

Four Tlingit Stories

Sam Johnston



Narrated at the October 2014 Tlingit Literacy Session at
the Yukon Native Language Centre

Transcribed and Translated by
Dr. Jeffry Leer



Mr. Sam Johnston, born and raised in Teslin, Yukon, is a fluent speaker of Tlingit. He is internationally recognized for his dedication to the Tlingit language and culture and to the transmission of these to future generations.

For many years, Mr. Johnston has shared his deep knowledge of his traditional language at YNLC's Tlingit literacy sessions. In an October 2014 session he narrated several stories entirely in Tlingit to encourage and challenge the participants attending the session. This

book and accompanying CD contain the written and spoken versions of those stories. The transcriptions and translations were compiled by Mr. Johnston working with Dr. Jeffry Leer, YNLC's long-term partner in Tlingit language documentation.

Mr. Johnston has been active for many years at Yukon College encouraging and teaching students in traditional native studies, and served one term as Chancellor of Yukon College in the early 2000s.

Mr. Johnston's traditional Tlingit name is Ànàlahàsh. He is the Leader of the Ishkitàn Clan, was Chief of the Teslin Tlingit Council for many years and is now an Executive Elder. He was elected as a Member of the Yukon Legislative Assembly and served as Speaker of the House from 1985 to 1992.

In addition, Mr. Johnston has long been an active member of the Teslin Tlingit Dancers, and has been very involved in coaching archery, traditional games, and dog mushing.

Mr. Johnston collaborated with YNLC several years ago to compile a set of basic Tlingit conversational lessons with audio. These are posted on the website ynlc.ca.

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ISBN 978-1-55242-412-4

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Introduction by Dr. Jeffry Leer, Transcriber and Translator

I met Sam Johnston on my first trip to Teslin on an expedition to document place names with Mrs. Daisy Sheldon. I paid a courtesy call to the chief's home, and imagine my surprise when then Chief Sam Johnston informed me that my namesake Wèhá, Jimmy Fox, was his mother's maternal uncle. Since that time I have collaborated closely with his family, especially his parents Rosie and David Johnston, who documented most of the Teslin-area Tlingit place names as well the Tlingit personal names associated with their families and clans. Sam's fondly remembered late sister Emma Sam taught Tlingit in Whitehorse and faithfully came to brighten up our Tlingit language workshops. Sam himself has attended many of these workshops, and is one of the elders we turn first to with our many questions about the Tlingit language.

So imagine our surprise and delight when Sam suggested that we tape him as he recounted Tlingit legends each day during the October 2014 Tlingit language workshop. Each story was a delight for the audience, as they will surely also be for students of Tlingit. John Ritter, then YNLC Director, asked Sam if he would permit us to publish the transcriptions and translations of this unique series of Tlingit legends. When he agreed, I went to work transcribing the texts with (often approximate) interlinear glosses, accompanied by a free translation into English. On my next visit to Whitehorse, in October 2015, Sam and I worked our way through the stories line by line, correcting and clarifying the text and translations as we went.

Sam's stories are for the most part light-hearted, dealing with the many ways that animals may interact with people and with one another in the wondrous world of mythology. Our storyteller, like generations of mythbearers before him, has reserved the right to embellish these legends and reshape them to suit his audience. His story of the lonely man and the seagull, which we have heard him tell on many occasions, is perhaps the most playful of the lot. It has a surprise ending that discloses the origin of yodeling - hardly a traditional Tlingit activity - yet Sam's version of this myth has never failed to lift the spirits of his audience, as it lightened the heart of the protagonist of the story.

Some of these legends are not to be found in the classical corpus familiar to students of Tlingit mythology. Others, although displaying a limited resemblance to legends familiar to the Coastal Tlingit, such as the origin of the Thunderbird, are strikingly different from the published versions, and on that account will be sure to provoke the interest and curiosity of students of comparative mythology. The telling of a historical account is circumscribed by the necessity for verifiability and by diplomatic considerations where it comes to interclan relationships. By contrast, the storyteller has much more latitude in the shaping of myths that are not considered to be the property of a particular clan by virtue of figuring in its origin story.

Sam has clearly chosen myths that are available for general use as vehicles for his storytelling art, and he has clearly taken advantage of the poetic license available to him in this arena. His goal is clearly to entertain and uplift his audience with these legends, while steering clear of any possible offense to his audience by choosing stories unaffiliated with local clan history. Not a single clan name is mentioned in any of these stories. This leaves the audience free to enjoy the richness and originality of these legends, since it is clear that there is no political subtext to them, and that their only aim is to uplift the audience with light-hearted stories that appeal to our common humanity, where the moral of the story is essentially: be kind to one another, lift one another up, and in the process, avoid saying anything that others could conceivably regard as offensive. Mr. Johnston has succeeded in achieving these ends both harmoniously and gracefully.

The stories speak eloquently for themselves. We can only add our deep gratitude to Sam Johnston for sharing these stories, to YNLC and the CYFN for offering them to the public, and to Sheila Maissan for laying them out so artfully on the printed page.

Gunalchîsh chxhánk', hà in ayitlàgû!

Jeffrey Leer

Emeritus Professor

University of Alaska Fairbanks

Mountainair, NM

August 2016

Thunderbird

X'ètl : Tlingit Text

Told by Sam Johnston (Ànàlahàsh) at YNLC, October 2014
transcribed by Jeff Leer (Wèhà)

So, thank you very much, and today I got a story for you about Thunderbird, where Thunderbird came from. Anybody ever hear the story about the Thunderbird? It's all going to be in Tlingit again so you got to really listen.

Ch'âkw áyû yú.á, yá yîs khâ, ch'a yèsú agamdishâ, kha yú du chàn xhán áyá â yê s yati. Tlêx' yatiyi át áyû, tlét àdé ajìghànàghi yé: ałkhâ. Tlákwx ałkhâ nìch.

Yá du chàn[ch] tsú yatîn, tlákwx de yà nagút. "Iyatîn gé? Iyatîn gé? De ałkhâ shûde yà nagút," yû xh'ayakhâ nìch wé du chàn.

Ch'a yâk'udé áyá ch'a hú sh dà yù tudítank, "A yáxh shákdêyá àdé xhat yatiyi yé. "Mâ yù kxhwasgìdí sá jikkhanâkh!" Yèsú a dà yù tuwatánk, a dà tuwatánk.

Yá àn shuká áyá hîn áxh kàwadà, tle ghíł' xh'ânáxh. K'idên a dà yù akùłghîndáxh áyú, k'idên a dà yù tuwatánk mâ sá khukghwanûk.

Yú àn â yê yatiyi yé, ch'a hêde â áyû, hintâk áyá â at khudziti.

Áyá yèsú a dà kè tumdítan. "Yû hîndáxh axh jìt wusgìdí wêt'át, àghâ shákdé ch'a ghût yêde at gughatî tsu axh jiyís."

Yèsú k'idên a dà yù akamdlig'hín, mâ sá du jidé kghwasgìdí hîn tâdáxh. K'idên dà ayanahâ áyú, às tlèn áyá anaxh nàshû. Yèsú du tû kè uwaxíx, yá ghíł' xh'ânáxh kè agaxhłaghîch.

A yáxh ásgé k'idên a kànáxh kè amlig'hích. Yèsú k'idên a dà yê jíné tsu. A dà yê jíné, a dà yê jíné. Yá wûshdáxh yá anasx'wên. K'idên ch'a gùt'á sá ayàwadlâkh, a gâs'i tsú â yê daxh àwa.ù. Kha yá tákhli tlèn tsú amliyéxh.

Yèsú a dà kè tumditàn, "Yá hîn tâ khudzitiyi át – xhât yáxh – a yìnâghu ìn àxh kè khasatâ."

Tíx' dês daxh ajikasit, yê–kwłayát' ìn. Yèsú a xh'ânáxh yâ wûshdáxh amłitiyi át xh'ânáxh àdé akamsiyà, wé tíx' akàwasidi, kha wé k'éxh'à a x'àn, kha a yìnâghu. Xhât yís mâ sáyá yù duwaghíx'k yáxh áyá adàné.

Ch'a yâk'udé ash jix' àwayèkh. Yèsú k'idên â anahîn k'idên àwayèkh.

Yèsú kè anasyékh, kè anasyékh, kè anasyékh, kè anasyékh. Ch'a yâk'udê tle yûwûshdáxh amsix'uwu às tlèn xh'ânáxh, ch'as k'idên a shá â yà nanìní áwé, tákhli ìn a gâs'i khu.a àxh amsix'ù.

A káx' wûsht wudighát.

Áyâ yê jinèyî du shát ìn akanik nìch, "Yû áyá yê jixhané, kha yû, kha yû." Ch'a àn khu.áyá du chàn khu.à, du tùwûch ch'ù ałkhâ.

Yèsú du sîk' yê adàyakhá, "lyatîn gé ? De yà nagút tsu de, ałkhâ shûde ! Mânáxh sáyû tsu du xh'êxh at ìtìxh ? Ch'a nichká áyû! Łíł dè du xh'êxh at ìtìxh[íkh]!"

Ch'a àn khu.a ch'a wanínáxh du xhán.à xh'êxh at tìxh nuch. Yèsú du xhán.à [ìn] akanîk mâ sá khuwanûk, kha mâ sá du tùwú yatì. Du shát ìn akanîk yâ àwashâdi át, yá kè amdzi't'exhi át.

Tle x'êghà, ts'ats'î tlèn áwé ùwayâ yú.á. Łigê !

Àxh kè astâ áyû amłix'ish dês. K'idên anałx'ish áyá yèsú, a dùgú tsú ałxwàch k'idên. K'idên a dà yê jinèyí, yèsú a dà yê jiné, a dà yê jiné.

Yèsú a dàt tumditàn, "Gùt'á sáyá â yánde kkhwatî yá at dùgú, a dà yê jixhwanèyí ?"

Yú àn shùdàxh tlét tlaxh yê kùnàlí tle at gùwu tlèn anaxh nàshû. A tú áwé â yan útĩych wé at dùgú. Ch'a yâk'udé khu.ùch wusitìn yá at gùwú tlèn. Mânáxh sáyútle gûs' a kinâ yan útĩych?

Ch'a àn khu.a tsu yá du xhán.à ìn akanik nìch mâ sáyá yà akunasyèn. Áyá, ch'a àn khu.a du chàn khu.a ch'a du tú, ch'ù ałkhâ. X'êghà du tugède yatì yú ałkhâ, ách áyú yê xh'ayakhâ nìch, "Shî dê, yak'ê dê du xhándáxh yìyagùdí wé khâ. Mâ sáyá iguxhłatìn ?"

K'idên yan asní áyú yâ at dùgú tlèn yèsú sh wakhshiyit amdi.àxh k'idên, k'idên.

"A tûxh yê kkhagût yá at dùgú." A tûxh wùgùt yèsú. Ch'a yèsú a tûxh yê nagúdi áwé, tle àn wudikhìn, łdakát yé. Yû dakît wudakhìnî áyáłdakát át ayatìn !

Yèsú a dà kè tumditán, "Yá atxhá axh xh'ède yà dushgêyich áyú, łdakát yá khu.ù has du xh'êxh at gakhatî. "

Yèsú, yá àn, łingit'ání â yê yatì. Yûdu ìkh, â yê at na.wèch, ch'a dà sá kè ashátch. Tlaxh x'êghà yá àn khu.ùwú has du tuwâ ksiyê, dà sáyû ch'as yú atxhá â yê natìch.

Á tsú, yû du chàn khu.à ch'a hú, hú du tuwâdàxh, hú du yêgi tuwâdàxh áyú, â yê at natìch yû kè tumditán.

Yèsú wé yîs khâ yê daxh adàyakhâ nìch "Â yèkh yi.á dê! De â yê at yatì." X'êghà ásgé, dà sá ch'as atxhá â yê natìch. Àdé yakùgeyi yè yá hândé yà anashkhákh át.

Yá àn khu.a yá kayâsh daxh alyêxh, a yidé at dux'ân, łdakát át. Áyá yá du xhán.à yê adàyakhâ nìch, hú du tuwâdàxh áyá yê yà at natìn. Gùsû dê wé tû dushkhìdi khâ yá àdé datìyi yé ?

"Tlêx' yatìyi át khu.a," yû adàyakhá du xhán.à, "Yâ át xhwadakhìnî łdakát yé, ch'a àn khu.à tlét ushk'é axh kê khiwu.àyí. Yêł axh kê mdu.àxhí, de hûch' áyá xhát! "

Ách áyú yèsú tsu át wudikhìn, át wudikhìn, át wudikhìn.

Ch'a yâk'udê amsitìn, dà sáyú ch'as dêxh yây tle yê wùsh
xhán, yây. Yá àdé ash kamlinigi yé áyú ch'ù dêxh daxh
àwashât, yèsú ch'a ghà akù.àkhw yánde, yánde, yánde.

Tlêní ayawudlâghí, ch'a yèsú àndáxh tlêt unaí, áx' du kâ
khiwa.à, kha yêł wuduwa.áxh.

Ch'ù áx' áyú tliyê wùnè.

Ch'as yè ndustín, ch'as yè ndustín, áyû, tle ajiwanákh, tle àxh
wudikhìn, yû tliyà shà xhùdé.

Áx' áyá shux'ânáxh wuduwa.áxh Xètl. Ách áyú, ch'u yídát, Xètl
wudu.àxhí, sîw dàk ustànch, yá hîndáxh khuwustiyích.

Sam Johnston

X'ètl - Text Analysis

Told by Sam Johnston (Ànàlahàsh) at YNLC, October 2014
transcribed by Jeff Leer (Wèhá)

So, thank you very much, and today I got a story for you about Thunderbird, where Thunderbird came from. Anyone out there ever heard the story about the Thunderbird? (Silence).

It's all going to be in Tlingit again so you got to really listen.

Tlingit Text	English
<p>Ch'âkw áyû yú.á, yá yîs khâ, ch'a yèsú <i>long ago they say this young man just recently</i></p> <p>agamdishâ, <i>took himself a wife</i></p>	<p><i>Long ago, they say, there was a young man who had just taken himself a wife</i></p>
<p>kha yú du chàn xhán áyá â yê s yatì. <i>and this his mother-in-law's residence there-at they are staying</i></p>	<p><i>and they lived with his mother-in-law.</i></p>
<p>Tlêx' yatìyi át áyû, tlét àdé <i>one being thing not in that manner</i></p> <p>ajìghànàghi yé: ałkhâ. Tlák w ałkhâ nìch. <i>he might leave it way gambling. always he gambles</i></p>	<p><i>There was just one thing: he could not quit gambling. He was always gambling.</i></p>

Tlingit Text		English
<p>Yá du chàn[ch] tsú yatîn, <i>this his mother-in-law also she sees it</i></p> <p>tlákw de yà nagút. <i>always already he is going</i></p>		<p><i>Now his mother-in-law saw this too, he was always on his way there.</i></p>
<p>"Iyatîn gé ? Iyatîn gé ? De <i>you see ? you see ? already</i></p> <p>yà nagút," yû xh'ayakhâ nìch wé du <i>he is going thus she says (every time) that his</i></p>	<p>atkhâ shûde <i>gambling to join in</i></p> <p>chàn. <i>mother-in-law</i></p>	<p><i>"See that? See that? There he goes to sit with the gamblers," his mother-in-law would say.</i></p>
<p>Ch'a yâk'udé áyá ch'a hú sh dà <i>just suddenly just he about self</i></p>	<p>yù tudítámk, <i>he keeps thinking</i></p>	<p><i>But suddenly the man fell to thinking about himself,</i></p>
<p>"A yáxh shákdêyá àdé xhat <i>right perhaps it is in the way I</i></p>	<p>yatìyi yé. <i>am way</i></p>	<p><i>"Maybe she is right about the way I am.</i></p>
<p>"Mâ yù kxhwasgìdí sá jikkhanâkh !" <i>by doing whatever (I can) let me leave it</i></p>		<p><i>"What can I do to quit?"</i></p>
<p>Yèsú a dà yù tuwatámk, a dà <i>then about it he is thinking about it</i></p>	<p>tuwatámk. <i>he is thinking</i></p>	<p><i>So he thought and thought about it.</i></p>

Tlingit Text						English
Yá <i>this</i>	àn <i>town</i>	shuká <i>front</i>	áyá <i>stream</i>	hîn <i>down along there</i>	kàwadà, <i>it flowed</i>	Now in front of the town there flowed a stream right down between the cliffs.
tle <i>just</i>	ghíł' <i>cliffs</i>	xh'ânáxh. <i>between-through</i>				
K'idên <i>well</i>	a dà <i>about it</i>	yù <i>after he had</i>	akùłghîndáxh <i>examined</i>	áyú,		After he had thoroughly assessed the situation,
k'idên <i>well</i>	a dà <i>about it</i>	yù <i>he thinks</i>	tuwatánk <i>how</i>	mâ sá <i>he will act</i>	khukghwanûk.	he carefully thought through what to do next.
Yú <i>yon</i> ¹	àn <i>town</i>	â <i>there-at</i>	yê <i>being</i>	yatiyi <i>place</i>	yé,	Now there was a lake just a ways from the village,
ch'a <i>just</i>	hêde <i>over here</i>	â <i>lake</i>	áyû, <i>it is (yonder)</i>			
hintâk <i>in the water</i>	áyá	â <i>there-at</i>	at <i>something</i>	khudzitì.		and in the water lived a certain creature (a water monster, ghunakadèt).

¹ "Yon" in the interlinear means "that (place or thing) yonder, way over there".

Tlingit Text					English
Áyá	yèsú	a dà	kè	tumditán.	<i>Then he started to think about it.</i>
So	then	about it	(starting) up	he thought	
"Yû	hîndáxh	axh jìt	wusgìdí	wèt'át,	<i>"If I could get that thing out of the water,</i>
yon	water-from	into my possession	if it fell	that thing	
"àghâ	shákdé	ch'a	ghût	yêde	<i>"then perhaps things would change for me again."</i>
then	perhaps	just (in a)	different	way	
tsu	axh jiyís.				
again	for me				
Yèsú	k'idên	a dà	yù akamdlig'hín,		<i>Then he looked it over carefully to figure out how he could get it (to himself) out of the water.</i>
then	well	about it	he looked here and there		
mâ sá	du jidé	kghwasgìdí	hîn	tâdâxh.	
how	into his hands	it will fall	water	bottom-from	
K'idên	dà ayanahâ	áyú,			<i>After he had looked it over carefully, (he noticed) a certain large tree standing over there.</i>
well	after he had looked it over				
às	tlèn ²	áyá	anaxh	nàshû.	
tree big			there-through	it extends	

² Emphasized: note dramatic mid-to-low fall on às, tlèn, nà-.

Tlingit Text	English
<p>Yèsú du tû kè uwaxíx, yá ghí' xh'ânáxh <i>then his mind-in up it popped these cliffs between-through</i></p> <p>kè agaxhłaghích. <i>up let him fell it</i></p>	<p><i>Then he got an idea: he would fell the tree so that it landed up between the cliffs.</i></p>
<p>A yáxh ásgé k'idên <i>correctly it would seem well</i></p> <p>a kánáxh kè amłighích. <i>it across up he felled it</i></p>	<p><i>He must have had it figured out good; he felled it nicely across (the cliffs).</i></p>
<p>Yèsú k'idên a dà yê jíné tsu. <i>then well about it he is working again</i></p> <p>A dà yê jíné, a dà yê jíné. <i>about it he is working about it he is working</i></p>	<p><i>He was carefully working on it, working on it, working on it.</i></p>
<p>Yá wûshdáxh yà anasx'wên. <i>this apart he is splitting it with a wedge</i></p>	<p><i>He was splitting the tree in two with a wedge.</i></p>

Tlingit Text		English
<p>K'idên ch'a gùt'á sá ayàwadlàkh, a gâs'i tsú <i>well now where-from he obtained it its posts also</i></p> <p>â yê daxh àwa.ù. <i>there-at he put them</i></p>		<p><i>Wherever he managed to wedge it apart, he started putting the braces in too.</i></p>
<p>Kha yá tákhli tlèn tsú amliyéxh. <i>and this mallet big also he made it</i></p>		<p><i>And he fashioned a large mallet.</i></p>
<p>Yèsú a dà kè tumditán, <i>then about it (starting) up he thought</i></p>		<p><i>Then he began to think,</i></p>
<p>"Yá hîn tâ khudzitiyi át – xhât yáxh – a <i>that water bottom-at existing thing fish like its</i></p> <p>yìnâghu ìn àxh kè khasatâ." <i>bait with there-from up let me lift its body</i></p>		<p><i>"I can get that water monster out of there using bait, as if it were a fish."</i></p>
<p>Tíx' dês daxh ajikasìt, yê–kwlayát' ìn. <i>rope next he braids them together lo–ong one with</i></p>		<p><i>So next he braided ropes together, using long (strands).</i></p>

Tlingit Text	English
<p>Yèsú a xh'ânáxh yâ wûshdâxh amłitiyi át <i>then it between-through this apart he chiselled thing</i></p> <p>xh'ânáxh àdé akamsiyà, <i>between-through there-toward he lowered it</i></p>	<p><i>Then he lowered it down through the gap he had created by splitting the tree,</i></p>
<p>wé tíx' akàwasidi, kha wé k'éxh'à <i>that rope which he had braided and that gaff-hook</i></p> <p>a x'àn, kha a yìnâghu. <i>its tip and its bait</i></p>	<p><i>the rope which he had braided, with a hook at the end and bait.</i></p>
<p>Khât yís mâ sáyá yù duwaghíx'k yáxh áyá <i>fish for how one jerks (the line) like</i></p> <p>adàné. <i>he works it</i></p>	<p><i>He kept jigging it up and down as if he were trying to catch a fish.</i></p>
<p>Ch'a yâk'udé ash jìx' àwayèkh. <i>just suddenly his (the man's) hands-in it bit it</i></p>	<p><i>Suddenly it struck at his line.</i></p>
<p>Yèsú k'idên â anahîn k'idên àwayèkh. <i>then well there-at when it had swum up well it bit it</i></p>	<p><i>After it had swum up close, it took (the bait) good.</i></p>

Tlingit Text		English
<p>Yèsú kè anasyékh, kè anasyékh, <i>then up he is pulling it, up he is pulling it,</i></p> <p>kè anasyékh, kè anasyékh. <i>up he is pulling it, up he is pulling it</i></p>		<p><i>Then he started pulling it up, pulling and pulling and pulling it up.</i></p>
<p>Ch'a yâk'udê tle yû wûshdâxh <i>just suddenly just like this³ apart</i></p> <p>às tlèn xh'ânâxh, <i>tree large between-along</i></p>	<p>amsix'uwu <i>which he had split with a wedge</i></p>	<p><i>Then suddenly, in the gap he had created by splitting the large tree,</i></p>
<p>ch'as k'idên a shá â yà nanìní áwé, <i>just well its head there-at as it is coming to be</i></p>		<p><i>as its head was moving into the right position,</i></p>
<p>tákhli ìn a gâs'i khu.a àxh <i>mallet with its post however off</i></p>	<p>amsix'ù. <i>he split with a wedge</i></p>	<p><i>he took the mallet and split away the bracing used to keep the gap open.</i></p>
<p>[Du jín at'ácht.] A kâx' wûsht wudighát. <i>his hands he claps them on it together it snapped shut</i></p>		<p><i>[Sam claps his hands.] It snapped shut on the creature.</i></p>

³ Tle yû, "just like this" (as illustrated by the speaker) is a set phrase. Note that yû can mean both "like this" (as an adverb) and "yon" = "that yonder" (as a demonstrative).

Tlingit Text	English
Áyâ yê jinèyî du shát ìn akanik nìch, <i>now as he is working his wife with he tells it (every time)</i>	<i>Now as he worked he would tell his wife,</i>
"Yû áyá yê jixhané, kha yû, kha yû." <i>like this I am working and like this and like this</i>	<i>"This is what I am doing, like this, and this."</i>
Ch'a àn khu.áyá du chàn khu.à, <i>nevertheless however his mother-in-law however</i> du tùwûch ch'ù ałkhâ. <i>to her way of thinking still he is gambling</i>	<i>But his mother-in-law thought he was still gambling.</i>
Yèsú du sîk' yê adàyakhá, "lyatîn gé ?" <i>then her daughter she says to her you see</i>	<i>So she told her daughter, "You see?"</i>
"De yà nagút tsu de, ałkhâ shûde ! <i>already he is going again now gambling to participate in</i>	<i>"There he goes again to join in the gambling.</i>
"Mânáxh sáyû tsu du xh'êxh at ìtìxh ? <i>why is it still his mouth-to things (food) you keep giving?</i>	<i>"Why do you keep feeding him?"</i>

Tlingit Text		English
<p>"Ch'a nichká áyû! <i>just good for nothing that is</i></p> <p>Łíł dê du xh'êxh at ìtìxh[íkh]! " <i>don't now his mouth-to things (food) (don't) you keep giving</i></p>		<p>"He's no darn good! Don't even bother to feed him now!"</p>
<p>Ch'a àn khu.a ch'a wanínáxh du xhán.à <i>nevertheless however just secretly her spouse</i></p> <p>xh'êxh at tìxh nuch. <i>mouth-to things (food) she keeps giving</i></p>		<p>But his wife kept feeding him no matter what (her mother said).</p>
<p>Yèsú du xhán.à [ìn] akanîk mâ sá <i>then his spouse with he tells it how</i></p> <p>kha mâ sá du tùwú yatì. <i>and how his inner being, mind it is</i></p>	<p>khuwanûk, <i>he is acting</i></p>	<p>So he kept telling his wife what he was doing and what his plans were.</p>
<p>Du shát ìn akanîk yâ àwashâdi <i>his wife with he tells it this which he had caught</i></p> <p>yá kè amdzit'exhi át. <i>this up which he had hooked thing</i></p>	<p>át, <i>thing</i></p>	<p>He told his wife about what he had caught, this creature he had hauled up.</p>

Tlingit Text						English		
Tle <i>just</i>	x'êghà, <i>truly</i>	ts'ats'î <i>bird</i>	tlèn áwé <i>big</i>	ùwayâ <i>it resembles</i>	yú.á. <i>they say</i>	<i>It looked just like a big bird, they say.</i>		
Łigê ! <i>it is big</i>						<i>It was huge!</i>		
Àxh <i>there-from</i>	kè <i>up</i>	astâ áyû <i>after he had lifted it (bodily)</i>		amlìx'ìsh <i>he skinned it</i>	dês. <i>next.</i>	<i>After he had pulled it out, he skinned it.</i>		
K'idên <i>well</i>	anałx'îsh <i>after he had skinned it</i>		áyá <i>then</i>	yèsú, <i>then</i>	a <i>its</i>	dùgú <i>hide</i>	tsú <i>also</i>	<i>After skinning it out, he carefully tanned the hide as well.</i>
ałxwàch <i>he fleshes it</i>	k'idên. <i>well</i>							
K'idên <i>well</i>	a dà <i>about it</i>	yê jinèyí, <i>as he is working</i>	yèsú <i>then</i>	a dà <i>about it</i>	yê jiné, <i>he is working</i>	<i>He was working on it carefully, working and working on it.</i>		
a dà <i>about it</i>	yê jiné. <i>he is working</i>							

Tlingit Text		English
<p>Yèsú a dàt tumditàn, "Gùt'á sáyá <i>then about it he thought what place is it</i></p> <p>kkhwatî yá at dùgú, a dà <i>I will put it this animal hide about it</i></p>	<p>â yánde <i>there-at to rest</i></p> <p>yê jixhwanèyí ?" <i>as I am working</i></p>	<p><i>Then he thought it over, "No where shall I put the hide while I am working on it?"</i></p>
<p>Yú àn shûdách tlét tlaxh yê kùnaí tle <i>this town end-from not very it is (not) far just</i></p> <p><u>at gùwu</u> <u>tlèn</u>⁴anaxh nàshû. <i>a stump big there-through it extended</i></p>		<p><i>Not far from the end of town stood a <u>big</u> stump.</i></p>
<p>A tú áwé â yan ùtîȳch wé <i>inside it there-at to rest he puts it that</i></p> <p><i>(every time)</i></p>	<p>at dùgú. <i>animal hide</i></p>	<p><i>He would put the hide in there.</i></p>
<p>Ch'a yâk'udé khu.ùch wusitìn yá <i>just suddenly the people saw it this</i></p>	<p>at gùwú tlèn. <i>stump big</i></p>	<p><i>Suddenly the townspeople noticed the big stump.</i></p>
<p>Mânáxh sáyú tle gûs' a kinâ <i>why is that just cloud it above-at</i></p>	<p>yan utîȳch? <i>to rest it comes</i></p> <p><i>(every time)</i></p>	<p><i>Why did a cloud keep forming there above it?</i></p>

⁴ Note the rapid fading away of the emphasized long low syllables, the pitch falling from medium high to very low.

Tlingit Text	English
<p>Ch'a àn khu.a tsu yá du xhán.à ìn <i>nevertheless however again this his spouse with</i></p> <p>akanik nìch mâ sáyá yà akunasyèn. <i>he tells (every time) how he has it coming along</i></p>	<p><i>But meanwhile he kept telling his wife how the project was coming along.</i></p>
<p>Áyá, ch'a àn khu.a du chàn khu.a <i>now nevertheless however his mother-in-law however</i></p> <p>ch'a du tú, ch'ù ałkhâ. <i>just her mind still he is gambling</i></p>	<p><i>But his mother-in-law believed he was still gambling.</i></p>
<p>X'êghà du tugêde yatì yú ałkhâ, <i>truly her mind-against it is you gambling</i></p> <p>ách áyú yê xh'ayakhâ nìch, <i>therefore she says (every time)</i></p>	<p><i>She was dead set against gambling, so she kept saying,</i></p>
<p>"Shî dê, yak'ê dê du xhándáxh yìyagùdí ⁵ <i>watch (out) now it's good now his proximity-from that you go</i></p> <p>wé khâ. Mâ sáyá iguxhłatîn ?" <i>that man how he will look after you</i></p>	<p><i>"Be on your guard; now would be a good time to leave that man. How is he going to look after you?"</i></p>

⁵ Coastal Tlingit yayigùdí.

Tlingit Text		English
<p>K'idên yan asní áyú yâ at</p> <p><i>well after he had prepared it this animal</i></p>	<p>dùgú tlèn</p> <p><i>skin big</i></p>	<p><i>After he had prepared the big skin with care,</i></p>
<p>yèsú sh wakhshiyít amdi.àxh</p> <p><i>then self (his own) field of vision-into he put it (the skin)</i></p> <p>k'idên, k'idên.</p> <p><i>well well</i></p>		<p><i>he took it and spread it out to have a look at it, carefully, carefully.</i></p>
<p>"A tûxh yè kkhagût yá at</p> <p><i>its inside-through down let me go this animal</i></p>	<p>dùgú. "</p> <p><i>skin</i></p>	<p><i>"I can get down inside this skin."</i></p>
<p>A tûxh wùgùt yèsú.</p> <p><i>its inside-through he went then</i></p>		<p><i>So he went down inside it.</i></p>
<p>Ch'a yèsú a tûxh yè nagúdi áwé,</p> <p><i>just then through it down as he is going</i></p> <p>tle àn wudikhìn, ɫdakát yé.</p> <p><i>just then with him it flew off every place</i></p>		<p><i>As he was going further inside, it took off flying with him, all over the place.</i></p>
<p>Yû dakît wudakhìnî áyá ɫdakát át ayatîn !</p> <p><i>yonder above-through as he is flying every thing he sees it</i></p>		<p><i>As he flew up into the sky, he could see everything!</i></p>

Tlingit Text	English
<p>Yèsú a dà kè tumditán, "Yá atxhá axh <i>then about it (starting) up he thought this food my</i></p> <p>xh'ède yà dushgêyich áyú, <i>mouth-to because they begrudged it</i></p>	<p><i>Then he started to think, "Since they were so stingy and didn't want to feed me,</i></p>
<p>"łdakát yá khu.ù has du xh'êxh at gakhatî. " <i>all this people their mouth-to food let me give</i></p>	<p><i>"What I'm going to do is, I'm going to feed all the people."</i></p>
<p>Yèsú, yá àn, łingit'àní â yê yatì. <i>then this town Tlingit village there-at it is</i></p>	<p><i>Now here is where the Tlingit village was.</i></p>
<p>Yûdu îkh, â yê at na.wèch, <i>yonder is beach there-at he puts things (food) (every time)</i></p> <p>ch'a dà sá kè ashátch. <i>just what(ever) up he keeps grabbing it</i></p>	<p><i>There was a beach way over yonder where he stored the food, whatever he caught.</i></p>

Tlingit Text		English
<p>Tlaxh x'êghà yá àn khu.ùwú <i>very truly this town people</i></p> <p>has du tuwâ <i>to their way of thinking</i></p> <p>ksiyê, <i>it is strange</i></p>		<p><i>The townspeople thought it was very strange</i></p>
<p>dà sáyû ch'as yú atxhá â <i>what(ever) just yon food there-at</i></p> <p>yê natìch. <i>it is (every time)</i></p>		<p><i>that food of all kinds kept turning up there.</i></p>
<p>Á tsú, yû du chàn khu.à ch'a hú, <i>it also yon his mother-in-law however just he</i></p> <p>hú du tuwâdâxh, hú du yêgi tuwâdâxh áyú, <i>he because of him he his spirit-helper because of</i></p> <p>â yê at natìch yû kè tumditán. <i>there-at food is (every time) like this (starting)up she thought</i></p>		<p><i>His mother-in-law started wondering about that as well, whether it was her son-in-law's doing, by means of his spirit helper, that there was food there.</i></p>

Tlingit Text					English
Yèsú <i>then</i>	wé <i>the</i>	yîs <i>young</i>	khâ <i>man</i>	yê daxh adàyakhâ nìch <i>thus he says to them (every time)</i>	<i>He kept telling the young men,</i>
"Â <i>there-at</i>	yèkh <i>down (to the shore)</i>	yi.á <i>(you all) get going</i>	dê! <i>now</i>		<i>"Go down there now! There is food there."</i>
De <i>already</i>	â <i>there-at</i>	yê at yatì." <i>there is food</i>			
X'êghà <i>truly</i>	ásgé, <i>it would seem</i>	dà sá <i>something</i>	ch'as <i>just</i>	atxhá <i>food</i>	<i>And indeed there was always food there.</i>
â <i>there-at</i>	yê natìch. <i>it is (every time)</i>				
Àdé <i>how</i>	yakùgeyi <i>it is abundant</i>	yè <i>way</i>	yá <i>these</i>	hàndé <i>hither</i>	<i>There was so much food there that he was accumulating stash by stash.</i>
yà <i>along</i>	anashkhákh ⁶ <i>he is moving them (stashes of food)</i>	át. <i>things</i>			

⁶ yà anashkhákh literally means "he is causing them to move from place to place" (as a bird hopping from spot to spot)

Tlingit Text		English
<p>Yá àn khu.a yá kayâsh daxh alyêxh, a <i>this town however these platforms they are making them it</i></p> <p>yidé at dux'ân, ldakát át. <i>inside-to things people are smoking every thing</i> <i>(of house)</i></p>		<p><i>Meanwhile, the townspeople were busy making caches and smoking food of all kinds to put inside them.</i></p>
<p>Áyá yá du xhán.à yê adàyakhâ nìch, <i>now this his spouse he says to her (every time)</i></p>		<p><i>Now the man would tell his wife</i></p>
<p>hú du tuwâdâxh áyá yê yà at natîn. <i>he because of him food is accumulating</i></p>		<p><i>that the growing stash of food was his own doing.</i></p>
<p>Gùsû dê wé tû dushkhìdi khâ <i>where is now the whom people used to look down on man</i></p> <p>yá àdé datîyi yé ? <i>this how he used to be way</i></p>		<p><i>He was no longer the man that people had looked down on, as he used to be.</i></p>

Tlingit Text	English
<p>"Tlêx' yatìyi át khu.a," yû adàyakhá <i>one being thing however like this he says to her</i></p> <p>du xhán.à, <i>his spouse</i></p>	<p><i>"There's just one thing," he said to his wife,</i></p>
<p>"Yâ át xhwadakhìní łdakát yé, <i>this around as I am flying every place</i></p> <p>ch'a àn khu.à tlét ushk'é axh kê khiwu.à yí. <i>nevertheless however it is bad on me that it dawn</i></p>	<p><i>"Although I can fly all over the place, there's one thing; I can't let dawn overtake me.</i></p>
<p>"Yêł axh kê mdu.àxhí, de hûch' áyá xhát! " <i>crow on me as it is heard already that's all me</i></p>	<p><i>" If the crow's call catches me (flying), that will be the end of me!"</i></p>
<p>Ách áyú yèsú tsu át wudikhìn, <i>therefore then again around he flew</i></p> <p>át wudikhìn, át wudikhìn. <i>around he flew around he flew</i></p>	<p><i>So he flew off again; he flew here and he flew there.</i></p>

Tlingit Text						English
Ch'a <i>just</i>	yâk'udê <i>suddenly</i>	amsitìn, <i>he saw</i>	dà sáyú <i>what is that (yonder)</i>		ch'as <i>just</i>	<i>Suddenly he saw something; there were two whales right close together, whales.</i>
<u>dêxh</u> <i>two</i>	<u>yâỹ</u> <i>whales</i>	tle <i>just</i>	yê <i>like that</i>	wùsh <i>each other</i>	xhán, <i>next to</i>	
Yá <i>this</i>	àdé <i>in this way</i>	ash <i>him</i> <i>(the man)</i>	kamłinigi <i>he had told</i> <i>(about it)</i>	yé <i>way</i>	áyú	<i>The way they tell his story, (the temptation was so powerful that,)</i>
ch'ù <i>still</i>	<u>dêxh</u> <i>two</i>	daxh àwashât, <i>he grabbed them</i>	yèsú <i>then</i>		ch'a ghà <i>in vain</i>	<i>he grabbed them both, and tried and tried to get them to shore.</i>
akù.àkhw <i>he is trying</i>	yánde, <i>shore-to</i>	yánde, <i>shore-to</i>	yánde. <i>shore-to</i>			

Tlingit Text		English
Tlêní	ayawudlàghí, <i>almost as he had gotten there</i>	<i>When he was almost there,</i>
ch'a yèsú àndáxh tlêt unaí, áx'	<i>just then town-from not it is (not) far there-at</i>	<i>just then, not far from the village, the dawn overtook him,</i>
du kê khiwa.à,	<i>on him it dawned</i>	
kha yêł wuduwa.áxh.	<i>and crow it was heard</i>	<i>and the crow's call was heard.</i>
Ch'ù áx' áyú tliyê wùnè.	<i>the same place-at it stopped</i>	<i>Everything stopped right there.</i>
Ch'as yè ndustín, ch'as yè ndustín, áyû,	<i>just people are starting to see just people are starting to see</i>	<i>The people caught glimpses of what was going on;</i>
tle ajiwanákh, tle àxh wudikhìn,	<i>just then he let go of them just then off he flew</i>	<i>he just let go of [the whales] and off he flew,</i>
yû tliyà shà xhùdé.	<i>yon further mountains among-to</i>	<i>into the mountains off in the distance.</i>

Tlingit Text					English
Áx'	áyá	shux'ânáxh	wuduwa.áxh	Xètl.	<i>That is where people heard the Thunderbird for the first time.⁷</i>
<i>there-at</i>	<i>it is</i>	<i>for the first time</i>	<i>it is heard</i>	<i>Thunderbird</i>	
Ách	áyú,	ch'u	yídát,	Xètl	<i>So now, even to this day, whenever the Thunderbird is heard, the rain falls, because Thunderbird was born of water.</i>
<i>therefore</i>		<i>even</i>	<i>now</i>	<i>Thunderbird</i>	
sîw̃	dàk	ustànch,	yá hîndáxh	wudu.àxhí,	
<i>rain</i>	<i>down</i>	<i>it falls</i> <i>(every time)</i> <i>(as precipitation)</i>	<i>this water-from</i>	<i>as he is heard</i> <i>it was born-because</i>	

So there you have the Thunderbird, where he came from.

Sam Johnston

⁷ Xètl wuduwa.áxh, literally "the Thunderbird is heard" is the ordinary way to say "there is thunder" or "it is thundering". Likewise, yêl wuduwa.áxh, "the crow is heard" means "the crow has cawed", much like "the rooster has crowed".

The Screech Owl and the Crow

K'ákw kha Yêl : Tlingit Text

Told by Sam Johnston (Ànàlahàsh) at YNLC, October 2014
transcribed by Jeff Leer (Wèhá)

Ch'ákw áyá yú.á łdakát yé áyá át ana.átjin. Łdakát át yù
xh'ála.átgin.

Yêl áyú, yù t'átk, yú shà àxh wù.ìyi yé dên át àwa.àt. X'êghà
khà tuwâ sigû áyá yá àdé k'idên yàwat'ayi yé.

Yêl yèsú a dàt kè tumditán, yak'ê hú tsú du jít à yawusxixí
àxh [wé xh'àn], yá khu.ù xhùdé hàt aghatit.

Yèsú łdakát yé áyú du yáxh kamdlihìji át ch'a ghà daxh
akù.àkhw. "Yá xh'àn axh jiyís yà yakghisatî." Ch'a yèsú wéx'
áwé has axh'ènákhch, khútxh yàwat'â. Łdakát ch'a ghà daxh
akù.àkhw.

Yèsú wêt ishkhákh wé k'ákw. Yèsú á dês àn yù xh'ali.átk. K'ákw
yú.á du kh'álú tsú yê kułayât'in, sètà yáxh.

Yèsú àn yù xh'ali.átk, àn yù xh'ali.átk. "Yá xh'àn axh jiyís yà
yakghisayîkh. "Łíł xh'akghìnàkh. Łíł x'wán xh'ínákhxhikh!" yù
adàyakhá. "Khushtuyáxh tsu i xh'êk' àxh wugàní x'wán ch'a tlèxh
yà yaksayîkh!"

Ch'a du xh'ayáxh áwé yù xh'àn yà ayanasyíkh. X'êghà yà
yanat'ên, ch'a àn tlét axh'èwanàkh. K'idên ayanadlâkh, yá du
kh'álú khu.a tle àxh wùgàn.

Ách áyá k'ákw kha łdakát yá ûndách has du kh'álú yê daxh
gudiyâtl', kha has du yá tsú àxh wùgàni yáxh natìch. Yá Yêl
[jiyís] yê jinèyích, wé K'ákw, du kh'álú àxh wugàních áyá, du
kh'álú ch'a yê gùwâtl', kha du yá tsú.

Ách áyû yê s daghàtì.

K'ákw kha Yêl : Text Analysis

Told by Sam Johnston (Ànàlahàsh) at YNLC, October 2014

transcribed by Jeff Leer (Wèhá)

Tlingit Text		English
Ch'âkw áyá yú.á łdakát yé áyá át <i>long ago they say every place about</i>	ana.átjin. <i>people used to go</i>	<i>Long ago, they say, people used to go everywhere.</i>
Łdakát át yù xh'ála.átgin. <i>every thing used to converse</i>		<i>All creatures used to talk.</i>
Yêl áyú, yû t'átk, yú shà <i>crow it was yon⁸ land yon mountain off</i> yé dên át àwa.át. <i>place in area of about people went</i>	àxh wù.ìyi <i>eroded</i>	<i>You see, Crow was walking around on the land near a landslide where the mountain had erupted.</i>
X'êghà khà tuwâ sigû áyá yá àdé <i>truly people like this like which well</i> yàwat'ayi yé. <i>it is hot way</i>	k'idên	<i>The people really liked how nice and warm it was.</i>

⁸ "Yon" in the interlinear means "that (place or thing) yonder, way over there".

Tlingit Text	English
<p>Yêl yèsú a dàt kè tumditán, <i>crow then it about up he thought</i></p> <p>yak'ê hú tsú du jít à yawusxìxí àxh [wé xh'àn], <i>it is good him too into his some that it fall there-from possession</i></p>	<p><i>Now Crow started to think that it would be nice for him to get hold of some fire too,</i></p>
<p>yá khu.ù xhùdé hàt aghatìt. <i>this people midst-to here in order that he bring it</i></p>	<p><i>so that he could bring some back to the people.</i></p>
<p>Yèsú ldakát yé áyú du yáxh kamdlihìji át <i>then every place him like they flew thing</i></p> <p>ch'a ghà daxh akù.àkhw. <i>in vain he (tries to) command them</i></p>	<p><i>So everywhere (he went) he tried in vain to get his fellow fowl to follow his instructions.</i></p>
<p>"Yá xh'àn axh jiyís yà yakghisatî." <i>this fire for me along you will carry (fire)</i></p>	<p><i>"You must carry the fire for me."</i></p>
<p>Ch'a yèsú wéx' áwé has axh'èràkhch, <i>just then there-at they (always) dropped it from the mouth</i></p> <p>khútxh yàwat'â. <i>too much it is hot</i></p>	<p><i>But they would always drop it prematurely because it was too hot.</i></p>

Tlingit Text		English
<p>Łdakát ch'a ghà daxh akù.àkhw. <i>all in vain he (tries to) command</i></p>		<p><i>He tried to get them all to do it, but it was no use.</i></p>
<p>Yèsú wêt iskhákh wé k'ákw. <i>then there-at it is perched that screech owl</i></p>		<p><i>Then (he saw) a screech owl sitting there.</i></p>
<p>Yèsú á dês àn yù xh'ali.átk. <i>then it this time with it he is conversing</i></p>		<p><i>So he struck up a conversation with it.</i></p>
<p>K'ákw yú.á du kh'ałú tsú yê kułayât'in, <i>screech owl they say his bill also it used to be long</i> sêtà yáxh. <i>snipe like</i></p>		<p><i>They say the screech owl's bill used to be long, like a snipe's.</i></p>
<p>Yèsú àn yù xh'ali.átk, àn yù xh'ali.átk. <i>then with it he is conversing with it he is conversing</i></p>		<p><i>So he talked and talked with it.</i></p>
<p>"Yá xh'àn axh jiyís yà yakghisayîkh. <i>this fire for me along you will carry (fire) in the mouth</i></p>		<p><i>"You are to carry the fire for me, to carry it in your beak.</i></p>

Tlingit Text	English
<p>"Łíł xh'akghìnákh. Łíł x'wán <i>don't you will drop it from the mouth don't be sure</i></p> <p>xh'ínákhxhikh !" yû adàyakhá. <i>you ever drop it from the mouth thus he tells him</i></p>	<p><i>"Don't drop it! Please don't drop it!" he said to it.</i></p>
<p>"Khushtuyáxh tsu i xh'êk' àxh wugàní <i>no matter again your mouth-little off it burns</i></p> <p>x'wán ch'a tlèxh yà yaksayìkh !" <i>be sure just forever along you carry it in the mouth</i></p>	<p><i>"Even if your little beak burns off, be sure to keep carrying it!"</i></p>
<p>Ch'a du xh'ayáxh áwé yú xh'àn yà ayanasyíkh. <i>just as he said yon fire along he is carrying it in the mouth</i></p>	<p><i>So the screech owl did as it was told and carried the fire in its bill.</i></p>
<p>X'êghà yà yanat'ên, ch'a àn tlél axh'èwanàkh. <i>truly it is getting hot neverthelessnot he dropped it from the mouth</i></p>	<p><i>It was getting very hot, but he never dropped it.</i></p>
<p>K'idên ayanadlâkh, yá du kh'ałú khu.a <i>well after he had achieved it this his bill however</i></p> <p>tle àxh wùgàn. <i>just off it burned</i></p>	<p><i>When he had gotten all the way there his bill was burned right off.</i></p>

Tlingit Text		English
<p>Ách áyá k'ákw kha ɫdakát yá ûndách has du <i>therefore screech owl and all these owls their</i></p> <p>kh'ałú yê daxh gudiyâtl', <i>bills they are (all) short</i></p>		<p><i>This is why screech owls – together with the whole owl family – have short bills,</i></p>
<p>kha has du yá tsú àxh wùgàni yáxh natìch. <i>and their faces also off it burned like it is (every time)</i></p>		<p><i>and their faces have that "burnt out" look as well.</i></p>
<p>Yá Yêł [jìyís] yê jinèyích, <i>this crow for because he is working that</i></p> <p>du kh'ałú àxh wugàních áyá, <i>his bill off because it burned</i></p>	<p>wé K'ákw, <i>screech owl</i></p>	<p><i>Because of the job Screech Owl had done for Crow, because his bill had burned off,</i></p>
<p>du kh'ałú ch'a yê gùwâtl', kha <i>his bill just it is short and</i></p>	<p>du yá tsú. <i>his face also</i></p>	<p><i>he has a short bill and a foreshortened face.</i></p>
<p>Ách áyû yê s daghàtì. <i>therefore thus they (all) are</i></p>		<p><i>That's why they are the way they are.</i></p>
		<p><i>That's it.</i></p>

Sam Johnston

The Lonely Man and the Seagull

Wułitishi Khâ Kha Kêtladi : Tlingit Text

Told by Sam Johnston (Ànàlahàsh) at YNLC, October 2014
transcribed by Jeff Leer (Wèhá)

*The seagull, how many of you know how to say "seagull" in Tlingit?
"Kêtladi", that's good.*

A yáxh áyá àdé yì ìn sh kaxhałnik yé.

Łingít áyú át na.átjin. Tlênáxh khâ áyú tlét k'idên sh tùdanùk. Tsu àxh du nákh akgha.át yû atxhá â yê duwa.uwu yêde. Àxh hàndê à gaxhdutî.

Khukałt'îx' ítđáxh áyá yú.á. Khatiyi wé â tsû de, â yáxh tsú de kínde khushû.

Ch'a hú áyá yê khudàyakhá, tlét k'idên sh tùdanùk. "Ch'a yâ yè kkhanùk. Tlét axh tuwâ ushgú yì ìn xhwa.àdî. Yì yakkhwa.â yì ìn xhwagudî. Ch'a yâ yè kkhanùk. Ch'a yê gugênk' atxhá kha nâkw axh xh'axháni yê gaxhyî.û."

"À , ch'a a yáxh áwé." Yèsû yê dàyadukhá, "Tlét hà yìghayât'. Ch'a yèsû wêx' tsu hàndé gaxhtù.ât. "

Gushé mâ sáyá at wùnì. Yèsû tsu áx' hàndé akghwa.at yé, tsu a yânáxh khuyàwahâ tsu.

Ch'ù a yáxh ásgé yèsû wé khâ khu.a du tùwú kè nałtsìn. Gùsú dê nìgu? Tlêx' yatìyi át khu.ayâ yú.á : tìsh du kànáxh yà natîn.

Ch'a àdé nghàtiyi yé ghût áyá, yû tliyàdé â yáxh át wùgùt. Ch'a át wugùdí áyá ch'as du kâ mdikhín kêtladi.

Ch'a àdé młitishi yé wé khâ tlét tsu dà sá du yáxh disêgu át tsu dê yè ùstínch. Yú kêdladi du kâ dakhîn, áyá ch'a kínde áyá áxh kè amdligín.

Tle kè at kàwashî yú.á kínde ałtíni áyá. "Kedladi-i, kedladi-i -
edladi-i," yû kè at kàwashî.

Àxh áyá mdujigûk yú.á; yá "yodel" yû duwasâgu shí. (At
dushùkh.)

Łingít xh'êdáxh wududzigûk.

Sam Johnston

Wuḷitìshi Khâ Kha Kêtladi - Text Analysis

(also called "The Joys of Yodeling")

Told by Sam Johnston (Ànàtahàsh) at YNLC, October 2014
transcribed by Jeff Leer (Wèhà)

*The seagull, how many of you know how to say "seagull" in Tlingit?
"Kêtladi", that's good.*

Tlingit Text	English
A yáxh áyá àdé yì ìn <i>it like this is in that way with you (folks)</i> sh kaxhaḥnik yé. <i>I am telling the story way</i>	<i>This is the right way that I'm telling you.</i>
Ḷingít áyú át na.átjin. <i>Tlingit there-about they always go</i>	<i>The Tlingit used to travel all over.</i>
Tlênáxh khâ áyú tlét k'idên sh tùdanùk. <i>one man not well he felt (inside himself)</i>	<i>A certain man did not feel well.</i>

Tlingit Text		English
<p>Tsu àxh du nákh akgha.ât again away from him the people are going to go</p> <p>yû atxhá â yê duwa.uwu yêde. that food there-at thus people keep it place-toward</p>		<p><i>They were about to go again, leaving him behind, to where they kept their food.</i></p>
<p>Àxh hànê à gaxhdutî. there-from here-toward some people will bring</p>		<p><i>They were going to bring him back some.</i></p>
<p>Khukał'îx' ítdáxh áyá yú.á. spring following-from they say (frozen outside)</p>		<p><i>This was after break-up in spring, they say.</i></p>
<p>Khatìyi wé â tsû de, â yàxh tsú de even that lake also already lake shore also already</p> <p>kínde khushû. upward it protrudes, shows itself</p>		<p><i>Even the lake, the shore of the lake as well, had started opening up; (the water started showing itself.)</i></p>
<p>Ch'a hú áyá yê khudàyakhá, tlél k'idén sh tùdanùk. just he himself he tells the people not well he feels (inside himself)</p>		<p><i>He himself told the people that he didn't feel well.</i></p>

Tlingit Text	English
"Ch'a yâ yè kkhanûk. <i>just here I will sit (stay)</i>	"I'll just stay here.
"Tlét axh tuwâ ushgú yì ìn xhwa.àdî. <i>not my mind's isn't with you that I go eye-in pleasant folks</i>	"I don't want to go with you.
"Yì yakkhwa.â yì ìn xhwagudî. <i>you will be held back with you (folks) that I go</i>	"I will hold you back if I go with you.
"Ch'a yâ yè kkhanûk. <i>just here I will sit (stay)</i>	"I'll just stay here.
"Ch'a yê gugênk' atxhá kha nâkw <i>just a little food and medicine</i> axh xh'axháni yê gaxhyì.û." <i>my mouth-at you folks will leave</i>	"Just leave me a little food and medicine."
"À , ch'a a yáxh áwé." <i>yes just it like it is</i>	"Okay, fair enough."

Tlingit Text		English
<p>Yèsû yê dàyadukhá, "Tlét hà yìghayât'.</p> <p><i>then thus people say to him not we will be (gone) long</i></p>		<p><i>Then they told him, "We won't be gone long.</i></p>
<p>"Ch'a yésû wêx' tsu hàndé gaxhtù.ât. "</p> <p><i>just then there-at again here-towards we will come</i></p>		<p><i>"We will be back shortly."</i></p>
<p>Gushé mâ sáyá at wùnì.</p> <p><i>I don't know how something it happened</i></p>		<p><i>Something happened, I'm not sure what.</i></p>
<p>Yèsû tsu áx' hàndé akghwa.at yé,</p> <p><i>then again there-at here-ward people will come (back) place</i></p> <p>tsu a yânáxh khuyàwahâ tsu.</p> <p><i>again further than it time passed again.</i></p>		<p><i>Then again they were coming back through here, but it took longer (than expected).</i></p>
<p>Ch'ù a yáxh ásgé yèsû wé khâ</p> <p><i>just it like it would seem then that man</i></p> <p>khu.a du tùwú kè nałtsìn.</p> <p><i>however his inner being it is getting stronger</i></p>		<p><i>It was true that the man was now feeling stronger.</i></p>
<p>Gùsú dê nîgu?</p> <p><i>where is now his being sick</i></p>		<p><i>His sickness was now gone.</i></p>

Tlingit Text	English
<p>Tlêx' yatìyi át khu.ayâ yú.á : <i>one being thing however they say</i></p> <p>tìsh du kànáxh yà natîn. <i>loneliness his surface-along it is settling</i></p>	<p><i>But they say there was one thing (that bothered him still): a feeling of loneliness began to take its toll.</i></p>
<p>Ch'a àdê nghàtiyi yé ghût áyá, <i>just in that he might way without</i> <i>way come to be</i></p> <p>yû tliyàdé â yàxh át wùgùt. <i>yonder next one over lake shore there-about he went</i></p>	<p><i>Without a clue as to what might become of him, he walked further over on the shore of the lake.</i></p>
<p>Ch'a át wugùdí áyá ch'as du kê <i>just there-about as he went just on him</i></p> <p>mdikhín kêtladi. <i>it flew seagull</i></p>	<p><i>As he was walking about, suddenly a seagull flew up and hovered above him.</i></p>

Tlingit Text		English
<p>Ch'a àdé młitìshi yé wé khâ <i>just in that way he was lonely way that man</i></p>		<p><i>That man was so lonely;</i></p>
<p>tlét tsu dà sá du yáxh disêgu át <i>not again what his like living thing</i></p> <p>tsu dê yè ùstínch. <i>again now he ever sees it</i></p>		<p><i>he never saw the likes of any living thing, like himself.</i></p>
<p>Yú kèdladi du kâ dakhîn, <i>this seagull on him when it flew</i></p> <p>áyá ch'a kínde áyá áxh kè amdligín. <i>just upward up there up he looked</i></p>		<p><i>But when the seagull flew on top of him, he lifted up his head and looked up.</i></p>
<p>Tle kè at kàwashî yú.á <i>just then up something he (started to) sing they say</i></p> <p>kínde ałtíni áyá. <i>upward as he was watching it</i></p>		<p><i>Then it just burst into song, they say, as he was looking up at it.</i></p>

Tlingit Text	English
"Kedladi-i, kedladi-i - edladi-i, " <i>seagull-ie seagull-ie - eagull-ie</i>	"Seagullie, seagullie, eagullie,"
yû kè at kàwashî. <i>thus up something it (started to) sing</i>	<i>that's the song it came out with.</i>
Àxh áyá mdujigûk yú.á, yá "yodel" <i>there-from people came to learn it they say this "yodel"</i> yû duwasâgu shí. <i>thus it is called song</i>	<i>That's how people came to learn this kind of song they call the "yodel".</i>
(At dushùkh.) <i>people they laugh</i>	<i>(The audience laughs.)</i>
Łingít xh'êdáxh wududzigûk. <i>Tlingit mouth-from people learned how (to sing it)</i>	<i>They learned it from a Tlingit.</i>

Sam Johnston

The Blind Man and the Loon

Tlingit Text

Told by Sam Johnston (Ànàlahàsh) at YNLC, October 2014
transcribed by Jeff Leer (Wèhá)

Ch'a t'l'ákw áyá yú.á, Łingít át na.átjin, łdakát yé. Yú â yàxh áyû â khuduwa.û. Tlêx' yatìyi khâ áyá tlét khùshtîn.

Yèsú yú â yê khuyatìyi yé atxhá has du xh'ède yà shunaxíx. Ách áyú yê dàyadukhá wé ł khùshitìni khâ, "Yú tliyàdé gaxhtù.ât yá sìn â tuwa.ùwu yé. Atxhá â yê tuwa.û. Àxh hàndê à gaxhtùtì. Ch'a yâ yê igaxhtusanûk. Atxhá kha hìn i xh'axhání yê gaxhtù.û."

Yèsú â khuwa.û. Tlêx' yagì áyá yèsú wé hìn àxh kè aguxhsa.în, gushé mâ sáyá wùnì, du xh'anákh yût kamjixhín.

"Há, mâ sá kghwatì?" Yèsú wê hìn yedí xákwdi ìn yû hìn a xh'ède mdighât'. Ádé yà ndaghát', tlét khùshtîn. Át daghât' áyá yèsú, hìnkh yê akghwatân yû hìn yì.ádi.

Dà sáyá ch'as tû àwanúk, yàkw,du tú. Tle ash ít xh'èwatán, "Gûk! A gíx' gagú!" yû dàyadukhá. Khà xh'ayáxh áwé áxh sh kamdlixh'íx'.

Yèsú du ìn dàk nahwên wé kaghìt. Áxh yà nahwen yé áyá ash xh'èwûs', "Mâ sáyá iyatì?" yû ash xh'èwûs'. "Tlét áyákhùxshatîn. Tlét tsu at uxhatîn."

Yû dèkî du ìn â dàk hû áyú du ìn kát shamdixhích. Áxh kê yas.â áyú, "Mâ sás yatì i wàkh?" yû ash xh'èwûs'. "Ch'a yê gugênk' áyá at xhàtîn," yû yàwakhà wé khâ.

Tsu du ìn kát shamdixhích. Tsu àxh kè yas.â áyá tsu, "Mâ sás yatì yìdát?" "Ch'a wás ch'a axh wakhxêxh'u tûnáxh; yú tû daxh xhàtîn," yû xh'ayakhá wé khâ.

Tsu du ìn kát shamdixhích tsu, wé kaghìt. Tsu àxh kè yas.â áyá tsu, "Mâ sás yatì yìdát?" Dà sáyá tsu ch'a ìdakát át ayatîn.

X'êghà du tùwú yak'ê wé khâ wé kaghìt du ìt wudashiyí. Du tuwáx' khu.a yàkw ìn áyá â dák uwagút, wé kaghìt díxh'náxh áwé â dák uwagút. Yèsú, yánde dês du ìn yan uwahû.

Àdé du ìtxh sh tughâ dìtiyi yé áwé, wé kaghìt ìdáchh sh tughâ datí, yèsú, "Mâ yù kaxhwasgìdí sa kwshé k'idên gunalchîsh yù yakkhwasakhâ?"

Yû a dà yù tuwatánk. Yèsú sh dât khumdlínùk. Ch'a hûch' áyá àwat'iyi át áyú, ts'as yù s'àkh sèt du sé.

Ch'a á dê sêdáchh kè akamdzitî, wé kaghìt sêxh akamsitì.
"Gunalchîsh," yù adàyakhá. "X'êghà i ìdáchh sh tughâ datí áyá.
"Ch'a axh àyí sèt i sêxh kaxhwsitì."

Ách áyá yú.á, ch'ù yìdát kaghìt sêde duwatîn wé sèt a sêxh akawustiyín. Ách khu.a áyá yú.á kaghìt tsú, du wàkh xh'àn yáxh daxh kasitì, wé tlét khùshitìni khâ ìt wudashiyích.

Sam Johnston

The Blind Man and the Loon - Text Analysis

Told by Sam Johnston (Ànàtahàsh) at YNLC, October 2014
transcribed by Jeff Leer (Wèhá)

Tlingit Text		English
<p>Ch'a tl'ákw áyá yú.á, ǵingít át na.átjin, <i>just always they say Tlingit about they used to go</i></p> <p>ǵdakát yé. <i>every place</i></p>		<p><i>They say the Tlingit used to go around everywhere.</i></p>
<p>Yú â yàxh áyû â khuduwa.û. <i>yon⁹ lake shore there people live</i></p>		<p><i>The people were living on the shore of a lake.</i></p>
<p>Tlêx' yatìyi khâ áyá tlél <i>one being man not</i></p>	<p>khùshtîn. <i>he can see</i></p>	<p><i>There was one blind man.</i></p>
<p>Yèsú yú â yê khuyatìyi yé <i>then yonder there thus people are staying place</i></p> <p>atxhá has du xh'ède yà shunaxíx. <i>food their mouth-to it is dwindling</i></p>		<p><i>Now their food supply was dwindling in the area they were staying.</i></p>

⁹ "Yon" in the interlinear means "that (place or thing) yonder, way over there".

Tlingit Text	English
<p>Ách áyú yê dàyadukhá wé † khùshitìni khâ, so thus people say to that blind man</p>	<p><i>So they said to the blind man,</i></p>
<p>"Yú tliyàdé gaxhtù.ât yá sìn â yonder further-to we will go this cache there</p> <p>tuwa.ùwu yé. we have it place</p>	<p><i>"We are going a way further on to where we have a cache.</i></p>
<p>"Atxhá â yê tuwa.û. food there we have it.</p>	<p><i>"We have food there.</i></p>
<p>"Àxh hànê à gaxhtùtî. from there hither some we will bring</p>	<p><i>"We'll bring some back here.</i></p>
<p>"Ch'a yâ yè igaxhtusanûk. just here we will let you sit</p>	<p><i>"We'll leave you here.</i></p>
<p>"Atxhá kha hîn i xh'axháni yê gaxhtù.û." food and water your mouth-near we will put it.</p>	<p><i>"We will leave you some food and water where you can get at it."</i></p>
<p>Yèsú â khuwa.û. then there he is living</p>	<p><i>So he stayed there.</i></p>

Tlingit Text		English
<p>Tlêx' yagì áyá yèsú wé hîn <i>one day then that water</i></p> <p>àxh kè aguxhsa.în, <i>from there up he will take (a dipperful)</i></p>		<p><i>One day he was going to get a dipperful of water,</i></p>
<p>gushé mâ sáyá wùnì, <i>I don't know how it happened</i></p>		<p><i>but somehow,</i></p>
<p>du xh'anákh yût kamjixhín. <i>his mouth-escaping out it spilled</i></p>		<p><i>it spilled before he could drink it.</i></p>
<p>"Há, mâ sá kghwatî ?" <i>hmm, how it will be</i></p>		<p><i>"Hmm, now what?"</i></p>
<p>Yèsú wê hîn yedì xákwdi ìn yû hîn a xh'ède <i>then that water container empty with yon water its mouth-to</i></p> <p>mdighât'. <i>he crawled</i></p>		<p><i>Then he crawled over to where he could get water with the empty container.</i></p>
<p>Ádé yà ndaghát', tlél khùshtîn. <i>there-to he is crawling not he can see</i></p>		<p><i>He was crawling blindly towards it.</i></p>

Tlingit Text	English
<p>Át daghât' áyá yèsú, <i>there-to when he had crawled then</i></p>	<p><i>When he crawled there,</i></p>
<p>hînxh yè akghwatân yû hìn yì.ádi. <i>in the water he will put yon water container</i></p>	<p><i>he was going to put the container into the water.</i></p>
<p>Dà sáyá ch'as tû àwanúk, <i>what? just within himself he felt it</i></p> <p>yàkw, du tú. <i>canoe his inner being</i></p>	<p><i>Suddenly it felt to him like a canoe.</i></p>
<p>Tle ash ît xh'èwatán, "Gûk! A gîkx' gagú!" <i>just then him to it spoke go ahead! its stern-in get going</i></p> <p>yû dàyadukhá. <i>thus someone says to him</i></p>	<p><i>Just then a voice spoke to him, "Go on, get in the stern!" it said to him.</i></p>
<p>Khà xh'ayáxh áwé áxh sh kamdlixh'îx'. <i>person's mouth-like there-through self he squeezed</i></p>	<p><i>So he did what it told him; he squeezed himself in.</i></p>

Tlingit Text		English
<p>Yèsú du ìn dàk nahwên wé kaghìt.</p> <p><i>then with him out it is swimming that loon</i></p>		<p><i>Then that loon swam out with him.</i></p>
<p>Áxh yà nahwen yé áyá ash xh'èwûs', <i>there-via along it is swimming place him it asks</i></p> <p>"Mâ sáyá iyatì ?" yû ash xh'èwûs'. <i>how you are thus him it asks</i></p>		<p><i>As it was swimming along there, it asked him, "How are you?" it asked him.</i></p>
<p>"Tlét áyá khùxshatîn. Tlét tsu at uxhatîn." <i>not I can't see not again thing I see</i></p>		<p><i>"I'm blind. I can't see anything. "</i></p>
<p>Yû dèkî du ìn â dàk hû áyú <i>out in the water with him there out after it swam</i></p> <p>du ìn kát shamdixhích. <i>with him it dived</i></p>		<p><i>After it had swum out there, it dove with him.</i></p>
<p>Àxh kê yas.â áyú, "Mâ sás yatì i wàkh ?" <i>there-from up after it surfaced how it is your eye</i></p> <p>yû ash xh'èwûs'. <i>thus him it asks</i></p>		<p><i>After it surfaced, it asked him, "How are your eyes?" it asked him.</i></p>

Tlingit Text	English
<p>"Ch'a yê gugênk' áyá at xhàtîn," <i>just a little things I see</i></p> <p>yû yàwakhà wé khâ. <i>thus he said that man</i></p>	<p><i>"Well, now I see just a little," the man said.</i></p>
<p>Tsu du ìn kát shamdixhích. <i>again with him it dived</i></p>	<p><i>Again, it dove with him.</i></p>
<p>Tsu àxh kè yas.â áyá tsu, <i>again there-from up after it surfaced again</i></p> <p>"Mâ sás yatì yìdát ?" <i>how it is now</i></p>	<p><i>After it surfaced again, (it asked) "How are they now?"</i></p>
<p>"Ch'a wás ch'a axh wakhxêxh'u tûnáxh; <i>just almost like just my eyelashes through</i></p> <p>yú tûł daxh xhàtîn," yû xh'ayakhá wé khâ. <i>yon rolling hills them I see thus he says that man</i></p>	<p><i>"It's almost like looking through my eyelashes; I can see the rolling hills," said the man.</i></p>
<p>Tsu du ìn kát shamdixhích tsu, wé kaghìt. <i>again with him it dived again that loon</i></p>	<p><i>Again the loon dove with him.</i></p>

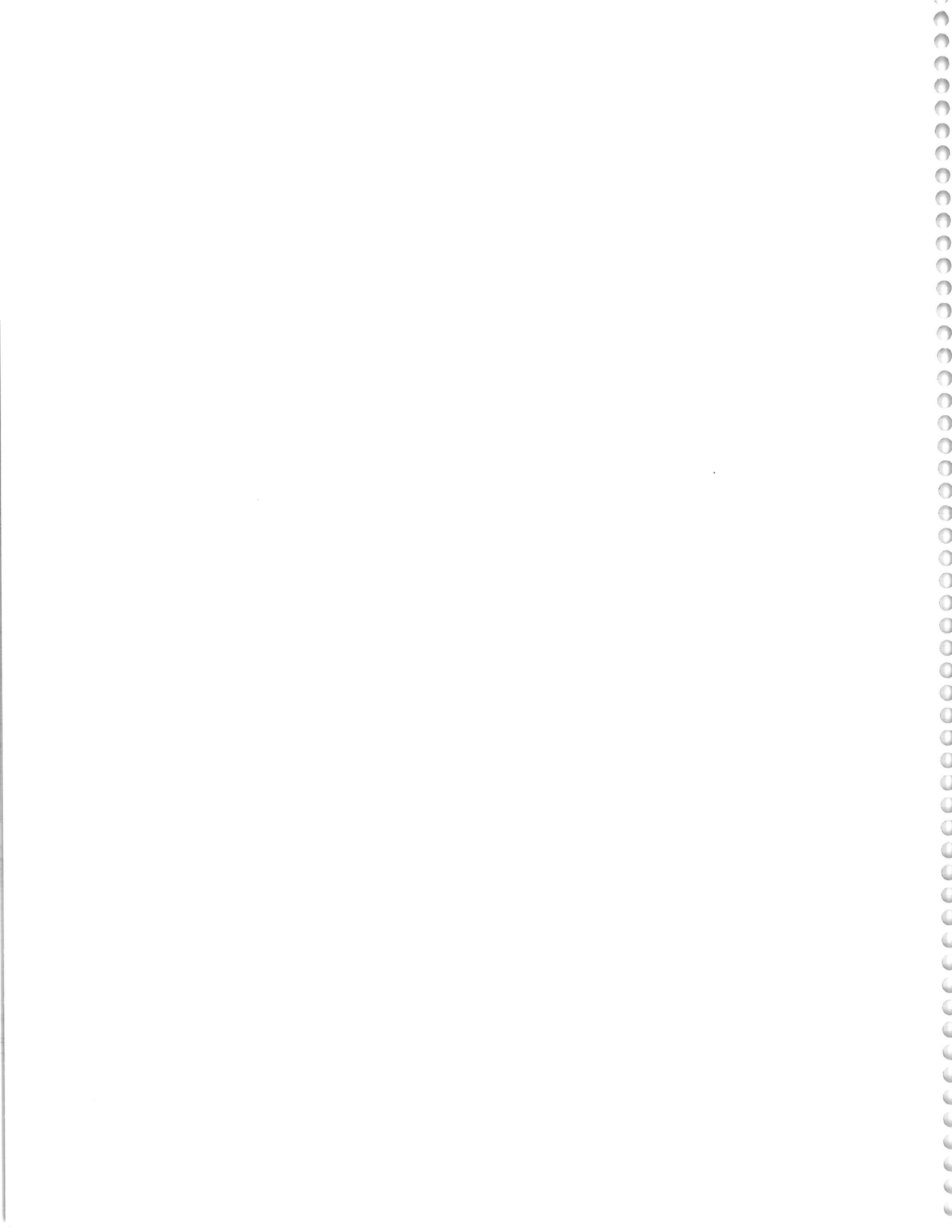
Tlingit Text		English
<p>Tsu àxh kè yas.â áyá tsu, <i>again away up after it surfaced again</i></p> <p>"Mâ sás yatì yìdát ?" <i>how it is now</i></p>		<p><i>After it surfaced again, (it asked) again, "How are they now?"</i></p>
<p>Dà sáyá tsu ch'a ldakát át <i>what is this? again just all things</i></p>	<p>ayatîn. <i>he sees</i></p>	<p><i>Suddenly he could see everything.</i></p>
<p>X'êghà du tùwú yak'ê wé khâ <i>truly his mind it is good that man that</i></p> <p>du ît wudashiýí. <i>him-to it helped him</i></p>	<p>wé kaghìt <i>loon</i></p>	<p><i>The man was very happy that the loon had helped him.</i></p>
<p>Du tuwáx' khu.a yàkw ìn áyá <i>his mind's eye-in however canoe with</i></p> <p>dàk uwagút, <i>out he went</i></p>	<p>â <i>there</i></p>	<p><i>It seemed to him that he went out there in a canoe,</i></p>
<p>wé kaghìt díxh'náxh áwé â dàk <i>that loon back-via there out</i></p>	<p>uwagút. <i>he went</i></p>	<p><i>but actually he went out there on the loon's back.</i></p>
<p>Yèsú, yánde dês du ìn yan <i>then shore-ward this time with him ashore it swam</i></p>	<p>uwahû.</p>	<p><i>Then finally it brought him to shore.</i></p>

Tlingit Text	English
<p>Àdé du îtxh sh tughâ ditiyi yé áwé, <i>in that way from him he is grateful way</i></p> <p>wé kaghìt îdâxh sh tughâ datí, <i>that loon from gratitude</i></p>	<p><i>He was so grateful to it, (so full of) gratitude to the loon,</i></p>
<p>yèsú, "Mâ yù kaxhwasgìdí sa kwshé k'idên <i>then how I am acting I wonder well</i></p> <p>gunat̚chîsh yû yakkhwasakhâ ? " <i>thank you thus I will say to it</i></p>	<p><i>(that he thought to himself), "Now what could I do to thank (the loon) properly?"</i></p>
<p>Yû a dà yù tuwatánk. <i>thus it about he thinks</i></p>	<p><i>He thought about it.</i></p>
<p>Yèsú sh dàt khumdlinùk. <i>then him around he felt, groped</i></p>	<p><i>Then he felt around his person.</i></p>
<p>Ch'a hûch' áyá àwat'ìyi át áyú, ts'as yû <i>just that's all that he found thing only yon</i></p> <p>s'àkh sèt du sé. <i>bone necklace his neck</i></p>	<p><i>The only thing he found was a bone necklace that he had around his neck.</i></p>

Tlingit Text		English
<p>Ch'a á dê sêdâxh kè akamdzitî, <i>just it now neck-from up he took it</i></p> <p>wé kaghìt sêxh akamsitì. <i>that loon neck-around he put it</i></p>		<p><i>So that's what he took off his neck, and he put it around the loon's neck.</i></p>
<p>"Gunałchîsh," yû adàyakhá. <i>thank you thus he says to it</i></p>		<p><i>"Thank you," he said to it.</i></p>
<p>"X'êghà i îdâxh sh tughâ datí <i>truly from you gratitude this is</i></p>	<p>áyá.</p>	<p><i>"This is (a token of) my sincere gratitude to you.</i></p>
<p>"Ch'a axh àyí sèt i sêxh <i>just my one necklace your neck-down-on</i></p>	<p>kaxhwsitì." <i>I put it</i></p>	<p><i>"I have put my own necklace on your neck."</i></p>
<p>Ách áyá yú.á, ch'ù yìdát kaghìt sêde <i>therefore they say just now loon neck-to</i></p> <p>duwatîn wé sèt a sêxh <i>it can be seen that necklace its neck-down-on</i></p>	<p>akawustiyín. <i>that he had put it</i></p>	<p><i>That's why to this day you can see the necklace that he had put on the loon's neck.</i></p>

Tlingit Text	English
<p>Ách khu.a áyá yú.á kaghìt tsú , <i>therefore however they say loon too</i></p> <p>du wàkh xh'àn yáxh daxh kasitì, <i>his eyes fire like they are (a colour)</i></p>	<p><i>And this is also the reason why the loon has red eyes,</i></p>
<p>wé tlét khùshitìni khâ ît wudashìyích. <i>that not he can(t) see man to because it helped</i></p>	<p><i>because it had helped the blind man.</i></p>

Sam Johnston





TOGETHER TODAY... FOR OUR CHILDREN TOMORROW

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