged to the father's side of the family, but because of his ability.

The close relatives of this Wolf household and chief are: 'Arhsedan of Gitlarhdams on the upper Nass, who belongs to the Gitkansnæt group; and Neeslaranows, Wolf head-chief of the Gitlæn tribe. Their origin was from Nass River to Gitrahla.

(Informant Oswald Tolmie, an old chief of the Gitrahla; interpreter, William Beynon, 1939.)