

similar trade with the Kaska, their next neighbors inland. The right to trade with the Tahl-tan was, in fact, restricted by hereditary custom to two or three families of the Stikine Coast Indians.

Houses.

With the exception of the houses already referred to as constituting the Tahl-tan village, and some others reported to exist on the Taku, the residences and camps of these people are of a very temporary character, consisting of brush shelters or wigwams, when an ordinary cotton tent is not employed. We noticed on the Tahl-tan River a couple of square brush houses formed of poles interlaced with leafy branches. These were used during the salmon-fishing season. At the same place there were several graves, consisting of wooden boxes or small dog-kennel-like erections of wood, and near them two or three wooden monumental posts, rudely shaped into ornamental (?) forms by means of an axe, and daubed with red ochre.

Chief's name.

On attaining the chieftaincy of the Tahl-tan tribe, each chief assumes the traditional name Na-nook, in the same manner in which the chief of the Coast Indians at the mouth of the Stikine is always named Shék or Shake.

Superstitions.

The Tahl-tan Indians know of the culture- or creation-hero Us-tas, and relate tales concerning this mythical individual resembling those found among the Tinné tribes further south, but I was unable to commit any of these to writing. Amongst many other superstitions, they have one referring to a wild man of gigantic stature and supernatural powers, who is now and then to be found roaming about in the summer season. He is supposed to haunt specially the vicinity of the Iskoot River, and the Indians are much afraid of meeting him.

Character of wars.

Between the Tahl-tan and the Indians inhabiting the Upper Nass* there has been a feud of long duration, which is even yet outstanding. There is much difficulty in settling such feuds when life has once been sacrificed, as they assume the character of a vendetta, a strict account being kept, which must be balanced by the killing of an equal number on each side before lasting peace is possible. The account of the feud here referred to is derived from Mr. J. C. Callbreath, who has been at some pains to ascertain the circumstances. It may serve to illustrate the nature of the intertribal "wars" carried on in the sparsely inhabited region of the interior.

* We are unfortunately without precise information as to the tribal divisions of the Indians of the Nass. According to the late Dr. Tolmie, who had long resided at Fort Simpson, in the vicinity of the Nass, the people about the mouth of the river are named Niska (sometimes written Naskar), while further up the river are the Nitawalik (Tinné?). (Comparative Vocabularies, p. 113 B.) It is probably the people so designated who come in contact with the Tahl-tan, but in the meantime I prefer to call them merely Nass Indians. The statement above quoted, however, does not tally with that made to G. Gibbs by Celestine Ozier, a Tshimsian half-breed, i.e. that to the northward of the tribe inhabiting the Nags was a tribe named Nis-kah. (Contributions to North American Ethnology, vol. i, p. 143.)