

THE RAVEN MYTHOLOGY

The difference between a story of *adaorh* (in Tsimshyan) and a tale was never a matter of doubt among the tribes of the north Pacific Coast. For example, the veracity of an *adaorh* in the Salmon-Eater tradition stands unquestioned. Such narratives really hold more than a grain of truth and reflect tribal recollections like the passage of Wolf clan ancestors under the receding Stikine Glacier. But the fictitious character of tales like those of the Raven, the Thunderbird, the Whale and the Dragon with Two Heads is obvious to most listeners. These belong to the realm of pure mythology.

How the Raven Stole the Sun, an ætiological myth of the Tlingits and the Haidas.

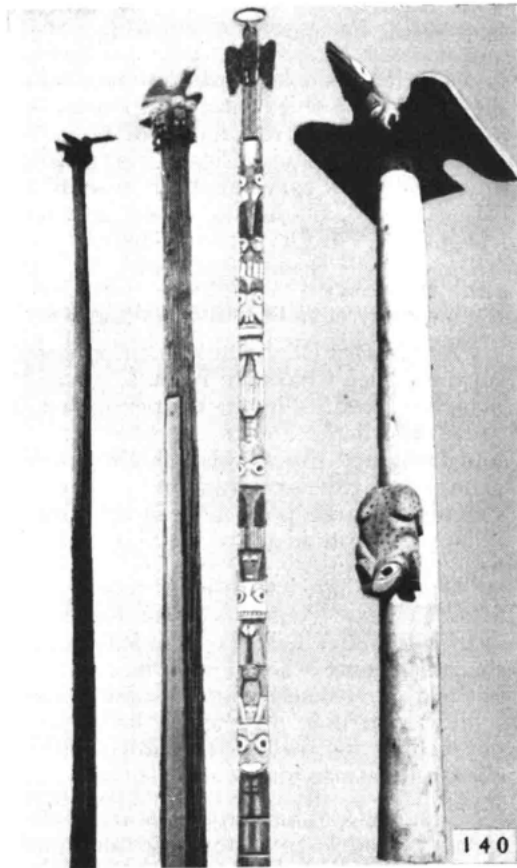
How the world was created by the supernatural Raven has been told for ages by the native tribes of Siberia and northwestern America. But the Raven, in this northern Genesis, did not draw nature wholly out of chaos; he was a transformer rather than a creator. In his primeval wanderings through chaos and darkness, he chanced upon pre-existing things — animals and a few people — and changed or multiplied them into their present state. His powers were not coupled with wisdom and integrity, for he often lapsed into the role of a jester or a cheat, covering himself with shame and ridicule.

His mythical adventures have always proved an incentive to native fantasy and story-telling. In the 1870's, Albert Edward Edensaw, for instance, was known to have made them his own to relate among the northern Haidas of the Queen Charlotte Islands, close to the frontiers of Alaska. And his "famous story" required "two or three days to tell in full, in his big totem-pole house." Who knows but he might not himself have contributed something to its contents and quality. For this kind of lore is ever in formation and quite alive. Charles Edensaw, his nephew and successor (1860-1924?), knew this story from earliest childhood; to him it had become a family heritage. Early in life he must have begun to illustrate its episodes by means of argillite (black slate) carvings, for, in his repertory, it is better represented than any other theme.

Among the episodes of the Raven myth illustrated in argillite by Charles Edensaw are: the Raven born in the form of a child to the Fisherman's daughter and playing with the ball of light — the Sun — in the lodge; the Raven, once more in his own feathers, stealing the ball of light and throwing it into the sky; the Raven, bent upon playing a trick, diving to the bottom of the bay and taking a halibut from the Fisherman's hook, or simply pulling at the hook, there to lose his beak and be shamed, because of the Fisherman's giving a quick jerk; the Raven stealing fresh water in a bucket from the

hidden spring of the old chief Kannuc; the Raven drawing mankind out of a clamshell; the Raven taking the Salmon away from Tsing, the Beaver, its owner, and carrying away with him the whole Beaver house; and the Raven locked in struggle on a sandy beach with the Crab.

That the elder of the Edensaw craftsmen, Albert Edward, had made this ancient tale popular among his people, and that his nephew Charles was the first to express it in sculpture, is remembered by the present-day elders in their tribe — among them Alfred Adams, of Massett — who often witnessed the storytelling and the carving. Even without this information we could not fail to notice the lack of illustrations of the Raven myth previous to 1875 or 1880, that is, before Charles Edensaw's time. But once initiated, the theme became so popular that it was also taken up by his imitators, particularly the totem-pole carvers of the Kaiganis and northern Haidas, and the Fort Rupert Kwakiutls.



Raven, at the top of totem poles

An episode in the creation story was of the theft of the Sun (as related to me, in 1939, by old "Captain" Andrew Brown). In the utter darkness at the beginning, the old Fisherman, sitting in a dug-out canoe, spent his time fishing, while his only daughter stayed in the lodge, smoking fish, or gathered salal berries in the wild fruit patches. One day, as she was picking berries, she swallowed, with the fruit, a salal leaf. And this made her pregnant; soon she realized that she was with child. The supernatural Raven had noticed her, in his wanderings, and had changed himself into a salal leaf in her path; he wanted to be born to her, for her old father secreted in his lodge the ball of fire which he had long coveted.

After the Raven was born to the Fisherman's daughter, he began to whine for something in the wooden box hidden in a corner of the lodge. Weary of the whining of the child, the old man bade his daughter bring forth the box and open it for his grandson. Within the box was another box wrapped up in a spider web; in this box, another; in the inner box, a smaller

one. Eight boxes she opened in turn, throwing the lids off, while her little son beside her gazed on, awaiting.

The lid of the last box no sooner came off than the lodge was flooded with light, and the child jumped upon the ball of fire in the open box. Holding it in his hands, he ran about the house and, entranced, began to play with it, tossing it from side to side. This episode is represented in at least two of the finest Edensaw carvings, both in small totem-pole form; one at the National Museum of Canada; the other, in a somewhat smaller pole, of the Lipsett collection — in Dr. Ryan's part of it — at Vancouver.

Other episodes in the Raven myth are illustrated in a number of argillite carvings, but not in large totem poles.

As Charles Edensaw was an outstanding personality among the Haidas on the Queen Charlotte Islands, it was his duty to help in preserving tribal arts and lore. So, in the course of two or three evenings, he used to tell at great length the ancient myth of how, in the beginning, the great Raven had fashioned the world. A highly talented carver, perhaps the best in his generation, Edensaw was fond of illustrating the deeds of the Raven in the carving of large poles and in argillite — a soft black slate which can be secured in a single quarry at Slate Chuck Creek near Skidegate.

Well equipped with steel tools he had wrought from the white man's files, Edensaw would carve the Raven stealing the Sun from the box in the old Fisherman's lodge; or the Raven after he had lost his beak, to his own shame; or some other part of the creation myth. After having told an episode in the cycle, Edensaw would show to his listeners the piece of argillite or the small totem pole into which he carved the Raven, and he seemed quite satisfied at his own performance both as an entertainer and as a carver able to illustrate his own tales.

Edensaw and his contemporaries from 1900 to the present, dropped most of early models to concentrate on small totem poles for the curio trade. Like their elders they sailed away from home in the summer, with their stock of carvings which they renewed every year, at first to such places as Seattle, Victoria, Vancouver, Wrangell, Juneau, and Sitka, and later, to Prince Rupert and Ketchikan, where they found their customers.

Although the significance of small totem poles is readily taken as totemic, actually it is not; this in spite of their resemblance to authentic totem poles of large size. The figures cut into their shaft — bear, eagle, raven, thunder-bird, black-fish, shark, etc. — are not meant for the totems or emblems of whoever carved them or of their relatives. They are used at random, without significance, unless they happen to illustrate well-known folk tales, like that of the Raven stealing the sun or of the Skidegate family that once made the Thunder its own possession.

The best-informed Haidas of the present day confirm this opinion as to the trends of the art as represented in our museums. Alfred Adams, an elderly native with much experience, recently said, "This work of argillite carving never was of any use to the people themselves; it was made for outsiders; it was merely commercial. Yet, in spite of that, Edensaw did not believe in modernizing his style; he followed the old fashion".

The purely commercial nature of this remarkable art was evident to both J. G. Swan and Dr. G. M. Dawson, who visited the Haida country in the early 1880's. Swan, in the *Smithsonian Contributions of Knowledge*, expressed his view that "these Indians so far have disposed of all their curiosities and other products in Victoria before coming to the American side . . . Hereafter they will bring their wares to Port Townsend, having found by experience of the past summer that they can dispose of all their manufactures there".

The best of them — Skaoskeay and Gonkwat Tsinge, in the 1870's and 1880's — were the contemporaries of the Impressionists in France. Their successors, Edensaw, Tom Price, and others, could have exhibited their work at the Paris Salon which, at that time, was loath to hang the canvases of Van Gogh, Gauguin, and Cézanne. If these painters can still be counted among our moderns, why not the carvers of Bear Mother and of the Raven stealing the Sun? In a proper perspective, the first might be considered European "moderns," and the others, American "moderns," belonging to our continent, in our own time.

How the Raven Obtained the Sun, according to a tradition recorded among the Haidas by James Deans (36:26, 27).

The tribes on the rivers Nass and Skeena . . . say that long ago, an old chief lived, with his only daughter, where the Nass now flows, who had all the light in three boxes. These Cauch [qaq] the raven god wanted to have in the worst way, and for a time tried to get hold of them without success. At length he hit on a plan. He noticed that the daughter went to the well every day for a supply of water. While there she often had a drink. So he turned himself into the needle-like leaf of the spruce tree and floated on her drinking water and was swallowed by her. In due season she gave birth to a son who was none other than Ne-kilst-lass or Cauch, who by this means was born into the family. He quickly grew up to be a big boy and became a great favorite with his grandfather, who spoiled him by letting him have all he asked for. One day he asked the old man for one of the boxes, in order, he said, to play with it. This the old man sturdily refused to grant. Being determined to have all of them, sooner or later, the raven raised such a row in the family as only a spoiled youngster could, that the old man had no peace, till at length he got angry and pointing to a box he said, "Here, take that one and play with it until you get tired." So the raven quickly took the box and rolled it about until he had it outside, when he took it up and dashed it to pieces, letting out a flood of light, because it was the sun box he had obtained. So he took the sun and placed it on high, where it has been giving light to the world ever since.

Having got the sun box his next step was to secure the other two. Knowing well he could not play the old game, he thought of another. He had heard that the old chief had gone up the river fishing for oolakens; so he made for himself a false moon, and took a canoe, and went up the river to meet Settin-ki-jess, the old chief's name. While the chief was fishing he usually took the moon out of its box in order to give him light, because he always fished after dark. Before getting near to the chief's house the raven god hid the false moon under his coat of feathers. When he reached the place where the chief dwelt it was quite dark. The chief said to the raven, "How do you see to get about in the dark when you have no moon?" "Oh, well enough," replied the raven, "I have a moon of my own," at the same time raising up his feathers and letting out a little light. When Settin-ki-jess saw that his moon was not as he believed it to be, the only one in the world, he lost all conceit of it and the stars, and left the two boxes lying about. His neglect was the raven's opportunity who opened the two boxes and let out their contents, which were placed in the heavens, where they have been ever since and will be to the end.

Engraven on one or two of the totem poles attached to the little houses in the miniature village I sent to the Chicago World's Fair, was a raven shown in the act of flying up with something in his beak, painted blue and as big as a dollar. This represents a version of the Hidery story of how Choo-e-ah, the raven god, got the sun. According to the story, he heard that a great chief living in a distant part of the country had the sun in a box, so in order to get it he went to the chief's house, and after a while found where the precious sun was kept.



Raven-Sleeps-on of Qawm

He said nothing to any one about his plans, so when all were asleep he opened the box and taking the sun in his beak was about to fly out of the smoke-hole in the roof (the name, in Hidery parlance, is *kinet*), when he noticed it was closed. So he called to some one on the roof, "Ah, kinet; ah, kinet; open kinet, open kinet." So they opened the smoke-hole, and he flew away with the sun and placed it on high.

How the Raven Brought Light into the World, Tlingit myth recorded by J. R. Swanton (119a: 3, 4.)

There was no light in this world, but the Raven was told that far up the Nass was a large house in which some one kept light just for himself.

Raven thought over all kinds of plans for getting this light into the world, and finally he hit on a good one. The rich man living there had a daughter, and he thought, "I will make myself very small and drop into the water in the form of a small piece of dirt." The girl swallowed this dirt and became pregnant. When her time was completed, they made a hole as was customary, in which she was to bring forth, and lined it with rich furs of all sorts. But the child did not wish to be born on those fine things. Then its grandfather felt sad and said, "What do you think it would be best to put into that hole? Shall we put in moss?"

So they put moss inside, and the baby was born on it. Its eyes were very bright, and moved around rapidly.

Round bundles of varying shapes and sizes hung about on the walls of the house. When the child became a little larger it crawled around weeping continually, and as it cried it pointed to the bundles. This lasted many days. Then its grandfather said, "Give my grandchild what he is crying for. Give him that one hanging on the end. That is the bag of stars." So the child played with this, rolling it about on the floor back of the people, until suddenly he let it go up through the smoke hole. It went straight up into the sky and the stars scattered out of it, arranging themselves as you now see them. That was what he went there for.

Some time after this he began crying again, and he cried so much that it was thought he would die. Then his grandfather said, "Untie the next one, and give it to him." He played and played with it around behind his mother. After a while he let that go up through the smoke hole also, and there was the big moon.

Now just one thing more remained, the box that held the daylight, and he cried for that. His eyes turned around and showed different colors, and the people began thinking that he must be something other than an ordinary baby. But it always happens that a grandfather loves his grandchild just as he does his own daughter, so the grandfather said, "Untie the last thing, and give it to him." His grandfather felt very sad when he gave this to him. When the child had this in his hands, he uttered the raven cry, "Ga!" and flew out with it through the Smoke-Hole. Then the person from whom he had stolen it said, "That old manuring Raven has taken all my things."

Another version of the same myth recorded in English at Wrangell, Alaska:

All of the beings Nascakiyaihl had created, however, existed in darkness, and this existence lasted for a long time, how long is unknown. But Raven felt very sorry for the few people in darkness and, at last he said to himself, "If I were only the son of Nascakiyaihl, I could do almost anything." So he studied what he should do and decided upon a plan. He made himself very small, turned himself into a hemlock needle, and floated upon the water Nascakiyaihl's daughter was about to drink. Then she swallowed it and soon after became pregnant.

Although all this was by the will of Nascakiyaihl and although he knew what was the matter with his daughter, yet he asked her how she had come into that condition. She said, "I drank water, and I felt that I had swallowed something in it." Then Nascakiyaihl instructed them to get moss for his daughter to lie upon, and on that the child was born. They named him Nascakiyaihl also. Then Nascakiyaihl cut a basket in two and used half of it for a cradle, and he said that people would do the same thing in future times. So they have since referred its use to him . . .



Raven and his Son, at Saxman

After a while the baby began to crawl about. His grandfather thought a great deal of him, and let him play with everything in the house. Everything in the house was his. The Raven began crying for the moon, until finally they handed it to him and quick as a wink, he let it go up into the sky. After he had obtained everything else, he began to cry for the box in which daylight was stored. He cried, cried, for a very long time, until he looked as though he were getting very sick. Finally his grandfather said, "Bring my child here!" So they handed Raven to his grandfather. Then his grandfather said to him, "My grandchild, I am giving you the last thing I have in the world." So he gave it to him.

Then Raven, who was already quite large, walked down along the bank of Nass river until he heard the noise people were making as they fished along the shore for eulachon in the darkness. All the people in the world then lived at one place at the mouth of the Nass. They had already heard that Nascakiyaihl had something called "daylight," which would some day come into the world, and they used to talk about it a great deal. They were afraid of it.

Then Raven shouted to the fishermen, "Why do you make so much noise?" If you make so much noise, I will break daylight on you." Eight canoe loads of people were fishing there. But they answered, "You are not Nascakiyaihl. How can you have the daylight?" and the noise continued. Then Raven opened the box a little and light shot over the world like lightning. At that they made still more noise. So he opened the box completely, and there was daylight everywhere.

How the Raven gave the World the Stars, the Moon, the Sun, according to the Tlingit traditions recorded by Edward L. Keithahn (62: 89, 90).

Yethl's effort to get light for the earth was the adventure that provided material for several famous totem poles. According to one of several versions, Yethl's world was one of the darkness, for another magician known as Raven-at-the-head-of-the-Nass had the sun, moon and stars boxed up in his house. Yethl intended to steal the sun, but the problem was how to get into the closely-guarded house.

From "Frog," Yethl learned that the magician had a daughter. "Mink," the girl's personal servant, told him of a spring where the maiden went daily for a drink of water. By transforming himself into a hemlock needle and dropping into her drinking water, Yethl was swallowed and in due time was reborn as the magician's grandson. Thus he gained access to the house.

"Young Raven," as Yethl is known in this stage of his adventures, was reborn in human form, but his Raven ancestry was revealed in his sharp, blinking eyes. He succeeded in endearing himself to his unsuspecting grandfather, who gratified his every whim. When he cried for one of the boxes hanging from the ceiling, he got it, and when left alone for a moment, removed the ropes that bound it and took off the cover. There were the stars. Yethl rolled them about like marbles and then playfully tossed them out through the Smoke-Hole where they took their places in the sky.

But the stars were not bright enough to light the night, so Yethl cried again and again for another box. At length his grandfather gave in and took down the box containing the moon. As before, Yethl watched his chance, and when alone, removed the moon and tossed it out through the Smoke-Hole. It soared up into the heavens, and took its place among the stars.

Yethl now knew that the remaining box contained the sun, so again he wailed until the grandfather, fearful that the child would die, took down his proudest possession, and gave it to the infant.

This time, as soon as he was alone, Yethl changed himself back into a Raven and, taking the box, flew out through the Smoke-Hole. He apparently resumed human form as soon as he was safe from pursuit and walked northward looking for people. He found men at length on the far side of a river and asked them to take him across, telling them that he had daylight. But they would not believe him, nor would they help him across. At last, out of patience, Yethl opened the box, and blinding light sprang forth. The people were terrified. Those wearing the skins of animals rushed into the woods and became "Forest People." Those having garments made of sea animal hides plunged into the water and became "Sea People." Those wearing bird skin clothing flew into the air and became "People of the Sky." That is why Indians still regard all of these beings as humans in disguise, but who, on occasion, may resume human form.

How the Raven brought Light into the World, according to informant J. Bradley, of Port Simpson. William Beynon recorded this myth in 1922.

After the flood, the Raven started to travel round the world to see how many people were saved.

At that time the world was in darkness, and the Raven was looking for the chief's house in which the light was kept. He came to the house of the chief who was supposed to have the moon in his possession.

The moon was kept in a large box containing ten smaller boxes, and in the innermost box was found the moon sewn up in a bag made of hide.

This chief had a daughter who was secluded in a compartment. No one could see her. The Raven flew around the girl's compartment but did not see her. He stood outside and waited. Soon he saw her coming out of the house. He turned himself into a pine-needle, fell into the water she was drinking, and was swallowed. The young woman became pregnant, and gave birth to a boy. He grew very rapidly, and every day the grandfather took the boy and stretched him until he was nearly full-grown. The child would cry, pointing to the boxes in which the moon was kept. After he had cried a great deal the chief took the boxes and untied them. He gave the boy the moon ball to play with. Every day the child would go under the Smoke-Hole of the house, but this was always closed when he went playing with the moon ball.

One day he was playing with the ball under the Smoke-Hole. No one was in the house, and the hole was open. He turned himself back to the Raven, and, taking the moon ball, he went through the Smoke-Hole and flew away. He travelled for a long time until he came to a place where he heard the people who were fishing oolakens.

He called out, "Give me some oolakens, and I will let you have the light." The people who were fishing in the dark called out, "You are fooling us. You cannot give us the light. Who does not know you!" This angered the Raven, who now had turned himself into a human being. He took the moon ball and opened it a little. Then the people fishing saw for themselves, and they gave the man many oolakens. When they had done this the man opened the moon ball and gave them daylight. He broke off a piece of the moon and smashed it into smaller pieces, saying, "These will be stars," and threw them into the sky.

After this the man changed himself into a crow, and wanted to travel. So he became an old woman. On seeing a reflection of himself as an old woman, he became ashamed, because of his long nose. He cut off a portion of it, and used it as a labret. This was how the labret originated.

How the Raven obtained the Sun, the Moon, and the Stars, as recorded in 1947 by Mrs. Jean Ness Findlay from "Captain" Andrew Brown, of Massett, Queen Charlotte Islands.

First Version:

The world was dark and the moon hidden, and the people could not see, for they had no light. So to get the moon for the world the Raven changed into a baby through his mother drinking water with spruce needles in it. His mother went to the well and dipped out water, every time she began to

drink, the spruce needles came into the water. Dipper after dipper she threw out to get it clear, and at last she had to drink the water with the spruce needles in it. That's how the Raven became a baby. All the time as a baby he would cry, "Moon, moon," for he was to get the moon for the world.

His grandfather said the boy was holy, and the moon was holy, and he was very much alarmed, but resolved to help him. So he got the box containing the moon, and took off all the boxes, one inside the other, as it was very precious, and gave the moon to the boy from the inner box.

The boy played with the moon, rolling it round the house and practised putting it in his mouth while no one was looking, as he wanted to fly away with it and give it to the world. After a time he cried for them to make a hole in the roof of the house through which he could fly.

The grandfather, thinking the boy was holy and sacred, made a hole in the top of the roof. The boy put the moon in his mouth and flew away. He rested on a tree, and the people from the moon country chased him; they wanted the moon back. They followed him a long time and a long, long way, but he flew away from them. The first place he came to was the Nass River during the oolaken season where the people were fishing for oolaken in the dark. "Let me have some oolaken," he called to them, but they refused to give him any. Again he called: "Let me have some oolaken, and I will give you light." They were surprised at the offer. "You cannot give us light," they said, "it belongs far away, and is a holy thing." They didn't believe him, for it was too good to be true.

He called again, "Give me some fish, and I will give you light." He showed them a corner of the light of the moon which he had covered with his robe. Amazed at the brightness, the people in one canoe gave him fish, then another and another. After the Raven had eaten all he wanted of the fish, he took the moon from under his robe and dashed it on a rock. It fell in pieces. The big piece he threw up and said, "This will be the sun for the daytime, and this," he said, taking up the second big piece, "will be for the night. The small pieces are the stars. And the benefit of these will be for the people forever." That is how the Raven obtained the sun, moon, and stars for the people.

Second Version :

The world was dark and the moon hidden. In order to get the moon for the world the Raven changed into a baby through his mother drinking water with spruce needles in it. The mother went to the well and dipped out water. Every time she was to drink, the spruce needles appeared. She threw out dipper after dipper to get clear water, but at last she had to drink the spruce needles (that's how he became a baby). All the time as a baby he would cry, "Moon, moon," for he was to get the moon for the world. His grandfather said the boy and the moon were holy, and was very much alarmed. He resolved to help him. He brought out the box containing the moon and took off all the boxes, one inside the other, as it was very precious. He gave the moon to the boy from the inner box, and the boy played with it, rolling it around the house. He practised putting it in his mouth when no one was looking, as he wanted to fly away with it and give it to the world. After a time, he cried for them to make a hole in the top of the house (through which he could fly). His grandfather, thinking the boy was sacred and holy,

made a hole in the roof and the boy put the moon in his mouth and flew away. He went from the house and rested on a tree. The people from the country where the moon was, chased him, wanting it back. They followed him a long time and a long way, but he got away from them. The first place he came to was Nass River during the oolaken season, where the people were fishing for oolaken in the dark. He called to them, "Let me have some oolaken," but they refused. He called again, "Let me have some oolaken, and I will give you light," and they were surprised at the offer. They said, "You cannot give us light, it belongs far away and it is a holy thing." They didn't believe him, because it was too good to be true. He called again, "Give me some fish, and I will give you light." He showed them a corner of the light of the moon and they were so amazed at the brightness that one canoe gave him fish, and one after another gave him oolaken. After the Raven had eaten of the fish, he took the moon from under his robes and dashed it on a rock. It fell in pieces. The big piece he threw up and said, "This will be the Sun for the daytime." Of the second piece he said, "This will do for the night," and of the small pieces he said, "These are the stars." The benefit of those will be for the people, meaning the people of the latter day will still have light. That's how the Raven got the sun, moon, and stars for the world.

Third Version :

One time a party of fishermen went out fishing. The Raven followed them, but they did not know. He wanted to get the bait off the hook, and in trying to get it at the bottom of the sea he was caught on the hook. Not wanting to be seen by anyone as he was the Creator, and ashamed to be found in so disgraceful an attempt to take the bait, he hid himself under the canoe and held himself so strongly there that his upper beak was pulled off. When the fisherman arrived home, the Raven came marching in to visit them, clothed as a very old man taking the white moss or lichen from the trees and bushes. The people were very much alarmed at the peculiar figure coming from the sea. They asked him, "Old man, see, we have found a beak at the bottom of the sea. Tell us what it means." So he told them: in order to escape the plague or punishment that was coming to him, they must leave the place and camp somewhere else. The people clothed anything sacred in feathers or birds' down, so they clothed the beak in feathers and placed it on the roof of a house and deserted the village. During their absence, he recovered his bill, which had been his reason for getting them to leave. And he was once more the Raven, and continued creating.

Second figure (often seen on the same carvings) is the butterfly, the interpreter or spokesman while the Raven was creating things around the world. Top figure on pole is the brown bear, his brother-in-law. Raven and Brown Bear are cousins.

How the Raven stole the Moon, as related by Andrew Brown, an old Eagle clansman among the Haidas of Massett; here given in brief form (in 1947).

The Raven (after he had lost his bill on the hook of the halibut fisherman) went to a place where the chief had the moon. There was no way of taking away the moon from the chief. So he transformed himself into a baby, and let himself be born to the daughter of the chief.

The chief greatly loved his grandchild who cried for the moon for days



Haida poles from Queen Charlotte Islands

and days. Finally the chief ordered that the moon be given to the child. The latter cried for an opening in the roof. Finally the chief ordered that a small opening be made in the roof. When the opening was made the boy transformed himself back to a Raven and flew away through the roof.

He flew to a place now known as Shannon Bay where he saw the people getting fish called oolaken. He said to them, "Give me all your oolaken, and I shall give you the light of the moon." The people didn't believe him until he showed them the moon that he kept under his wings. The people then gave him the fish, and the Haida legend relates that he ate all the oolaken there. This is why there are no oolaken there to-day.

He then threw the moon up to the skies. That's why we have the moon.

The Origin of Light:

How the Raven Yaihl stole the ball of daylight, according to a tradition recorded by William Beynon from Edmund Patalas of Kitkata, a southern Tsimshyan tribe, who had received it from a former Neeswærhs, a Haida chief of Skidegate, Queen Charlotte Islands. Variants of this myth are also told by the Tlingits and the Tsimshyans. The Raven is called Yaihl among the Tlingits; he is the equivalent of Trhaim-

sem or Weegyot among the Tsimsyans.

The myth of the origin of Daylight originated at the source of Nass River. The people were suffering a great hardship, and all was in darkness. But it was known that a great chief at the headwaters of that river, who controlled the light, was a harsh tyrant, and wanted everybody to suffer. Yaihl, the Raven, who helped the Haidas, saw the difficulties the people were in and made up his mind to go to Nass River. As he had to fly a long way from the Queen Charlotte Islands, he took many small pebbles with him before he left on his journey. These he would drop when tired. An island would spring up upon which he could rest. He tried this first at Frederick Island, then at North Island, and again at Dundas, continuing in this way right up to the mouth of Nass River. The Raven flew until he came to the clouds above the Nass; above these clouds all was light, but beneath, it was dark.

The Raven, a supernatural being, decided to transform himself into a pine needle. The chief's daughter would come out to draw water at the waterhole. Soon she did, as she was thirsty. She was just about to drink, when she saw the pine needle in the water. Though she wanted to blow it away, it kept drifting to her mouth. In her impatience she finally swallowed it. Soon she became pregnant, and eventually gave birth to a boy. The chief of the skies was very happy about his new grandson. Every day he took the child and stretched it, causing it to grow quickly, and soon it began to crawl about.

The boy began to cry; he would not be satisfied. As he cried, he called out, "Mæ, mæ," and the chief was at a loss to know what to do. All his wise men could not help him. The Raven, who actually was the boy in disguise, caused one of the wise men to say, "Chief, it seems that he wants the ball of light. Give it to him to play with in the house. See if it quietens him." Then the chief took down the box containing the ball of light, and gave the ball to the boy to play with. Taking the ball, the child rolled it about and threw it to one side, and then the chief put it away. The boy was satisfied, and now the chief could sleep. Every day the boy would call for the ball, and after playing with it only a short while, would toss it aside when it would be put away in the box. This continued for some time until the chief and his wise men began to relax their watch on the boy when he played with the daylight ball.

The Raven began planning to get to the door and fly away with it. One day, the door being open, the raven started rolling the ball about, edging toward the door. Just as he stood there, he assumed his Raven form and, grasping the ball in his claws, he flew out, down the river.

It was the season of the oolaken; the people were fishing by the light of their torches. The Raven, who had now rested on one of the tree tops, became hungry and asked for oolaken. The fishermen said, "Come, lazy one! Get your own oolaken. We are having great difficulties gathering enough for ourselves." "If you do not give me any, I will break the daylight ball, and you shall all become blind." "Listen to the Raven! Where could he get the light ball?" They jeered. Now these were ghost people; no other in darkness could go about to gather oolaken. The Raven was now angry. He took the daylight ball and said, "Be careful! I shall break it, and your people will all perish!" They laughed and said, "Come, Raven, break the ball,

that we may better see what we gather." So the Raven took the daylight ball and pecked a hole in it, thus bringing daylight to the world, at the headwaters of Nass River.

The ghost people all perished; other folk came from all directions to gather oolaken. That is how Raven brought daylight to the world.

How the Raven threw the Moon into the Sky. Version recorded at the Haida village of Skidegate, in 1947, by Miss Alice Philip, of Vancouver, British Columbia.

The Raven knew that a certain chief had the Moon in his house, but the chief guarded it so carefully that no one ever saw it.

One day, the Raven was flying over, when he saw chief's daughter go down to the stream for water. Immediately he changed into a seed. The girl drank him, and by and by she had a baby. Baby grew (it was the Raven), and kept looking around for the Moon. But the chief kept it out of sight.

One day, Baby started to cry. And he cried and cried. Nothing would stop him. At last the chief asked, "What do you want?" and Baby answered: "I want the Moon." The chief said: "No, you can't have the Moon!" So Baby cried and cried and cried. At last the chief could not stand any more. So he said: "All right, I will show you Moon."

The chief put everyone out of the house, closed up the Smoke-Hole, and brought out the Moon for Baby to see, just for a little while. Then the chief put the Moon away where (Baby Raven) could not see.

After a while, Baby started to cry again, and he cried and cried and cried. The chief was angered, and said, "What's the matter?" Baby said: "I want the Moon!" The chief answered: "No, you can't have the Moon." But Baby cried and cried and cried. So the chief had to give Baby the Moon, to stop him.

Baby played with the Moon, and then gave the Moon back. So the chief let him play with the Moon whenever he cried. But always the chief would put everyone out of the house, and closed up the Smoke-Hole.

One day, when he let Baby play with the Moon, he forgot to close up the Smoke-Hole and right away Baby changed back to Raven, took the Moon in his beak, and flew up through the Smoke-Hole.

He flew over the mainland, and saw men fishing for oolaken up the Skeena River. The Raven said to them, "I have the Moon. You give me oolaken, and I will show the Moon when it is dark, so that you may fish." But the men did not believe the Raven. He was too lazy to fish, and always tried to get fish without working.

So when it was dark, the Raven showed the Moon for a little while, and the men were surprised: it was so light, that they could fish.

Next day, they gave the Raven oolaken, and he showed the Moon for a while at night. Next night, more oolaken, and more Moon. And so on until he got so many oolaken that he did not want the Moon anymore. So he threw the Moon up into the sky. It has stayed there ever since.

How the Raven Stole the Moon, communicated by Archie W. Shields to Edward L. Keithahn, in 1946, (Mr. Shields had obtained this narrative from "a man who carved totems on the Queen Charlotte Islands.")

In the very early days when the world was new, it is said there was no light in the land, for the Moon was the private property of one man. The Raven heard of the Moon, so he searched for it. Finally he located it. He then planned to steal it, scouted round the moon-owner's house, and sized up the situation.

The owner of the Moon had a child who had just begun to crawl around. During the absence of the man, the Raven went into the house and killed the baby. Then he transformed himself into a baby and climbed into the crib in its place. It happened that the parents were very fond of the baby, and greatly pampered and petted it. The child [who was the Raven in disguise] began crying and wailing as babies do. The parents did everything to stop this crying, but with no success. In his crying he pronounced the word "Moon." The Moon was kept inside a box of stone. Inside this box were four other stone boxes. The Moon was taken out and given to the baby (the Raven) to play with. He stopped crying and rolled the Moon on the ground. Then he began to cry again. He wanted to have the Smoke-Hole in the roof opened. The grandfather opened it and he stopped crying. When nobody was looking in his direction, he picked up the Moon and flew out the open smoke outlet.

He flew with the Moon to Nass River, when he came upon some oolaken fishermen. He asked them for some oolaken, but they told him that as he was not able to give them light, he was not entitled to any oolaken. So he let out a piece of the moon from under his wing to show that he could give them light. The fishermen were delighted with this and gave him boatloads of fish which he devoured. Then he broke the Moon into pieces by his power. There were many small pieces which he threw into the sky, and so the stars were made. There were also two larger pieces from which the Moon and the sun were formed.

The Raven and the Sun in Siberia among the Koriaks, according to Waldemar Jochelson (116:378).

Raven-Man swallows the sun because Big-Raven declines to give his daughter to him in marriage, whereupon the earth is plunged into darkness. Yine-a-neut, Big-Raven's daughter, tickles the Raven-Man who swallowed the sun: he opens his mouth, and sets the sun free (p. 252).

Pacific Coast: This corresponds to the episodes of the raven cycle of the Pacific coast, in which the Raven liberates the sun (Boas, *Indianische Sagen*. P. 360, No. 157).

The Raven Myth in Siberia, according to Waldemar Jochelson (116: 17, 18, 19, 355).

THE TRANSFORMER OF THE WORLD AND THE ANCESTOR OF THE KORYAK — Big-Raven (*Quikinnagu*, or *Kutkinnaku*) is the augmentative form of the mythical name of the raven. In some myths he is designated as Raven-Big-Quikil. The Kamchadal call him Kutq.

The Maritime Koryak of the western shore of Peshina Bay call Big-Raven also Big-Grandfather, as may be seen from the myths recorded at the villages of Itkana, Kuel, and Paren; while the Reindeer Koryak of the Taigonos Peninsula call him Creator, as is evidenced by the myths recorded on the Taigonos Peninsula. The identity of Creator with Big-Raven and with Big-Grandfather is also recognized by the Taigonos Koryak, in some

of whose tales the last two names are also found. On the other hand, we find in texts recorded in other localities, sometimes the name Big-Raven, then Creator or Big-Grandfather; and sometimes in the same tale we meet with two names.

It may be pointed out here that the Chukchee make a distinction between Raven (*kurkil*) and Creator. The former appears as a companion and assistant of Creator when creating the world.

All the tales about Big-Raven belong to the cycle of raven myths which are popular on the American as well as on the Asiatic shores of the North Pacific Ocean. But while the Kurkil of the Chukchee, and the Raven of the North American Indians, play a part only in their mythology, particularly in the myths relating to the Creation of the world; and have no connection with religious observances, Big-Raven plays an important part in the religious observances of the Koryak. Steller calls the Kamchadal Kutka "the greatest deity of the Kamchadal, who created the world and every living being." Like the heroes of the other raven myths, Big-Raven of the Koryak appears merely as the transformer of the world. Everything in the world had existed before he appeared. His creative activity consisted in revealing things heretofore concealed, and turning some things into others; and, since everything in nature is regarded by the Koryak as animated, he only changed the form of the animated substance. Some things he brought down ready-made to our earth from the Supreme Being in heaven. Big-Raven appears as the first man, the father and protector of the Koryak; but at the same time he is a powerful shaman and a supernatural being. His name figures in all incantations.

The raven, nevertheless, plays some part in their cosmogony. He swallowed the sun, and Big-Raven's daughter got it out from his mouth, whereupon she killed him. This suggests the tale of the liberation of the sun told by the Indians of the north Pacific Coast. In another tale the raven and the sea-gull appear as shamans, bringing Ememqut, the son of Big-Raven, back to life several times, after he had been killed by an invincible giant who keeps his heart hidden in a box.

Almost all of the recorded Koryak myths, with very few exceptions, deal with the life, travels, adventures, and tricks of Big-Raven, his children, and other relatives. In this respect the Koryak mythology is very similar to the transformer myths of the Tlingits relating to the raven Yelch or Yetl.

Big-Raven and his wife Mitti play all sorts of indecent tricks just for their amusement.

The circumstance that almost the entire Koryak-Kamchadal mythology is devoted exclusively to tales about Big-Raven brings it close to the American cycle of raven myths; but some characteristic features from other American cycles are also connected with Big-Raven. We find in the tales relating to Big-Raven and to members of his family a love for indecent and coarse tricks, which they perform for their own amusement, — a feature common to all the tales current on the whole Pacific coast.

To Big-Raven are ascribed not only greediness and gluttony, features characteristic of the heroes of the raven cycle, but also the erotic inclinations of the Mink, as well as the qualities of other heroes and transformers of the Pacific Coast, and of the heroes Manabozho of the Algonquin, and Hiawatha of the Iroquois. Thus Big-Raven figures not only as the organizer of the universe and the ancestor of the Koryak, but also as a culture-hero.

In the monotony and lack of color of the tales, uniformity of these episodes, and simplicity of the motives of actions, the Koryak myths remind one rather of the tales of the Athapascans. Thus we find a similarity of form between some of the Athapaskan legends recorded by E. Petitot and those of the Koryak.

The Raven among the Chukchees, according to Waldemar Bogoras (113:319, 320).

The Raven mentioned in different incantations is also supposed to be Valviya'k, "assistant" to the Creator or to the Zenith. One of the shamans distinguished between this Raven and the Raven who restored to the earth the sources of light. The latter was called by him a very mighty "Being," who had dealings with mankind only at the time of the creation, but, after that, transformed himself into thunder, and became invisible.

The Crow Steals the Sun (Loucheux Myth, Dènè); the author's version (111:254).

Grizzly's grandchild had seen the sun when it was put into the bag. He tried to induce his grandfather to let him play with it, but old Grizzly would not listen to him. The boy

cried so much about it, that at last the Black Bear asked his uncle to let the boy play with the sun for a little while. In the end the Grizzly took the sun down and gave it to his grandson, saying, "You must not take it outside of the lodge." So delighted was the boy when he got the sun, that he at once began throwing it up, catching it, and rolling it all around in the lodge. As he missed it once, it rolled outside through the door; and before he could catch it again, the Crow seized it and cast it back into its place in the sky.¹

The Raven Flood Totem (Tlingit), Alaska, as described in a circular of Hall's Trading Post of Ketchikan, with the introduction: "Here is the reading as told us by an old Indian chief."

At one time the Flood completely covered Alaska with water. The top figure on this pole is of the Raven with children in his arms. The circle around his head represents heaven. At the time of the Flood, the Raven rescued these children and flew up into the heavens. When the Flood subsided he descended but found that water still covered the earth. As there was no place to land, he called upon his friend the Frog for help; he was too tired to fly back into the heavens with his load. So the giant Frog rose to the surface of the water and let the Raven light on his back thus saving the children. The two bottom figures on this totem represent the Raven lighting on the back of the Frog. The face of the man in the centre of the pole is of the children's uncle, who was drowned while trying to save the children before the Raven came to the rescue.

How the Raven first obtained the Salmon, according to James Deans, (36:28, 29).

When Choo-e-ah, the raven god, was looking for salmon to put in the newly formed rivers, he was informed Tsing (beaver) had all the salmon, so in order to get a quantity he turned himself into a beautiful boy and went to the beaver's house. When old Tsing saw a nice-looking boy outside, he told him to come inside and live with him awhile. This the boy gladly did. Very soon he gained the old beaver's favor by making himself generally useful. Whenever Tsing went fishing he left the boy at home, and would neither tell him about his salmon nor where he got them. One day, after a meal of salmon, the boy asked him where he got such nice fish. Tsing told him that he had a lake and a river full of them. Hearing this, the boy asked him for a few, if he could spare them, in order, he said, to place them in the rivers and lakes on earth. "No," replied the beaver, "they are exclusively my property, and I cannot part with any of them."

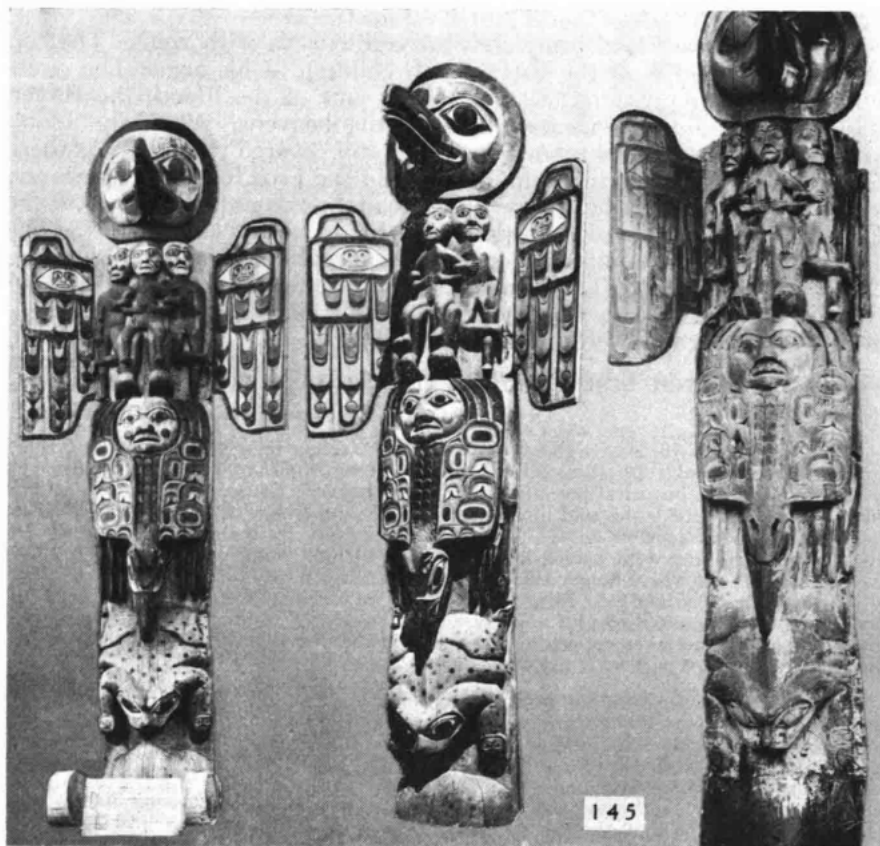
Seeing the state of affairs, the boy said no more, but awaited his own time. After this the boy was more than ever attentive to the wants and wishes of the old chief, who after a while took him to help while fishing. Gradually, more and more, the beaver got less suspicious of the boy, and finally would stay at home and send him. For a long time the boy would return at evening, bringing a supply of better fish than even the beaver himself could bring. All the while the boy was collecting a goodly supply for future use. So one day, when all was ready, he took the fish he had selected and left for the new made rivers, in which he placed male and female salmon. These, in time, filled the lakes and rivers, and afterward afforded a supply of salmon for mankind. This is how Ne-Kilst-lass put the salmon in the rivers, lakes, and streams. Having secured a supply of salmon, his next step was to obtain a supply of oolaken, with which to fill certain rivers.

How the Raven lost and recovered his Bill, according to a Tlingit myth recorded by J. R. Swanton (119a:8).

Raven came to a place where many people were encamped fishing. They used nothing but fat for bait. He entered a house and asked what they used for bait. They said, "Fat." Then he said, "Let me see you put enough on your hooks for bait," and he noticed carefully how they baited and handled their hooks. The next time they went out, he walked off behind a point, and went under water to get this bait. Now they got bites and pulled up quickly,

¹ Compare the tales of the origin of daylight from the north Pacific Coast, in which Raven becomes the grandchild of the owner of daylight in order to be enabled to carry it away (see, for instance, R. H. Lowie, *The Assiniboine*, pp. 101-104).

but there was nothing on their hooks. This continued for a long time. The next time they went out they felt the thing again, but one man among them who knew just how fish bite, jerked at the right moment and felt that he had caught something. The line went around in the water very fast. They pulled away, however, until they got Raven under the canoe, and he kicked against it very hard. All at once his nose came off, and they pulled it up. When they landed, they took it to the chief's house and said, "We have caught a wonderful thing. It must be the nose of the Gonaqadet." So they took it, put eagle down on it, and hung it up on the wall.



Tlingit Sun and Raven totem pole, at Saxman

After that, Raven came ashore at the place where he had been in the habit of going down, got a lot of spruce gum and made a new nose out of it. Then he drew a root hat down over his face and went to the town. Beginning at the nearer end he went through the houses saying, "I wonder in what house are the people who caught Gonaqadet's nose." After he had gone halfway, he entered the chief's house and inquired, "Do you know where are the people who caught Gonaqadet's nose?" They answered, "There it is on the wall." Then he said, "Bring it here. Let me examine it." So they gave it to him. "This is great," he said, and he put up his hat to examine it. "Why," said he, "this house is dark. You ought to take off the smoke-hole cover. Let some one run up and take it off so that I can see." But, as soon as they removed it, he put the nose in its place, cried "Ga!" and flew away. They did not find out who he was.

A version of the same myth recorded in English at Wrangell, Alaska:

While he was under the ocean he saw some people fishing for halibut, and he tried to tease them by taking hold of their bait. They, however, caught him by the bill and pulled him up as far as the bottom of their canoe, where he braced himself so that they pulled his bill out. They did not know what this bill was and called it *gone't-luwu'* (bill-of-something-unknown). Then Raven went from house to house inquiring for his bill until he came to the house of the chief. Upon asking for it there, they handed it to him wrapped in eagle down. Then he put it back into its place, and flew off through the smoke-hole.

How the Raven lost his Bill, as recorded, in 1947, by Mrs. Jean Findlay, from "Captain" Andrew Brown, of Massett, Queen Charlotte Islands.

Long ago, when the Raven had power to change his body into human form and could float and swim under water, he went after a party of fishermen as they were out on the fishing banks. He wanted to get the bait off the hook at the bottom of the sea, and in the attempt was caught on the hook. Not wishing to be found in so disgraceful a fashion, taking or stealing bait, he hid himself under a canoe and attached himself so strongly that the upper part of his beak was pulled off. The fisherman arrived home. Meanwhile the Raven clothed himself as a very old man, taking the white moss or lichen from the trees and bushes. The people were much alarmed at the peculiar figure coming from the sea, and they asked him, "Old man, look! We have found a beak at the bottom of the sea. Tell us what it means." He told them to leave the place and camp somewhere else, in order to escape the punishment or plague coming to them.

When anything is sacred, it is clothed in feathers or bird down. And the people clothed the beak in feathers, and placed it on the roof of a house. They deserted the village. During their absence, the Raven took his beak back which was his reason for persuading the people to leave the village. He was once more the Raven, and continued creating.

How the Raven lost his Bill, as related, in 1947, by "Captain" Andrew Brown, an old Haida of a northern Eagle clan at Massett.

The Raven was our creator, according to the stories among our people.

The Raven went on a tour of the Queen Charlotte Islands. While he was on the tour, he saw some fishermen going out fishing for halibut. He followed them out and stole their bait off their hooks in the water. While he was stealing the bait, the hook of one of the fishermen caught his bill. The fisherman went to his camp at the edge of town.

When the fisherman came home, the people were amazed at the bill of a bird that was found on the hook of the fisherman's line. They were unable to learn of its origin. Finally someone suggested that they ask the old man (the Raven in disguise) that had moved in, at the edge of the town.

He was brought to see the bill, and had an inspiration on how to regain his bill. He told the people that it was a beak of a sacred bird called "Scra Good," and that no one should make any unkind remarks about it, but that it would be placed in a nest on the roof of the chief's house.

That night, while the people slept, he went up on the roof and stole his beak back. He is seen on the totem pole with his hands over his mouth to hide the absence of the beak.

The crow shown on the totem pole alludes to a story of the time when the Raven invited the crows to gather leaves on which to eat the fish. But the crows brought back only the bark of trees. The Raven was displeased with them, so he went out to get the leaves himself. While he was gone the crows ate up the fish. It goes to show that crows were always thieves.

How the Raven lost his Bill, as recorded by Miss Alice Philip at the Haida village of Skidegate, in 1947.

The Raven was hungry. Down at Copper Bay, men were fishing, using blue back for bait. The Raven was too lazy to fish for himself, and he craved blue back. So he caught a flounder, skinned it, and crawled inside the skin to swim down and steal the bait off hooks. They (the fishermen) could not understand what was stealing their bait, but decided to catch the thief. Next time they felt the line pulled, they gave a great heave, Raven in (flounder skin) fought hard, and at last got away, but he lost his beak. Men pulled up the line, and on the hook was a funny black thing. They did not know what it was. They had a consultation in the Long-House around the fire, but could not decide what it was. The Raven came in and sat down in a dark corner with his hand over the place where the beak should be. At last, the men gave up, and asked the Raven if he knew what this strange black thing was that stole the bait. He looked a long time (still a hand over his mouth), then said it was . . . (he made up a name). No one had ever heard of it before, but no one said so, as he would lose face by showing his ignorance. The Raven persuaded them to leave the black thing with him, and when no one was looking, he slipped it back on.

For a while, he did not steal bait, but temptation was too great. He started again. Again the trap was set, and this time they caught him in the flounder skin. They brought him home, and roasted him over the fire. This was a bad spot. Raven knew he had to think fast, as it was hot where he sat down. So he thought and thought. The only way to get free was to draw the people's attention somewhere else. If only guests would arrive! Just then a great many important people arrived, and everyone left the house to give a big welcome. Only a small boy was left in charge of the fire. Raven, very hot, had to get out fast. So he made a big noise, and the boy tried to see what made the noise. Right then the Raven came out of the flounder skin, and flew up through the smoke-hole. The boy was scared, because they would get after him for letting the flounder go. When everyone came back, they asked him where the flounder had gone, and the boy answered that the flounder had a big bowel movement, and nothing was left but the skin. There was the skin on the floor.

The Raven who lost his Bill, as communicated by Archie W. Shields to Edward L. Keithahn, in 1946.

(In his letter of transmission to Mr. Keithahn, dated April 22, 1946, from South Bellingham, Washington, he states: "I am now attaching the history of those poles, which was written by the man who made them over in the Queen Charlotte Islands.")

Nanki'tslas (the Raven) started off afoot. After he had travelled for a while, he came to the town of Ku'ndji. In front of it many canoes floated. The people within were fishing for flounders. They used for bait salmon roe that