

The creation of Haida'Gwaii (Haida)

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This is how the Islands came out, came up and out. This is the story I'm going to tell. This was told to me GwaaGanad Diane Brown by James Young.

I'll start in English now.

This is the story of how Haida'Gwaii came to be how it came out of... up and out of the Ocean.

A long, long time ago, the loon was in the water swimming. There was no land to be seen. Many, many nights he swam. No land was to be seen. And then he looked upwards. When he looked up and saw clouds, only clouds. So he flew up to the clouds. He flew up into the clouds, and in the clouds was a Haida House, sitting there. He saw this. So just like that, he sat beside... he sat outside the Haida House and he made himself into a human and walked into the House.

Inside the House, he saw two rocks, lying. He saw them burning. Beside these burning rocks, there was an old man with white hair. He was sleeping there on his back. He walked around the fire and he thought: "Oh, I think I'll wake him" But not, but he did not move, even a little. He did not move, so again, he went outside, he walked outside.

Like the loon... the loon, cries out. How this loon cries out, that is still to this day is how they cry. So outside, he was crying out. All day, he did this crying, loon cry.

Night time, it became, and he walked into the House; still the old man never moved, not even a little. He was sleeping on his back. So he went outside again. He returned back outside. He was sitting outside, when again he started to cry. All night he cried.

Now dawn came. When dawn came, he went in the House and the old man still had not moved. He went back outside and he cried. This went on for three nights. He cried, he cried. And then the door opened, the old man walked out of the door. "What are you crying for? What are you walking around crying for?" He said to him. "I can't sleep, it's not possible for me to sleep. I can't sleep at all. The way you're crying around all the time."

So Loon said back to him: "I came from down there, and there, nowhere is there land, only ocean. There's only ocean there. Ocean is the only thing there." He said to the old man.

"Come in."

So just like that, he walked in after the old man. And where the old man was lying is where they sat. The old man started to rub his tummy in circular motions and in a while, he pulled out a child... a child, he pulled out. And he put him on the ground, the earth. And he stepped on the child's feet and he started pulling him up, upwards. He pulled him upwards and then he got so tall, just so tall or big. And then he

went even more, he pulled him, to be even more tall. He was taller than the Haida, the humans. He said: "I'm going to make you taller than the Haida, than the people, Chief." Is what he said to him.

So he turned him around and around and then he really liked, he liked what he had created a lot. Then he said to him: "Behind me, there's boxes." He told, told him. "Could you get the box." So like that, the young man that he just created went behind him and got the box. So he walked out with the box, put it in front of the old man, and the old man opened it. Inside was another box. He took that box out, and in that box was another box that he opened. And he put that box out and opened it. Inside that box, was another box. And he pulled this box out. And in that box... all together, there was 5 boxes inside of each other. And in the last box, inside the last box, there was 2 rocks. He took them out. One rock was small and the other rock was bigger. So he gave, he gave the young man the rocks.

So the Loon returned into the ocean. He said: "Loon, you bring these to the ocean. Put them in the ocean. The small rock, you take it and you, you breathe on it, but not for long. Do not breathe on it for very long, and then put it down, and fly. When it is... fly all night with it."

And in the night, when it becomes night, again, into the ocean, put the bigger rock into the ocean. You breathe on this one very long. Blow on it and blow on it even more and then put this one down. And he, so, just like this he, he did what he was told by the old man.

So he took the rock and returned and he flew to the ocean and he put the rock into the ocean, the small rock into the ocean. And then, he took the other one and, and the small one and he breathed on it a little and then he threw it. It sunk. And then he flew away and... it sank... and in the evening, when again he went back... he went to the ocean, he went back to the ocean and he threw the big rock. He threw this big rock into the ocean and he blew on it and blew on it, and he blew on it even more. Then he put it down.

So there was the 2 rocks, the small rock, the smaller rock is Haida Gwaii, this is how we call it. The bigger rock in what the white, is, became what the White people called 'The Land Out There' or 'The Big Island Out There' – is how we call it. But the White people call it North American continent.

So this person that he pulled out of his tummy, the person that he made, the child that he pulled out, now is a big person, an adult I suppose. Now he made himself into Raven. And he flew down, he was going to fly down to Haida Gwaii. So he made himself into a Raven and was going to fly down... getting ready to fly down, when the old man said: "Don't fly down. Like this, put your arms on your side, tightly along on your side, and then throw yourself and spiral down and when you... then you will get to Haida Gwaii. When you spiral down like this, you will get to somewhere on Haida Gwaii and you will see some earth."

When he got there, he landed on some earth and he picked some up with his fingers. And from this earth, he made humans, Haida, or people he made out of that, the earth that he landed on, the Raven. So, what, what was made out of these rocks is still where we live. And from the earth, he made the people. And the islands, on the islands, the Haidas today are living. Also, there, there was spauna, a spauna that eats supernatural killer whales. That's also where we came from, from the ocean. The supernatural killer whales came from the ocean. And they're all different. Now we, we, we take their, we copy their likeness and we use those, crests that we copied from the killer whales. That's what we use, certain clans use.

And now, Raven walking, he started... After this, Raven started walking and this is how he began, this was his first, this was his beginning as well. He walks all over Haida Gwaii and this is how he lived. This is the end of the beginning of Haida Gwaii and the beginning of Raven.

(...)

Thank you for listening.