

Súwh-tš'égghèdúdính: the Tsìnlhqút'in Nímính Spiritual Path

by

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B.A., University of Victoria, 2004

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Abstract

As *Tsìnlhqút'in* one's connectedness comes through the ancient stories, influencing one's interactions with others in the community, respect for ancestors, and sustainable interaction with environment. The most powerful of these stories is the "the Bear Who Married a Woman" and the concept of *nimính* is central to its theme. Told by one *Tsìnlhqút'in* elder, the story is full of the richness of ancient words, terms from the bear's language, and vivid illustrations of ancient ways. This period, set out originally by mammals and fish to ensure that people continue to prosper and maintain respect for all life forms, is preserved in the term *súwh-tš'éghèdúdính*. This documentation sets out to partially shed light on the *Tsìnlhqút'in* concept of an energy called *nimính* which manifests within individuals at the onset of a life transition (namely at birth, puberty, and death) lingering for varying durations from one week to an entire lifetime, and influencing subsistence items, places, and vegetation. Maintaining balance amidst a web of other lifeforms is an ancient lifeway which now seems a complex undertaking.

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With deep gratitude to those who have supported me: my husband and three sons, Carson, James, Jeremy, and Jeffan and my sister Elsie who has come to my assistance to care for my children during my studies. To Dr. Nancy Turner whose passion and energy I could never match, which has sustained me through the dark times. I thank my thesis committee who have all been insightful, positive, and encouraging. I am much indebted to Dr. Leslie Saxon for her friendship, guidance, and editorial assistance; to Dr. Lorna Williams for keeping me faithful to my traditions; and to Dr. Suzanne Urbanczyk who has always been enthusiastic and full of inspiration. Financial benefits for this research came from the *Yunešít'in* Government Council and additional monetary dividends came through the help of Dr. Leslie Saxon.

Dedication

My mother has had a powerful hand in my cultural education, and this study is based on her personal experiences and her knowledge. I am deeply grateful for her strength, her faith, her respect, her gentleness, and her unconditional love. She is truly the most spiritual person I know.

PART ONE: THE RESEARCH SETTING

CHAPTER 1

PRESERVING *TSÌNLHQÚT'ÍN* KNOWLEDGE

My own experiences have shaped my views and assessment in respect to this study. Taking part in the annual camps of the seasonal round has given me a deep appreciation for nature and has instilled in me a great respect for the ancestors, the land, the vegetation, the wildlife, and the streams. I recently made a trip on horseback to the mountains near my mother's birthplace, and I immediately understood why her mother loved the mountains so much. In her old age, she went through intense grief when she could no longer travel on horseback to go to the mountains. The landscapes literally become an intimate part of us and going out on the land is a source of delight, like greeting distant family members or seeing old friends. On film, a man from *Nunavut* described a visit to his homeland as being, "...like coming home after forty years in the desert" and said, "I love the memory of this river...I see the rocks along the shore. I spent the best part of my childhood on this river..."(Kreelak and Gjer 1999).

I grew up in a large family, taught by parents who were steeped in the traditional ways of our people. Fortunately, my parents were both monolingual speakers of *Tsìnlhqút'in*, so I was richly blessed with a cultural immersion in the language. *Tsìnlhqút'in* is my first language. I have voluntarily collected *Tsìnlhqút'in* oral history, plant use, genealogical data, technological data, and photographs of the people. I see my present course of study as the perfect fusion of my longstanding love of cultural ways of knowing. I feel almost a

sense of panic when I realize how little research has been done; the enormity of what needs to be done, and in so little time.

1.1 Methodology

For this thesis, I interviewed one *Tsìnlhqút'in* elder, my mother Helena Myers (hereafter *Ìnkél* 'mom; mother'), who is a veritable walking library of *Tsìnlhqút'in* culture and still there are hundreds of more hours of her knowledge that should be recorded. She is 91 and in failing health, nearly blind and very deaf, but with a remarkable memory for her age. Her knowledge base has obviously been significantly enriched as a result of being raised traditionally by her great-grandparents. Her knowledge goes back to the early 19th century. She was born into a large family, married into another community, and attended numerous social gatherings throughout her life. Her mental capacity is incredible and she had the advantage of mentally preserving everything she heard during her lifetime. She, being the oldest living *Tsìnlhqút'in* is a walking library holding accumulated *Tsìnlhqút'in* knowledge.

Ìnkél speaks only her ancestral language, a language handed down from the voices of her parents, great-grandparents, In soft gentle tones, choosing her words carefully, she hints, warns, and sways us through stories, allowing us to make our own choices. Her strength as teacher comes from her love and respect.¹ The fact that she is a monolingual *Tsìnlhqút'in* speaker sets her apart in that she has remained relatively uninfluenced by

¹ This is an excerpt from my paper, *Memories Frozen onto the Landscapes*, Writing 336, University of Victoria, 19 November 2002.

technology and most of the other modern intrusions of mass culture. She thus has a "pureness" of knowledge.

Ìnkél and I have a very respectful mother-daughter bond as well as a co-researcher relationship. I learned about the concept of *nímính* from her and I had recorded her on the topic previous to coming to University of Victoria. When it came time to begin this research, she was the only *Tsìnlhqút'in* I knew who had a wealth of knowledge on the topic of *nímính*. Knowledge on *nímính* is minimal among the younger generations of *Tsìnlhqút'in*, and this narrowed down my choice of participants to *Tsìnlhqút'in* elders, and *Ìnkél* being one of the eldest and the most knowledgeable and revered elder of the *Tsìnlhqút'in* nation made her an ideal participant. She is a creative artist and dedicated teacher of *Tsìnlhqút'in* traditions. In fact, she has given me more data than is required for this thesis.

I, on the other hand, have been disadvantaged, growing up in this time period, because I was not raised traditionally in the sense *Ìnkél* was, with exposure to rituals, story-telling, oral teachings, and other personal cultural experiences as a part of my daily life; so out of necessity, I rely on second-hand knowledge – *Ìnkél's* experiences. I am versed in both English and *Tsìnlhqút'in*, with a dedication and meticulousness about keeping a written record of *Tsìnlhqút'in* traditions. In comparison to my elders' resourcefulness and mental capabilities, my modern education has left me mentally incapacitated in the sense that I lack the ability to recall information. It is difficult for me to mentally accumulate, retain,

and summon up oral teachings effortlessly, so unfortunately, I rely on recordings and hand-written notes.

This qualitative study is based on two recorded interviews; one taped previously in 1987 on a range of topics; a more recent audiocassette in 2006 entitled *Ts'ènimính*. For the reason that *Ìnkél* neither reads nor writes, the format of the interview were oral questions and answers which were audio-recorded. Both interviews on *nímính* were arranged in her home, and these recordings were transcribed and translated. *Ìnkél* and I benefited from obvious research advantages unshared by non-*Tsìnlhqút'in* researchers; namely my awareness and understanding of the culture, protocols, and values, all of which facilitated respectful relationships between the group of study, *Ìnkél*, and myself. My doing this work in my community together with my fluency in the language allowed me the freedom to report, consult, and discuss my work at any time. *Tsìnlhqút'in* elders in general are more comfortable being interviewed by members of their own family, as outsiders are not usually well-known, thus are seen as potential threats within the community. There is a long history of mistrust of outsiders among *Tsìnlhqút'in*, which makes it difficult for researchers from outside the community to elicit proper responses. This study is about definitions and explanations of *nímính* and about ancient narratives, and there will be references to others' personal experiences of *nímính* in the recordings, therefore, the unstated protocol to protect the anonymity of other *Tsìnlhqút'in* members has been respected. So in the accounts herein, the identity of individuals and terms for places have been removed.

Ancient stories, terms related to *nímính*, and ceremonial knowledge were all common knowledge several generations ago. It was expected that all *Tsìnlhqút'in*, including those who are *nímính*, would know about *nímính*, how to conduct themselves, use the ceremonies, and pass this knowledge down to new generations. In *Tsìnlhqút'in* culture, the only sacred knowledge held in secrecy are those shared in confidence to shamans by their spirit powers. All transcriptions will be shared with the *Tsìnlhqút'in* communities and for this reason have been left in the language using the present *Tsìnlhqút'in* orthography.

I originally proposed to focus my thesis on describing the *Tsìnlhqút'in* concept of *nímính*, and I wanted to look at the historical events which shaped and enforced *nímính*, and document how the effects of *nímính* energy is dealt with in ceremonies today. My immediate question was: What linguistic features or terms are present in ancient *Tsìnlhqút'in* stories which relate to *nímính* or to transitional ceremonies? This proposal expanded after I transcribed the audio-recordings. The whole range of transcriptions on the principles of *nímính* extended to include eight related themes: (1) ancient *Tsìnlhqút'in* stories, (2) categories of *nímính*, (3) preserving one's wellbeing and those of others by observing *nímính* restrictions, (4) *nímính* proscriptions for subsistence resources (hunting, fishing, and trapping resources and the related gear), (5) respect for wild animals (6) respect for domestic animals, (7) preventative care of plant food, and (8) *nímính* ceremonies. Each of these divisions is conveyed in now rarely used terms and systematically arranged according to particularized circumstances and historic events. Initially, making the final decision on the direction and content of this thesis meant

omitting large chunks of my research and I placed some of my research in the appendices. On my final revision, however, seeing how all my research on *nímính* was so interconnected, I ended up including the data from all my transcripts. I realize that to weave *nímính* to all its origins and document this huge collection in its entirety is a massive project, however this initial documentation is purely a preliminary study. *Ìnkél* knows much on the topic, and my suspicion is that there is a great deal more to gather on the topic from other *Tsìnhqút'in* elders.

1.2 *Tsìnlhqút'in* orthography

The *Tsìnlhqút'in* have used an orthography featuring 47 consonants and six vowels since 1976 developed by Eung-Do Cook. The *Tsìnlhqút'in* sound system does not include the letters /f/, /r/, and /v/. There are a number of back vowels and diphthongs which are not included in the vowel chart. These vowels are distinguished from regular vowels by the placement of the diacritic /[^]/ over consonants (s, w, and z) preceding vowels; the back consonants /gg/, /gh/, /q/, /qw/, and /x/ also affect vowels in the same way. There are five *Tsìnlhqút'in* characters which do not appear on standard keyboards and these are: the glottal stop /ʔ/, post-alveolar voiceless fricative /s̺/, labio-uvular voiced fricative /w̺/, post-alveolar voiced fricative /z̺/, and the close central unrounded vowel or high front short vowel /i/. In this paper, I use these *Tsìnlhqút'in* characters, but omit the glottal stop /ʔ/ before all initial vowels and substitute an apostrophe /' / between word syllables. I parenthesize the consonant /z̺/ found in the standard orthography and place the symbol in brackets when used as a diacritic indicating a vowel modification rather than as consonant sound. That is, I place the post-alveolar voiced fricative /z̺/ in brackets (z̺) to show that there is pharyngealization or a flattening effect on the vowel in the syllable but no consonant. The bracket indicates that the post-alveolar voiced fricative /z̺/ is silent. In this thesis, I also marked for tone, which is not generally done among *Tsìnlhqút'in*, and this is simply to avoid any ambiguity.

CHAPTER 2

THE PEOPLE

The following essay is based on my cultural education learned while living among *Yunèsít'in* 'people of the south'; 'Stone'. The process through which I arrived at the University of Victoria has been an evolutionary journey, which began with my life on a *Tsìnlhqút'in*² (also pronounced *Tšìnlhqút'in*, *Tšìlhqút'in*, or *Tsìlhqút'in*; and the standard spelling is *Tsìlhqot'in*; Chilcotin) Native community in a remote area of the Interior of BC. The *Tsìnlhqút'in* people are part of a large language family group of Dene (also known as Athapaskan, Athabaskan, and Athabaskan), whose neighbours are the *Ènáy* (*Nuxalk*; Bella Coola), *Nìnchàt'in* (*Dakelhne*; Carrier), *Qàjù* (*Kwakwaka'wakw*; Kwakiutl), Homalco, Klahoose, Sliammon, *Èná* (*Secwepemc*; Shuswap),³ and *Èšch'éd-dèní* (*Stl'atl'imx*; Lillooet) (First Nations of British Columbia 1994). To a wider audience, *Tsìnlhqút'in* refer to themselves as *nènqàyní* 'person\people of the earth' (more commonly translated as First Nations, Native, Aboriginal, or Indigenous) and "*nènqàyní*" decoded by syllables can be translated as follows:

² *Tsìnlhqút'in* is my mother's pronunciation of the term and I will use this spelling throughout. It seems that the nasal has been dropped by the more recent generation of speakers. It is odd though, that she articulates the term for river as *tšìnlhqóx* rather than *tsìnlhqóx*, changing the close front vowel /i/ to a diphthong.

Most of the text on this page are excerpts from my paper, *Storytelling: The Power Of Voice In Lhin Nits'en Nanayidash*, Linguistics 505, University of Victoria, 21 April 2005

³ The *Tsìnlhqút'in* neighbours *Ènáy* (*Nuxalk*; Bella Coola) and *Èná* (*Secwepemc*; Shuswap) are distinctly differentiated from *Ènátsél* 'little enemies'. The *Ènátsél* are described as "semi-mythical people" by Robert B. Lane (1981) in the *Handbook of North American Indians* (402) and to my knowledge, these people were living in *Tsìnlhqút'in* territory in the past, but no longer exist today. Edward Sapir (1936), an anthropologist, elaborated on the cognate terms for "ena" and gave the English gloss 'enemy, foreigners' and this makes historical sense. The Dene cultures in his list having the closest cognates to the *Tsìnlhqút'in* term are Chipewyan *e-ná* 'enemy, Cree Indian,' Loucheux *a-ne* 'enemy, Eskimo,' and Navaho 'à-nà' (230).

- | | | | | |
|---------------|------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|
| 1) <i>nèn</i> | <i>qày</i> | <i>ní</i> | 2) <i>nènqày</i> | <i>ní</i> |
| 'land' | 'surface' | 'person of' | 'the world' | 'person of' |

ní < dèni
'person; people'

There is a possible cognate for the term *nènqàyní* in Berard Haile (1943:65), a priest said to have a natural aptitude for learning Navajo documented “Soul Concepts of the Navaho”. He was known among the Navajo people as Yazzie ‘shorty, or “The Little Man Who Knows All”. He gives *naxoká·dine’é* the same translation as the *Tsìnlhqút’in* term *nènqàyní* ‘earth surface people’ (78). In reference to the spoken language, *Tsìnlhqút’in* indicate their language as being “*nènqàyní ch’ih*” ‘in the Native way’ and not “*Tsìnlhqút’in ch’ih*” ‘in the *Tsìnlhqút’in* way’. Generally, in greeting strangers, one may introduce oneself as *Tsìnlhqút’in* ‘person of the river,’ sometimes pronounced as *Tsìnlhqút’in* by some speakers. The name is interpreted in several ways:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| 1) <i>tsì(n)lqhóx</i> | <i>t’in</i> |
| 'river' | 'person of' |

- | | | | |
|-----------------|------------|-------------|----------------------------------|
| 2) <i>tsìlh</i> | <i>qóx</i> | <i>t’in</i> | <i>-qóx < yèqóx</i> |
| 'red ochre' | 'gorge' | 'person of' | 'gorge'; 'river'; 'large stream' |

- | | | | |
|--------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| 3) <i>tì</i> | <i>lh</i> | <i>qóx</i> | <i>t’in</i> |
| 'rock' | | 'gorge' | 'person of' |

- | | | |
|-----------------|------------|-------------|
| 4) <i>tìnlh</i> | <i>qóx</i> | <i>t’in</i> |
| 'axe' | 'gorge' | 'person of' |

Tsìnlhqút'in greetings or self-introductions typically include the presentation of details about one's genealogy; names of one's parents and grandparents including the area or name of one's community; indicators which give a sense of the history of one's background to the greeted. People know one another or at least know the generations which they are a part of, and youth are generally known by their parents and grandparents.⁴

In the year 2002, Roger William, Chief of *Xèní Gwét'in* First Nations Government forwarded to *Tsìnlhqút'in* members the *Tsilhqot'in* Nation population. Roger is *Ìnkél's* nephew and my first cousin. The *Tsìnlhqút'in* nation is comprised of seven communities with a total of 4,100 people:

- *Èsdìlàngh* 'Alexandria' ('peninsula'; 150 members)
- *Tl'ésqóx* 'Toosey' (250 members)
- *Tl'étinqóx* 'Anaham' (1,500 members)
- *Tsìdèldèl* 'Alexis Creek' (lit. 'red rock'; 600 members)
- *Yùnèsít'in* 'Stone' (also known as *Gèx Náts'énághìnlht'ì* 'where one clubbed a rabbit'; 350 members)
- *Tágwédísdzán* 'Towdystan' (a community in *Èlkh'áchúgh* 'Ulkatcho' (Carrier); 100 members)
- *Xèní Gwét'in* First Nations Government (*Xèní*; formerly Nemiah; 400 members)

⁴ The information on self-introductions is an excerpt from my paper, The Right to be Dene: Restoring Ancient Concepts, Linguistics 596, University of Victoria, 19 November 2004.

CHAPTER 3

THE LAND CONTAINS A WEALTH OF THE SACRED

Historical terms for the landscape give flavour to *Tsinlhqút'in* history and their respect for natural landscape and wildlife. This is also supported by the work of a lawyer, Kwesi Baffoe, in his introductory comments of “Profile of the Sayisi Dene Nation of Tadoule Lake in Northern Manitoba”. He noted that “Dene have a profound respect for the land. For them, the land is alive, full of supernatural beings that formed the land and the spiritual creatures that continue to inhabit it” (2005). This is also true for *Tsinlhqút'in*. The following are names of places given to convey a sense of how *Tsinlhqút'in* themselves give meaning to their culture and history via their landscapes.

Lhìn Nits'én Nánàydásh 'a dog who courts someone', also known as *Lhìndèsch'ósh* 'miniature dog', is a story narrated by Charlie Quilt, *Ìnkél*, and George Myers; all southern *Tsinlhqút'in* elders. The historical figures in this story remain alive through story, and the main historical figures are tied to the landscapes via placenames. They sit in their final fossilized forms along the Chilcotin River,⁵ near *Tsêlyú Ts'ilhèd* 'where smoke fled down a cliff'. It is told that in their search for beaver, they carved ditches using their feet, creating *Tsìnlhqóx* 'a river; Chilcotin River' and they finally caught up with the beaver below *Tì(ž)lìn* 'where it flows'. *Lhìndèsch'ósh*, at the end of the story, planted *súnt'íny*

⁵ I studied versions of *Lhìn Nits'én Nánàydásh* for several years while taking courses at the University of Victoria. Rather than recreating what I already wrote, I chose to use excerpts from my coursework to include in this thesis. Part of the second paragraph above is from my paper, *Storytelling: The Power Of Voice In Lhìn Nits'en Nanayidash*, Linguistics 505, University of Victoria, 21 April 2005.

‘spring beauty corms’⁶ (*Claytonia lanceolata*) and *èsghùnsh* ‘yellow avalanche lily bulbs’⁷ (*Erythronium grandiflorum*) along mountain slopes in the western, more mountainous part of the territory, in places like *Èlàgì Sèqàn* ‘where (a field of) flowers sit (in a container or plate)’ and *Èsgàny Ànx* ‘chickadee’s den’. Neither placename refers to the *súnt’íny* ‘spring beauty corms’ which are harvested seasonally in large quantities. Before the availability of garden vegetables, wild root vegetables formed a considerable portion of *Tsìnlhqút’in* diet.⁸

Ti(ê)lín overlooks a traditional fish camp where spring salmon, sockeye, and humpback go to spawn each year. In one ancient *Tsìnlhqút’in* story, a boy witnessed the migration

⁶ *Súnt’íny* ‘spring beauty corms; Mountain potatoes’ are harvested from mid to late May and early June depending on the weather on the south facing slopes of Nemiah, and later in the summer or fall, they are harvested in the mountains. In former times, people camped near wild potato fields to harvest wild potatoes, and played lehal and other games. When the *súnt’íny* are ready for harvest, it is said to be *gwéžlín* ‘it has matured’ (while berries are said to be *nížt’án* ‘mature’). *Súnt’íny* is boiled for half an hour, and were flattened, then strung together with thread and placed on tree branches to dry. Sometimes, my maternal grandmother would dry them on a table, or leave them on a tarp out in the sun to dry. She would then add them to soup or cook them in a pit. *Súnt’íny* are placed in *k’élés* ‘pit-cooking pits’ to steam-cook for at least three hours, and were usually placed in cooking pits in the morning and taken out in the evening. in the morning, and taken out in the evening. Layered into the pit over red-hot stones with *súnt’íny* are: *èsts’ichèn* ‘Whitebark pine’ (*Pinus albicaulis*) bark and boughs, *gúnš* ‘fireweed’ (*Epilobium angustifolium*), *úndzíny-chèn* ‘wild strawberry plants’ (*Fragaria Virginia*), and this includes *úndzíny-tlùl* ‘wild strawberry runners’. There is one unidentified plant included for the layers, and these are all sealed using bark and covered up with soil. In one version of the story, *Ts’iqi Sès Ghàghindá* ‘the Woman Who Married a Bear’, roots and eggs were pit-cooked together. (Excerpts from two of my University of Victoria course papers: *Lhìndesch’osh* Said, “Become Spring Beauty and Yellow Glacier Lily”, Linguistics 403, 18 Dec. 2004; and Life in the Meadows: The Seasonal Round of the *Tsìlhqot’in*, Environmental Studies 490, 7 Jan 2002.)

⁷ The plant stem of the *èsghùnsh* ‘yellow glacier lily’ is called *èsghùnsh-làltéž*, and the pod has stamens which stick out from the top of the “pod” and this is called *bètl’èqwéz*. After the plant finishes blooming, it has *làlchòs* which looks similar to the mature heads on dandelions. When the plant loses its stem, it is then called *xáchéllhbád* which describes the appearance of the remaining leaves. *Èsgùnsh* is a unique term, and interestingly, its word root matches the Koyukon word *-dzoyh* ‘curled object’; ‘claw’, which is an accurate description of the plant’s bulbs. The *Tsìnlhqút’in* verb stem of *ts’èdèghùnsh* ‘it is cut into cubes’ is similar to this word root. The *Tsìnlhqút’in* term does not appear to be borrowed, but the name for the plant is not listed in other Dene dictionaries, except for Ulgatcho term which seems to be a contracted form of the *Tsìnlhqút’in*. (Excerpts from my University of Victoria course papers, Life in the Meadows: The Seasonal Round of the *Tsìlhqot’in*, Environmental Studies 490, 7 January 2002; and *Lhìndesch’osh* Said, “Become Spring Beauty and Yellow Glacier Lily”, Linguistics 403, University of Victoria, 18 Dec. 2004.)

⁸ The last sentence on this page is from my paper, Life in the Meadows: The Seasonal Round of the *Tsìlhqot’in*. Environmental Studies 490, University of Victoria. 7 January 2002.

of salmon and said that the salmon were excited when nearing the mountain of their destination and as they flipped out of the water, they called out, '*Ti(ž)lín gúyèd*' 'where it flows is near'. This story comes to life with each storytelling and each fall with the return of the salmon.

Subsistence is a theme which runs throughout this document and there are placename expressions incorporating names of mammals, fish, and birds. *Sès Ànx* 'bear's den' is a placename and is also a setting for the story *Sès Ts'iqí Ghàghìndá* 'the bear who married a woman'. Names like *Dèk'àny Chùh Gùlìn* 'there are rainbow trout too' and *Šèbày Tàlgóg* 'where a mountain goat walks into water' add colour to the landscape.

The events in the forthcoming discussions, for the most part, took place in domestic settings and the terms for homes are ancient expressions such as *Etsí Beqiyèx* 'grandfather's fish camp.' *Qiyèx* /qì-yèx/ literally means 'foot under' but previously it likely meant 'village', and today, it means fish camp. Kwesi Baffoe, in his opening remarks described the connections to one's dwelling place stating among Dene saying, "to the Dene, the camp is the centre of the universe and the climate, the topography, the whole cosmos and its organisms are connected in some way to the territory in which they live" (2005). Generally, *Tsinlhqút'in* favoured locations were along lakes and since the people seasonally camp near lakes to fish, the term *qiyèx* is still in use. It is clear that the people who named these places saw the landscapes to bestow them with vivid names as in the following names around Eagle Lake: *Nèghátálhchúž* 'it spreads across (like a blanket)'; *Dàndzèn Ch'ìgháts'énèlhtásh* 'where one occasionally gazes at loons'; and

Ts'ù Ts'ìsèt'í 'lake at the end of a row of spruce trees'. The latter *tš'ìsèt'í* describes spruce trees as forming a long strip right to a clearing. As a younger speaker of the language, I find it remarkable that such a term was coined with reference to a landscape and vegetation in view of the fact that I associate the term *tš'ìsèt'í* only with ropes, strings, and wires which are strung far in a straight line by human hands.

The ancestors are continuously present today on the landscapes. They have left us ancient names, hand tools, and trails. We bring them to life in singing their songs and telling their stories. We continue to use their language and we are acquainted with their cherished places. The past and the present merge together into the future.

The distance of time away from my community and the remoteness of the meadows have allowed me to better appreciate the ways our ancestors respected and tended our homeland. In 2002, in "Memories Frozen onto the Landscapes", I wrote about my childhood memories of fishing.

In the crisp 1975 May morning, my mother and I step onto a log raft made by my father, and push away from the bank. The blanket of water ripples as we move smoothly along. The waves behind swish-swash against the pine logs, and a trail of dimples follow behind. Further out on the lake, my mother drops rocks into the water, one by one. "Bel-limp! Bel-limp!" they respond behind me as I keep the craft moving. The fishnet whispers as it slithers into the swirling holes and slices through the deep water, forming a long mesh wall.

The sun illuminates the yellow aspen floor, while my mother takes the rainbow trout from her net. Later, I watch her against a mural of reeds and a serene lakeshore, as she ritually untangles the wet algae-covered nets on her lap. The rock-weights click and echo as she piles them on one side next to the gleaming fish. The waves slosh against the log raft and the birds sing their cheery tunes. She's

contented only when she's busy. She drapes the nets over a line to dry. I help her string the rainbow onto wooden poles, and we carry the slippery, dripping load to the drying rack, where she will smudge them from underneath. A smoldering fire of rotted wood and aspen preserves, flavours the fish, and deters flies. On hearing the quacking voices of mallards, she looks up briefly and comments *nat'i tedlux* 'the ducks are laughing'. The calls of the loon, she describes as *dandzen qedelhnih* 'the loons are yahoo-ing'. My mother personifies everything in nature: *dechen t̄silghelh* 'the trees are shaking their heads'; *belh senax ghinlh'az* 'drowsiness has crept into my eyes' as if sleep crawls on insect-like legs;" and she refers to rivers and mountains as *Yeda-Denilin* 'ancient ones; ancestors'.

I cherish this childhood memory, my last visit to *Nik'ex-hum Beqiyex* 'Nik'ex-hum's Fish Camp', a small lake 106 kilometers west of Williams Lake. I treasure the annual strands we wove onto the ancient patterns of my ancestral homeland. I understand now, how the traditions of my people are re-imbedded through memories and storytelling.

Our ancestors left a rich and diverse landscape for the future generations of living creatures and people, a time-honoured tradition that has been heedlessly ignored in present forestry and land use practices. Our meadows are no longer as I remember them.

CHAPTER 4

CHALLENGES TO THE STUDY

The *Tsìnlhqút'in* and their ancestors derived benefit from their diverse landscape of mountains, plateaus, valleys, and semi-arid areas. Within our territory, there is ongoing natural subsistence harvesting, ranching, tourism, forestry, and mining. The pristine wilderness where *Tsìnlhqút'in* imprinted their history no longer exists as such; much of the subsistence area is clearcut and overgrazed. The ancient resource sites and campgrounds are for the most part riddled with roads, tree stumps, and cattle - unrecognizable according to *Tsìnlhqút'in* who once lived there. Hence it will certainly not be easy for youth to visualize the stories within this present topography and environment without knowing what existed previously. The stories somehow seem to belong to another time and it is only the older generations who retain knowledge of this *Tsìnlhqút'in* past. It is within this context that the present research project has begun.

With adaptation to lifestyles in communities rather than on land and adjustment to changes to their landscapes, *Tsìnlhqút'in* traditional teachings have become more challenging to pass on to younger generations. Current lifestyles and modern institutions have displaced many of the old traditions to the point where younger *Tsìnlhqút'in* individuals must learn about their culture in words rather than through practices, but this can change quickly at this point in time. Knowledgeable elders are accessible and willing to pass on what they know. Native people have often criticized researchers and museum curators for “preserving” culture for the sake of preservation, but this now seems

necessary, not solely for preservation's sake, but in order that collections may be available for future *Tsìnlhqút'in* generations.

Among my own people, there has been a noticeable trend where, during the transitional period after European contact, when grandparents and parents, whether they attended residential school or not, have “chosen” not to pass on their stories, language, and culture. This means there is now a generation who no longer speak their language nor practice their culture. This generation is now realizing the importance of language and culture and wish to learn their ways, but there are few places to go to learn their language, and there are no *Tsìnlhqút'in* cultural collections to seek out. Our elders are rapidly passing away, and the loss of each is like the burning of a library. Learning about *Tsìnlhqút'in* culture and language has been my life long passion; so, it is with great respect to my ancestors, and a belief that it is their wish to pass on this knowledge which has encouraged me to pursue this topic on *nímính*.

It has been a difficult task to gather and organize the research on *nímính* for a number of reasons besides its breadth and extensive terminology. This study is purely an overview of *Tsìnlhqút'in* terminology, and a partial one at that, and being such, is somewhat fragmented in the *Tsìnlhqút'in* sense because it excludes much of the existing knowledge on *nímính*. Perhaps one might say that the document also fails as a linguistic paper because detailed discussions of linguistic features and analyses are limited.

My modern traditional training did not give me the advantage of familiarizing myself with the topic during my youth; hence, a lot of energy went into discerning the relevancy of various closely related themes. Distancing myself from my topic has been almost impossible, so examining the research data from different points of view has been difficult. The table of contents was the most difficult to structure, since there is no instructive cultural model to follow. There were many ideas to think through as possible themes to follow, and at times it was not easy to make decisions as to which to choose. In the final stages of my research, I opted to use the cultural *Tsìnlhqút'in* categories which I had already organized within my transcripts. Generally, *Tsìnlhqút'in* references are scarce and Dene terms relating to *nímính* (transitional ceremonies and cultural traditions) are seldom listed in dictionaries; so further historical and comparative analyses of *Tsìnlhqút'in* terms was not a sensible option.

The terms for *nímính* and all its inclusions are culturally learned principles, hence are distinctly *Tsìnlhqút'in*, and the concepts are not entirely understood except by some *Tsìnlhqút'in* elders. As a result, some expressions evade concise *Tsìnlhqút'in* definitions and have no English equivalents. The demeaning term “superstition” which has been applied time and again to refer to our way of life, has given me the motivation to continue my search, allowing me the opportunity to uphold my history and to honour my ancestors. While there are cultural belief systems which are similar across cultures including the mainstream culture, perceptions have changed considerably making it so that what used to be respected with great awe in the past is now looked upon as primitive.

In fact the cultural views presented and terms used in English desecrate the *Tsìnlhqút'in* appreciation of *nímính*, so in this document I rely heavily on transcribed translations.

This thesis is somewhat structured in the traditional *Tsìnlhqút'in* manner except for the liberal overview of *nímính* and the tables. In oral tellings, for example, elders generally only tell what is necessary for immediate tasks or simply transmit what is required to answer specific questions. I have organized *Ìnkél's* transcriptions, and arranged tables to provide outlines for sections. The tables may seem odd to *Tsìnlhqút'in* readers, for the reason that this is not done orally by elders. Boxes create rigid structures around concepts and time when there is no such thing in the mind. For the most part, I have integrated *Ìnkél's* knowledge into the body of this document, and in some cases, where she explains significant terms or practices, I have given excerpts with interlinear translations. I have left many of her descriptions, critical to the discussion of *nímính*, within the text with English glosses. In other cases, as a way to avoid repetition, I have summarized a number of similar stories to include all *Ìnkél's* contribution to the topic. By no means is this document an overall account of Native ways nor is it a complete report on the *Tsìnlhqút'in* understanding of *nímính*. This thesis is purely knowledge learned by *Ìnkél* and experiences she retained throughout her lifetime. In addition, I need to point out that I have very limited knowledge about *nímính* and about *Tsìnlhqút'in* stories in general. Many of the competent *Tsìnlhqút'in* elders who were more knowledgeable about *nímính* are no longer with us. There will likely be errors, misunderstandings, insufficient clarification, etc. in this thesis. I have merely expanded upon some concepts, clarified

where necessary, analysed terms, marked for tone,⁹ and have added supplementary insights to the discussion of *nímính*, primarily from my fluency in the *Tsìnlhqút'in* language and thirty years of field research among *Tsìnlhqút'in* elders. It is with great honour that I have been the recipient, of my generation, who has been exposed to such extensive information. My thesis tries to draw together multidisciplinary views about *nímính*; first and foremost through a *Tsìnlhqút'in* lens, and secondly from anthropology and linguistics. Citations from other documented texts and excerpts from my previous course papers give support to this study.

⁹ As a side note, in marking for tone, I had to choose one voice for consistency. *Tsìnlhqút'in* tone is influenced considerably in context; the high tones vary as well as the low tones. So I had to go through the transcribed sections while focusing on one voice, and I used the voice of Charlie Quilt. He was my mental guide and I chose his voice because his voice is loud and expressive. Inkel's voice is too low and subdued to mark easily for tone. Some words with low tone become high tone in sentences following high tone words, so I could not rely on "find and replace" to speed up the process. The orthography has one vowel which I could not mark for tone and this is a high fricative lax vowel, the barred *i* /i/.

CHAPTER 5

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is an existing small collection of well documented translated *Tsìnlhqút'in* stories, written in standard storytelling form from the late 1900s to 1950s. Livingston Farrand's *Traditions of the Chilcotin Indians* (1900) and Robert B. Lane's (1953) Ph. D. dissertation *Cultural Relations of the Chilcotin of the West Central British Columbia* contain many translated *Tsìnlhqút'in* stories. Farrand did exceptional work in documenting a number of stories and his translations are remarkably accurate, except for his omission of character dialogues and details. Lane provides a broad overview of *Tsìnlhqút'in* traditions from elders who were present in the 1950s.

There are Dene and Native stories about transformations and these were useful in drawing parallels between stories. I was somewhat disappointed with literary sources, mainly at the brief overviews of subsistence practices and the limited mention of the different energy-carriers and their restrictions. I searched almost frantically to find something to guide me in my study. I mention below some documented sources which were useful in the analyses of *nímính*.

Elders are meticulously honest and thorough in their telling of oral accounts, and this appreciation is also documented in *Make Prayers to the Raven: A Koyukon View of the Northern Forest* (1983) by Richard Nelson, an anthropologist who studied the Koyukon culture. Richard's book is packed with Koyukon knowledge on respectful subsistence activities, and reverence for nature and mammals. He has numerous examples which

parallel with *Tsìnlhqút'in* traditions and much to add to the discussion of *nímính*. His book is eloquently written and is truly a valuable resource.

A *Tsìnlhqút'in* elder said that *šàdànx* 'during an ancient time period', all creatures were human and all spoke the *nènqàyní* language. Following the transformation of the landscapes and the creation of creatures, all were made to speak different languages. This was one way to quell the conflicts which led to the disintegration of harmony during this period (Solomon n.d.). Richard noted the same events of this period:

...All things human and natural go back to a time called *Kk'adonts'idnee*, which is so remote that no one can explain or understand how long ago it really was. But however ancient this time may be, its events are recounted accurately and in great detail through a prodigious number of stories. The stories constitute an oral history of the Koyukon people and their environment, beginning in an age before the present order of existence was established. During this age "the animals were human" – that is, they had human form, they lived in a human society, and they spoke human language (16).

...After the Distant Time people and animals became completely separate and unrelated (20).

Richard translated *Kk'adonts'idnee* as literally meaning 'in Distant Time it is said' and the cognate expression in *Tsìnlhqút'in* is *šàdànx ts'èdènísh* which is the time period in which the *Tsìnlhqút'in* stories likely took place.

June Williams' (1982) *Chilcotin Stories* contains transcribed *Tsìnlhqút'in* stories, including *Lhìn Nits'én Nánàyídásh* 'the dog who courts (a woman)' (also known as *Lhìndèsch'ósh*) told by Charlie Quilt. June is *Ìnkél's* niece and my first cousin, from *Xèní* (Nemiah). Charlie Quilt is related to me through my paternal grandmother whose maiden

name was also Quilt. Part 1 of the story features *Lhìndèsch'ósh* marrying a young woman who is in puberty seclusion, and this is the first mention of one carrying *nímính* energy; the woman was *bèghèts'è'in*. This story (also in Farrand 1900; and Myers 1977) is likely the oldest *Tsìnlhqút'in* story and is shared by most Dene and by other language groups in British Columbia (Wakashan, Coast Salish, and Interior Salish) as well as the Quinault, Cree, and Cherokee. Among Apache in the United States, a similar story is re-enacted in puberty ceremonies, and in the Northwest Territories, the *Tlìchq* (Dogrib) believe themselves to be descendants of the people in this story.

Charlie Quilt's version of *Lhìn Nìts'én Nánàydásh* is very formal and he related the story cheerfully. There is something about storytelling which brought Quilt to life. It was as if this was his life-purpose, and when I recorded him, I brought in two elders and found that he was sick in bed, yet, he told us four stories, *Lhìn Nìts'én Nánàydásh* being one of them. Quilt seemed to savour his stories as he told them, and he used emphasis in multiple ways to convey *Tsìnlhqút'in* wisdom and truth. His narration lacks some additional details found in another version by my paternal grandfather, George Myers. Throughout the story, my grandfather chose an empathetic and perceptive approach in telling the story to his listeners (young granddaughter and a Euro-Canadian woman). In his telling, he filled in background details and described cultural knowledge; teachings he had acquired, realizing these were no longer part of general *Tsìnlhqút'in* education. *Ìnkél's* account is uncomplicated, moderated for a contemporary audience, yet her story requires supplementary clarification for modern readers.¹⁰

¹⁰ This page is from my paper, *Storytelling: The Power Of Voice In Lhìn Nìts'en Nanayidash*, Linguistics 505, University of Victoria, 21 April 2005.

Part 11 of *Lhìn Nìts'én Nánàydásh* in the *Tsinlqhút'in* version centers around its main characters setting out on a medicine journey to bring about new creatures, to modify existing giant mammals and birds, and to change landscapes. The Apache, the Navajo, and the northern Dene have documented that twins, who exhibit spiritual powers, transform giant mammals during this era when mammals preyed upon people. These narratives match the stories about Yamoria in George Blondin's three books: *When the World Was New: Stories of the Sahtu* (1990), *Yamoria the Lawmaker: Stories of the Dene* (1997), and *Trail of the Spirit: the Mysteries of Medicine Power Revealed* (2006); as well, these books each contain a collection of stories. The twins of the Northern Dene were born with powerful medicine and were known by names translating as 'One Who Circled the Earth': *Yamozha* (*Tlìchq̄*; Dogrib); *Yamodezhaa* (South Slavey); *Yamoreya* (North Slavey); *Ehtachohka'e* (*Gwich'in*); and *Yabatheya* (*Denésoliné* or *Dënesuḷiné*; Chipewyan) (Northwest Territories Education, Culture and Employment 1993). These individuals not only created harmony in the world between mammals and people, they also “changed the way we lived and worked with each other. [In fact, Yamoria is known as] ‘The Great Lawmaker’ and he brought a way of life to the Dene based on these laws” (Blondin 2006: 24). *Tsinlqhút'in* twins are born with spiritual power and have the ability to create, transform, and heal. To some extent, these abilities has been carried down to this present day.

The bear is featured in the last part of *Lhìn Nìts'én Nánàydásh* where he escapes being transformed like the other mammals. Mammals were not only made smaller but their eating preferences were changed from eating humans to surviving on small mammals and

plants. Hence the bear retains its ancient nature – that of killing human beings (Farrand 1800; Myers 1977; Williams 1982). Today, the bear is greatly respected for its ancient powers and its human-like qualities - attributes which are brought out in several other *Tsìnlhqút'in* stories. These stories include, *Sès Ts'iqí Ghàghìndá* 'the bear who married a woman' (Farrand 1900; Myers 1977; Williams 1982), *Dèyènž Sès Ghàghìndá* 'the man who lived with a bear', and *Sès Dèyènž T'ásé'iz* 'a bear whose gaze caught up with a man'. Contained in all these stories are allusions to *Tsìnlhqút'in* culture, ancient lifestyle, technology, philosophy, customs, as well as their spiritual and natural resources, in general illustrating a worldview from which the concepts of *nímính* have emerged. The conflicting powers of bears and women led naturally to the development of laws or proscriptions from this point in time for women, twins, and the treatment of the dead. These form a large part of the present *Tsìnlhqút'in* rituals, some of which are briefly described herein. The most interesting features about bears in these stories are their intuitive and spiritual abilities, and it is clear that bears have enforced both hunting prohibitions and the respectful treatment of their relations.

Georgina Loucks' *The Girl and the Bear Facts: a Cross-Cultural Comparison bear* has been crucial to the study of *nímính*. Her work contains an assortment of bear stories from the Tagish and Inland Tlingit (Catharine McClellan 1970), Eastern Cree (Alanson Skinner 1911), Bella Bella, Blackfoot, Cherokee, and others. Loucks outlined general particulars from bear stories, and most valuable were ancient instructions handed down by bears, in particular, how to respect bears and their remains, as well as bear rituals and menstrual taboos.

As examples of the options I grappled with in creating an outline for my table of contents, I found in my research, two models illustrated in two books which were possible options. One in Richard K. Nelson's (1983:23) "Make Prayers to the Raven: a Koyukon View of the Northern Forest" which is a remarkable synopsis of Koyukon traditions related to my study. He listed three categories:

Proper treatment of natural spirits involves hundreds of rules and taboos (*hutlaanee*), some applying to just one species and others having much more general effects. The rules fall into three main categories – first, treatment of living organisms; second, treatment of organisms (or parts of organisms) that are no longer alive; and third, treatment of nonliving entities or objects.

The *Tsìnlhqút'in* concept of *nímính* is basically about respect for lifeforms, but the understanding of *nímính* is also about the energy of *nímính* and its effects on life force. Jarich Gerlof Oosten's (1976:65) headings in "The Theoretical Structure of the Religion of the Netsilik and Iglulik" in Chapter 5, "Ritual Injunctions", is an example of an alternative way to organize ritual observations. He organized his work under three headings:

- Ritual injunctions relating to childbirth and menstruation
- Ritual injunctions relating to death
- Ritual injunctions relating to game

In this chapter, Jarich Gerlof Oosten summarized similar restrictions to those which are observed by *Tsìnlhqút'in nímính* individuals, specifically for menstruants, mourners, and ones who have had physical contact with the dead. It is amazing how alike the Netsilik

and Iglulik traditions are to *Tsìnlhqút'in* in this respect. He relied mainly on the work of K. Rasmussen, and judging from this chapter, Rasmussen was a very productive researcher and he provided valuable records on these cultures.¹¹

I also struggled with the translation of the *Tsìnlhqút'in* term *dé'áts'èt'insh* 'causing ritual obstructions to (subsistence resources)'. It was difficult to explain a term so all-inclusive. The detailed definition of *dé'áts'èt'insh* took up a whole page. So many of the terms used in the discussion of *nímính* are terms for wide-ranging occurrences. I skimmed through Jarich Gerlof Oosten's section referred to above. In his explanation for rejecting the term taboo, Jarich noted the following definition for the term ritual injunction which he said was "introduced by van Baaren" (1973): "This particular injunction is a standardised rule, part of and based on the religious framework of a culture" (64). It was much later that I made the decision to borrow his term "ritual" and this made perfect sense for the reason that *nímính* individuals are described by *Ìnkél* as "walking rituals" - almost everything they do is a ritual.

In another book, I have found valuable knowledge regarding the traditions of the Southern Tutchone, Tagish, and Inland Tlingit in Catharine McClellan's *My Old People Say: an Ethnographic Survey of Southern Yukon Territory Part II* (2001), particularly on comparable data on menstruants, widows, and fresh meat. Catharine McClellan, an anthropologist and former professor, devotes a chapter on "The Round of Life" in which she covers over 50 pages of knowledge on phases of life from the three cultures. Of

¹¹ Jarich Gerlof Oosten's main references for his chapter "Ritual Injunctions" are F. Boas (1888), K. Rasmussen (1929; 1931), and Th. P. van Baaren (1973).

particular interest to the study of *níminh*, she dealt with the topics of puberty, old age, and death for each of the cultures. She documented extensively on the culture of each nation consecutively. The total number of pages for her two-volume work comes to approximately 611 pages.

Peggy V. Beck and Anna L. Walters' *The Sacred: Ways of Knowledge Sources of Life* (1977) is a college textbook on North American religions, citing documents about Natives who reside from Baffin Bay to United States and to the far east. Anna L. Walters is a Pawnee and Otoe-Missouria writer who lives in Arizona. The book has an excellent section entitled *Ways of Thinking About the Sacred* in the first chapter, covering spiritual belief, interdependency, and reverence for life sources. This text contains detailed definitions of terms, for example, in Chapter 1 "Seeking Life: Definitions of Religion and the Sacred", the term "worldview" which is useful to explain for this study is defined at length quoting Alfonso Ortiz (1973:91), a Tewa anthropologist:

The notion "world view" denotes a distinctive vision of reality which not only interprets and orders the places and events in the experience of a people, but lends form, direction, and continuity to life as well. World View provides people with a distinctive set of values, an identity, a feeling of rootedness, of belonging to a time and a place, and a felt sense of continuity with a tradition which transcends the experience of a single lifetime, a tradition which may be said to transcend even time.

In my own lifetime, my early exposure to seasonal camps, and later as a teen, learning the stories which are situated on the land have given me the sense of traditional continuity and a deep connection to the land and to my ancestors. It is unfortunate that I did not experience the puberty ritual as have the Dene women in the north, the Apaches, and

Navajos. Of most interest to my study in Peggy V. Beck and Anna L. Walters is Chapter 9 “Girl’s Puberty Ceremonies” which contains excerpts from many documented sources, including the traditions and the origins of menstruation.

Kwesi Baffoe’s *Profile of the Sayisi Dene Nation of Tadoule Lake in Northern Manitoba* (2005) is an important document because it lays out traditional Dene laws. Kwesi Baffoe, a former dentist, now a lawyer, cited from his personal interviews, and among others, from Joan Ryan’s *Traditional Dene Justice Project* (1983) which was documented for the *Tłı̄chʔ* (Dogrib) people, and from the unpublished thesis of Ron George, *The Indigenous Law of Aboriginal People: Restoring the Foundation of Justice* (2001). He also referred to various court decisions. In terms of usefulness for the study of *nímính*, his sections on Traditional Laws, Hunting Rules, Rules Governing Trapping were most valuable.

Lorna J. Marshall in *Nyae Nyae !Kung: Beliefs and Rites* (1999) documented surprisingly similar cultural data to the *Tsìnlhqùt’ín* knowledge in *nímính*. She gathered information on food avoidances and said this custom was observed “for the protection of health, strength, and skills” by “boys and girls and young adults, pregnant women, women in childbirth, parents of newborn babies, hunters, and healers”. She stated the reason for noting these individuals is that they “are in their procreative years or in states of life when their functions are vital to the life of the group” (92). A !Kung hunter must not have contact with his baby, wife, and including her breast milk, and in addition, the !Kung have a plant remedy to deal with menstruant contact with hunting equipment.

The *Koyukon Athabaskan Dictionary* (2000) is unlike general English dictionaries. The main entries contain elaborate descriptions of Koyukon and Ten'a culture, and this is what is exceptional about it. The author, Jules Jetté, besides being a Jesuit priest fluent in the Koyukon language, was a linguist and ethnographer. After his arrival in Alaska in 1898, he accumulated a massive data base on Koyukon and Ten'a history, culture, and language. James Kari, a linguist who works primarily on Dene languages, edited Jetté's work with the assistance of a Koyukon cultural and linguistic expert Eliza Jones, and they transformed the collection into a 1118 page dictionary. This is a tremendous piece of work. Eliza Jones began this project in 1973. Of the most interest to this study were cultural specifics on the menstrual restrictions and their food avoidances, and hunting violations and the subsequent aloofness of animals. As well, this is an excellent resource for historical and comparative investigations of Dene languages. This documentation consists of maps, sketches, a comprehensive dictionary beginning with Koyukon headwords, topical listings, English-to-Koyukon index, and a Koyukon word-initial index.

PART TWO: REFERENCES ABOUT *NÍMÍNH* IN AN ANCIENT STORY

In the beginning of all things, wisdom and knowledge were with the animals, for Tirawa, the One Above, did not speak directly to man. He sent certain animals to tell men that he showed himself through the beast, and that from them, and from the stars and the sun and moon should man learn... all things tell of Tirawa.

Eagle Chief (Letakos-Lesa), 2004

CHAPTER 6

SÈS TS'ÍQÍ GHÀGHÌNDÁ 'THE BEAR WHO MARRIED A WOMAN'

Tsìnlhqút'in elders were exposed to many stories told by their elders who lived in the eighteenth century, therefore are well-versed in traditional *Tsìnlhqút'in* culture and terminology. I worked on one *Tsìnlhqút'in* narrative a few years ago, and I attempted to portray the storyteller's voice on paper but I found this inefficient. Storytellers rearrange scenes, delete and shorten some, and others they elaborate on as they tell their stories. Storytellers use voice and expressions to effectively validate the authenticity of their stories and also to give stories meaning. In *Tsìnlhqút'in*, the oral citations, "they say" or "it is said" connects listeners to ancestors and validates the story as being factual. In retelling the stories in English, these constant phrases become too repetitive and somewhat awkward, so much that such phrases may be omitted by the writers. Stories which are read at bedtime for children may generally be misunderstood as fiction. In *Tsìnlhqút'in*, the authenticity of stories is never questioned in regards to ancient knowledge passed down orally.¹²

I provide an interlinear version of *Sès Ts'íqí Ghàghìndá*, one of the longer stories, which provides the second earliest contribution to the knowledge of *nímính* and its related prohibitions. *Sès Ts'íqí Ghàghìndá* is a *šàdànx* story and this version was told by *Ìnkél* in 1977; recorded by her daughter (and my sister) Maria Myers and subsequently

¹² This paragraph is an excerpt from my paper, *Storytelling: The Power Of Voice In Lhin Nits'en Nanayidash*, Linguistics 505, University of Victoria, 21 April 2005.

transcribed by her niece (and my cousin) Maryann Solomon in 1985; and finally translated by myself for this thesis.

Sès Ts'iqí Ghàghindá 'the bear who married a woman'

1. *Chìnsdàd ts'ètísán ts'èdènísh.*
 silverweed roots someone began harvesting it is said
It is said that someone began harvesting silverweed roots.

2. *Xèdìnt'áh egúh nánètísh, gún ts'iqíh.*
 she alone there she kept going to bed that person the woman
The woman bedded down alone there each night.

3. *Chìnsdàd hèsèn ghìnlhghìl hìnk'àn chìnsdàd béd*
 silverweed roots she is harvesting it became dark and then silverweed roots meal
dìlhtsín.
 she prepared for herself
She is harvesting silverweed roots and when it became dark, she cooked roots for herself.

4. *Chìnsdàd béd hélhtsi egú xéná yáx k'í*
 silverweed roots meal she is making then finally over there willow(s)

ts'égwèdènághínlyàh egùn qwén ts'álht'àlh déni hínlhtsán
 one had parted (branches, there light one is moving a light the person she saw
 creating an opening)
While she was cooking, she looked toward an opening in the willows and she saw a person shining a light.

5. *Gú qwén dzánh sú ts'álht'àlh gázt'ìn déni hínlhtsán.*
 there light only well one is moving a light one is doing that the person she saw
She saw someone, a man, shining a light.

6. *Hìnk'àn sútsél déni nìlh'ìn.*
 and then carefully the person she looks at him
And she observed the man carefully.

7. *Nìnk'éd déni bànághínyà.*
 in fact the person he comes upon her
It is actually a man who comes upon her.

8. *Sès dzánh hát'ìn bènàgh qwén hélísh.*
 bear only he was doing that his eyes light it becomes
It is only a bear; his eyes naturally light up.

9. *Dèni-t'ày nítl'ádìndàh ts'èdènísh, gún etíán.*
 a person's back down he sat it is said then he began to eat
It is said that he sat behind her and began to eat.

10. *Gúyì chínsdàd ts'ètàyínlh hínk'àn chínsdàd ìnlhí*
 that silverweed roots one is going to eat it and then silverweed roots one
bèts'én ts'etíẓ'án.
 to him one hands it over
She hands him a bundle of roots which she had prepared for herself.

11. *Èyì, "Nènàlh gánt'ì hèsàn hángwánt'in?" yélnhí,*
 that "in your presence that kind I am eating the reason you're doing that he told her
gúy béd hénlìn í.
 that meal it is that one
He complains to her, "Have I eaten this kind of food in your presence before?" in reference to the cooked roots.

12. *Egúh hán gúy lhà béd hílih éyì*
 then (emph) that (neg) meal not that one

béghéchòẓ éyì nànyèdíẓ'án, éyì yínlhchúd.
 it had been tied that she replaced it with that he took

Then she replaces her former offering with uncooked roots which he takes.

13. *Néndíwh ts'iqíh gùghintén egúh gwéghé'ézán ts'èdènísh,*
 right here the woman where she held there (area) he didn't eat it is said

ts'ègùghintén ègúh lhá gúyínl.
 where it was held by someone there (neg) (area) he didn't eat

It is said that he left uneaten those parts of the roots she had touched.

14. *Nènk'èyèd tèsánh "Élhghènàghúqí," dijágh tèsághint'í.*
 right there perhaps "Let's live together" he said possibly
It might have been at this point that he said, "Let's live together."

15. *Ch'ìlh'àz gwèch'àjèni'àz sághìní*
 lastly they left on foot (dual) possibly.
Then they must have finally left.

16. *Lhà* *séx* *hílih,* *gwèghén* *xéyánh,* *nílh* *gúxìnyàh,*
(neg) long not near since with one she walked under there

yáx *é'ànx* *égùn.*
over there den there

They must have been in close proximity to the den because it was not long before she entered the den with him.

17. *Gún* *déyènâ* *ín* *gádình* *ts'èdènísh,* *“Yùsétil* *xághúnyá,”* *yélníh.*
him the man (emph.) he said it is said mat you will get he told her

It is said that the man said to her, “Get some bedding.”

18. *Gú* *él,* *tsìntsén-í-èl* *dèqád-tsèl* *nèzùn* *jínìl'in* *éyì*
those bough Douglas-fir boughs flat ones nice it looks ones

áyédénìghìn
she packed it in from outside

She packed in flat, fine-looking Douglas-fir boughs.

19. *“Nènàlh* *gánt'ì* *yùh-dézésyàh* *hángwànt'in?”*
“in your presence that kind underneath - the bedding I use the reason you’re doing that

“Have you seen me use this kind of bedding? Is that why you’ve done this?”

20. *Àn* *xèdèd* *gánt'ì* *qàtízáh.*
so himself that kind he went to get

And he goes to get bedding himself.

21. *Gú* *xwés* *bélh* *tl'úgh* *nùwíshì-tl'ùgh* *bélh* *chéyéghèdìlhqéd,*
those types prickly rose with grass, pinegrass with he pushed it into a pile

dèlghùngh *gúh* *yádìsh* *àyúlh'in* *lìn* *yélh*
he is growling there up there somehow (emph?) with it

tl'ágúwèyàlh *sánh.*
he walked backwards possibly

Growling, he likely piled together pinegrass and rose bushes and somehow brought them up the hill backwards.

22. *Hìnk'àn* *qúngh* *néndáyédénìlàh* *hà.*
and then home he brought them in (emph.)

And then he brought the (bedding) into the den.

23. *Àn* *ts'iqíh* *ín* *gáyénižèn* "Dínín *húnlht'í* *béçh'èd*
hence the woman (emph). she thought that, it is prickly how will on it

tàsðálh *hát'in?"* *yénižèn.*
I'm going to sit he is doing this she thought

The woman thought to herself, "How will I be able to sit on them when they're so prickly?"

24. *Egúchúh* *dèni-ní* *égwébiyénižèn,* "Húyénižèn *líðành?"*
even so a person-mind he knew it What are you thinking? (emph)?

dènišh.

he says

Even though he knows her thoughts, he says, "What are you thinking about?"

25. "Dínín, *húnlht'í* *béçh'èd* *tèts'ètàðálh* *yénešèn* *án,*" *dijágh.*
it is prickly how on it one can sit on it I'm thinking" (emph.) she said
She said, "I am thinking, how is one able to sit on those when they're so prickly?"

26. "Néndánh *tl'áládéžinjís* *híny,* *béçh'èd* *tètl'ádéžintsàd,*"
here now slide (your garment) over your buttocks (emph.) on it sit on it

dijágh.

he said

"Here now, slip (your garment) up over your buttocks and sit on it," he said.

27. *Gáts'èjágh* *ts'èdènišh,* *gángú* *chós* *dèni* *bàgágújágh* *ts'èdènišh.*
one did that it is said it seemed as if down (n) the person it seemed to her it is said
It is said that one did that [sat on the mound] and it felt like down to her.

28. *Chùnchùh,* *tši,* *bènèn* *húnilt'á* *gùtàðálh* *ègúh*
again rock month the number of he was going to hibernate that

gánilt'ih *éyi* *áyédénilhqéd* *ts'édinh.*
equal to that ones he shoved them in it is said

Again, it is said that he shoved in the number of rocks equal to the number of months he was going to hibernate.

29. *Èyèd* *dèlghùngh* *áyédénilhqéd* *ts'èdènišh.*
there he is growling he pushed them in it is said

He shoved them in growling, it is said.

30. *Èyèd* *án* *gúyi* *néndáyédénilàh* *sághini*
then (emph) that one he carried them inside possibly

It is then that he likely brought in those (the stones)

31. *Ìyèdáh jéžqih....*
right there they sat\lived (dual)

There the two of them live.

32. *Chùnychùh gún ts'iqih iyèn gáyénižèn, "Ìnkwél*
again that person the woman that person she thought this Mother

bélh díg ánásìlìn yánáh," yénižèn.
with Saskatoon berries I worked on back (west) there" she thought

Again, the woman thought this, "I harvested and preserved saskatoon berries in the west with mom."

33. *Egùhchùh hùts'éyènižèn égúh égwinižèn, "Húyénižèn lídành?"*
even so what one thought that he knew "What are you thinking?" (emph.)

dèniš.

he says

Even then, he knew her thoughts and he asked her, "What are you thinking?"

34. *"Ìnkwél díg lhàn bélh ánásìlìn," nì.*
"Mother Saskatoon berries lots with I worked on" she said.

"I harvested and preserved many saskatoon berries with mom," she replies.

35. *Bètl'ànstil nágwénâghinqád égùn díg xánâghîngúy, éyi*
his rump he slapped there Saskatoon berries they came dropping out they

yàldìl ghinlí sành.
she ate (past tense) possibly

He slaps his rump and saskatoon berries spill out from his rump and she likely ate these.

36. *Égúh gát'in chùnychùh ch'iz séx ghinlí sàghiní,*
then he was doing that again later for a long duration (past tense) possibly

"Ìnkwél ésgùnsh bélh ánásìlìn ghinlí yánáh."
Mother yellow glacier lily bulbs with I worked on (past tense) back (west) there."

It may have been much later, after eating for a time (when she said), "I harvested and preserved yellow glacier lily bulbs in the west with mom."

37. *Egùhchùh gát'insh bètl'ànstil nágwénéqíg égùn ts'én ésgùnsh*
and again he did that his rump he slapped there towards yellow glacier lily bulbs

xágósh.

they continuously drop out

And again he does that; he slaps his rump and from his rump fall yellow glacier lily bulbs.

38. *Chùnychùh sùnt'iny tèsánh ts'édènish ts'iyènižèn.*
 again spring beauty corms perhaps it is said one thought

And again, it is said that perhaps it is spring beauty corms she thought of next.

39. *Chùnychùh gáts'eyènižèn, égúhchúh "Húyèniłžèn álídành?" dènish.*
 again one thought that and again "What are you thinking? (emph.)? he says

"Sùnt'iny bélh dénìlh ánásìlìn hást'ì, sè'ìnkwél, yénéšèn
 spring beauty corms with with one I worked on I have my mother I'm thinking

hádèsnih," nih.
 I am saying she said

In response to one's thought once more, he asks "What are you thinking?" to which she replies, "I am thinking that I harvested and preserved spring beauty corms with my mother."

40. *Egúhchúh gát'insh ts'édènish, égwènz xágwénègòsh,*
 and again he does that it is said from there out (area) it continuously spills out

bètl'ànstìl nágwénèqíg.
 his rump he slaps (once)

And he does that again they say, he slaps his rump and out they spill from there.

41. *Nènk'èd ch'iz hán nènk'èd, nènk'èd sánh éghúlhts'én*
 certainly later (emph.) certainly certainly perhaps spring (season)

gwéts'én gwázèlh tésájagh sáts'èdènish.
 near approaching in time she might have done that since it is said

gádình, gáts'iyènižèn, "Gwédézésdình," ts'èyènižèn,
 she said one thought that I am greatly aroused she thought

"Gwédézésdình," yènižèn, yènižèn gwádánížèd.
 I am greatly aroused she thought she thought she was thinking about that

It was surely later, perhaps approaching the spring (season), since it is said that she thought, "I am greatly aroused."

42. *"Gwédézésdình," yèlhnìh ts'èdình.*
 I am greatly aroused she told him one said

She told him, "I am greatly aroused."

43. *Gádinh ts'èdènísh, "Èt'án gwé(ẓ)lín èt'án sáquíd*
 he said it is said leaf/leaves they become leaves in the shade of

hínk'àn," ts'èdinh díjagh.
 only then it is said he said

It is said that he answered, "Only when the leaves develop; (only) under the shade of leaves."

44. *Ìyèd ch'iz chùh gúwh sájagh xèntsèl*
 there later too then she must have done that suddenly

ègúh chúh gáts'iyènižèn ts'èdinh, "Sùnagh
 then too one thought it is said my older brother

éch'àn ghéžélh lhà bèch'á wéli gúlih
 the first one age (neg) outdo him will be impossible

néntizán," yénižèn.
 he's growing up she thought

Then, later, she must have done that; it is said, all of a sudden one thought again, "My older brother, the eldest one is growing up, becoming unsurpassed; indomitable."

45. *Egúh dèni-ní nígebíyènižèn, "Húyènižèn lídành?"*
 then a person's mind he knew a person "What are you thinking?" (emph)

dènísh.
 he says

Even then he read her mind but asked, "What are you thinking?"

46. *"Sùnagh éch'àn ghéžélh lhà bèch'á wéli*
 my older brother the first one age (neg) outdo him will be

gúlih yánáh yénéšèn," nih.
 impossible back (west) there I am thinking she said

"I am thinking that my older brother, the eldest one who lives in the west is becoming unsurpassed; indomitable," she said.

47. *Hínk'àn gádinh, "Ìyèn háhínih bèdàzàx*
 and then he said him you are referring to his breath (?)

qítl'ùgh ts'èsèl iyèn?" nì ts'èdinh.
 footwear-grass one is keeping warm him he said it is said

And then it is said that he haughtily retorted, "You mean him, the one whose grass insoles are being kept warm close to his face."

48. *Sùnchùh*, *sùnchùh*, “*Sèchèl* *àtìsh* *ghèzèlh* *iyèn*,
again again my younger brother the middle one age him/that one

iyèn *lhà* *bèch'á* *wélí* *gúlih* *néntízáan*,”
him (neg) outdo him will be impossible he is growing up

yènižèn *ts'èdènísh* *ts'iqih* *éyèn*.
she thought it is said the woman her/that one

And again, it is said that the woman thought, “My brother who is the middle in age is growing up, becoming unsurpassed; indomitable.”

49. *Egúchúh* *égwínèžínsh*, “*Húyénílžén?*” *dènísh*.
even then he knew “What are you thinking?” he says

He again knew and asked, “What are you thinking?”

50. “*Sèchèl* *àtìsh* *ghèzèlh* *iyèn* *lhà* *bèch'á* *wélí*
my younger brother the middle one age him (neg) outdo him will be

gúyáh *néntízáan* *yánáh* *yénésèn* *hádìny*,”
impossible he is growing up back (west) there I am thinking she is saying

yélhnhíh.
she told him

She replied, “I am thinking that my brother who lives in the west who is the middle one in age is growing, becoming unsurpassed; indomitable.”

51. “*Iyèn* *hálhínih* *bédàzàx* *ch'ixáts'égwèltísh*
him you are referring to his breath one is taking [an infant] out [of a baby basket]

iyèn?” *nì* *ts'èdình*.
him he said it is said

It is said that he haughtily retorted, “You mean him, the one who is near an infant who is being taken out of a basket.”

52. *Sùnchùh* “*Sú'éch'ih* *ghèzèlh* *lhà* *bèch'á* *wélí*
again the very last one age (neg) outdo him will be

gúyáh *néntízáan* *yánáh*,” *yènižèn*.
impossible he is growing up back (west) there she thought

Again, she thought, “The youngest one who lives in the west is growing up, becoming unsurpassed; indomitable.”

53. *Sùnchùh* “*Húyénílžén* *lídà?*” *dènísh*.
again “What are you thinking?” (emph.) he says

Again he asked, “What are you thinking?”

54. “*Sèchèl èch’ih ghézèlh iyèn lhà bèch’á wéli*
 my younger brother the last one age him (neg) outdo him will be

gúyàh néntizán yènèsèn hást’ì,” nì.
 impossible he is growing up I am thinking I am she said

She replied, “I am thinking that my younger brother who is the youngest in age is growing up, becoming unsurpassed; indomitable.”

55. *Ìyèd hínk’àn, “Sènàch’iz nízán,” díjagh yá’ánxw*
 there and then without my awareness he grew up he said way out there
 (lit. my eyes-later)

nèdilhged bétsinsh ínaghèlgèd ts’èdènish.
 he pointed in a circle his nose he placed his fingers on his nose it is said

It is then that he vaguely admitted, “He grew up without my knowing about him,” and it is said that he reached out and pointed, moving his pointer (finger) in a circle and returned it to rest directly on his nose.

56. *Bétsinsh lànè’álgéd nénján déni bándétén*
 his nose he pointed his fingers to his nose right here the person his doorway

jígwédísts’án ts’èdinh.
 there was a noise It is said

He put his finger to his nose and right then, it is said that there was a noise at his door.

57. *Gúyèn èlhghà’eyùwh jèdilhts’ih.*
 them separately they live

They (the other people) live in separate places.

58. *Gán lhíqén tèsánh yés jèdilhts’ih sághint’i,*
 just underground home possibly under they live were perhaps
 (lit. dirt-fire)

ùndidánh lá gáts’àghint’i.
 long ago (emph.) they lived that way

They may have been living in underground homes as people did long ago.

59. *Ìyèd hínk'àn, "Nénján ành bélh sínqìh?" ts'édính,*
 him/then and then here (emph.) with you are living (dual) she was asked

ts'édính, "Hútáséx, bíyèx
 it is said I am going to shoot him underneath him

xáxédùghùnl't'àx," nih ts'édính.
 you will scramble out from there he said it is said

It is then that she is asked, "Are you in there with him?" and it is said that he added, "I'm going to shoot him and when I do scramble out from beneath him."

60. *Dèni án yèdízt's'án.*
 the man it is she heard him

It is a man and she heard him.

61. *Gáts'èjagh bèyèx xèts'éghédàlt'ì ègùn chúh k'ásél*
 one did that underneath him one scrambled out then too almost

nìch'ixédilt'ì ègùn ts'uníntsí.
 he pounced on top of a person there he was shot by someone

It is done that way; he [the bear] is about to pounce on her when she scrambled out from under him and he shot at him [the bear].

62. *Ts'uníntsí yèyèx xáxédàlt'ì.*
 he was shot by someone underneath him she scrambled out

He [the bear] is shot and she scrambled out from under him.

63. *Ìyèd hínk'àn dènilh-áyélh'in tíjyéninjèz.*
 there and then assisting one with it they dragged it out

And then she helps him drag it out.

64. *Gù'ánz íyèd nìjyélh'éx.*
 on the other side there they skinned it

They skin it outside.

65. *"Bèqí íyèdáh, bèqí íyèdáh bèlá íyédínláh*
 its hind paw(s) right there its hind paw(s) right there its front paw(s) he left them attached

ch'èdúghúnt'ás," nih ts'íqí.
 you cut them off she said the woman

The woman asked, "Cut off its hind and front paws and leave them attached to the skin."

66. *"Bèch'èz tù elaghilht'ih," nít's'édính.*
 Because of him/it water one told her

(Translation unknown - I am unsure whether this was said by the woman or her brother)

67. *Gáts'inlág* *bèqí* *bèlá* *ts'édághíndzáy,* *níts'èlh'èx.*
 it was done to it its hind paw(s) its front paw(s) one (left) them attached it was skinned
It is skinned that way leaving the paws attached to the skin.

68. “*Síd sès-zéž* *túsghí,*” *nìh* *ts'èdình* *ts'íqí.*
 me bear skin I'll pack it she said one said the woman
It is said the woman stated, “I will pack the skin.”

69. *Gúyèn ín* *ètсэн* *tížghín* *sághìní* *bèchèl* *ín*
 him/that one (emph.) meat he started to pack possibly, her younger brother (emph.).
Her younger brother must have packed the meat.

70. *Ìyèd án* *lhìndèsch'ósh* *ìnlhí* *gùlh* *náljìd.*
 there (emph.) miniature dog one with them it is crawling
There, a small dog was following them.

71. *Èyèn,* *yáníz* *nìch'ìh* *ghéyàlh* *xèdèltsìsh.*
 her/that one way back there behind one she is walking intentionally made herself
She purposely lagged behind him.

72. *Lhìn gùbàyéžtsí,* *lhà* *dèni* *t'ásásh* *chù.*
 dog it barked once at them (neg.) the man didn't catch up to yet yet
The dog barked once before she caught up with him.

73. “*Húlt'in* *hát'in?*” *ts'èyènižèn* *ts'èniwèlh'in* *ts'égúst'in*
 What is she doing is she doing one thought one wants to see one one wanted to
bàgwè'in *ts'èghédàlt'ì.*
 hidden from him one moved there; hid
He wished to watch her and wondered, “What is she doing?” and she hid from him.

74. *Gú lhìn yàtsílh,* *ìnlhés* *détélyínsh* *hínk'àn*
 that dog is barking continuously along very and then

lhìn nághén *ágwét'in* *hántàgwèt'in.*
 dog she is chasing that's what is happening it is apparent that's what is happening

Apparently, the dog was barking relentlessly as she [detelyinsh] and chased it around.
 *[translation unknown: possible making vocal noises while panting]

75. *Néndúwh níghéx gát'ìn gùbélh ts'éghénílch'ágh, "Àntàh*
 here near one she was doing that with them one became angry in fact/so that's what

ègwáh hánh gánt'ìn á lhìn náyètsìsh.
 that (emph.) you're doing (emph.) dog is barking at you

She was doing this near him and he became angry with her and said, "So this is what you're doing (causing) the dog to bark at you."

76. *Èsdí séx nányáh án!" ts'èdình.*
 much too long (duration) you are walking (emph.) one said

"You are walking much too slow!" she was told.

77. *Lhà hùlht'ih chùh sès-zéž ghéghìlh*
 (neg.) nothing wrong with her; innocently and so bear skin she is packing

názéd hèlish.
 she is standing she became

She then transformed herself and immediately stood there packing the bear skin.

78. *Ìyèd gú'én égúh lhá lhìn xèdànyíltsí*
 there after that then (neg.) dog she didn't prompt it to bark at her again

égùn yáx jèdílhts'ih égùn nájèndìl
 then over there they lived there they arrived back.

After that, she didn't provoke the dog again and they arrived at their lodging place.

79. *Ìyèd dánh sès, sès tízbéz ts'édènísh, gún*
 there right then the bear the bear she began stretching it onto a frame it is said her/that one

ts'iqí sès ghàghìndá íyèn.
 the woman the bear she lived with; married to her/that one

It is said, immediately there, she, the woman who lived with a bear, began to stretch the bear [skin] onto a frame.

80. *Sès hèbèz, sés hèlhtsâsh.*
 the bear she is stretching it onto a frame the bear she is scraping/softening it
She stretched the bear [skin] onto a frame and scraped the skin to soften it.

81. *Hínk'àn bèdíx néndí-tsèl, lhà hínáz-tsèl hín ègùn*
 and his younger sister the short one (neg.) not too tall (emph.) over there

náyèlh'á.
 she sent her about to do things for her

And then she sent her younger sister, the short one who wasn't too tall, over there.

82. “*Yáx inkwél béts’én sáché́n, sáché́n dìny xághún’àlh,*”
 over there mother to her tiger lily bulb(s) tiger lily bulb(s) four bring over (sg)

yélhnih, egùn gúwélgáy.
 she told her over there she walked away to

She [the woman] asked her, “Bring me four tiger lily bulbs from mother,” and she [the sister] walked over there.

83. *Sáché́n dìny xúšt’in éyì gánt’ì bèlàts’ághíndzáy égùn*
 tiger lily bulbs four she wanted that that type she was given (pl) from there

xánághèlgáy.
 she walked back from there

She was given four tiger lily bulbs which she [the woman] wanted and she returned with them.

84. *Néndíd bèghú yélhtsín.*
 this her tooth/teeth she made them into

She (the woman) put them into her mouth, and they became her teeth.

85. *Yadí yígwédízhwés, bézi xáyághìngúy ts’èdènísh,*
 up there she bit into [a surface] with them her mouth they fell out it is said

dèchèn dízhwés ts’èdènísh.
 wood she bit into it it is said

It is said that she bit into wood up above and they [the bulbs] fell out of her mouth.

86. “*Shùnchùh èsghùnsh dìny sàxághúnlgásh,*” *yélhnih.*
 again yellow glacier lily bulbs four (walk) get for me she asked her
“Again, get me four yellow glacier lily bulbs,” she asked her.

87. *Gát’insh égùn télgish, égùn ègwènz xánálgish.*
 she does that to there she walks from there from that direction she returns on foot
She did that; walked over there and returned again.

88. *Èyì bèghú yélhtsín éyì lhà xágósh ts’èdènísh.*
 these her tooth/her teeth she made these ones (neg.) they fell out it is said
She [the woman] transformed these into her teeth and these do not fall out.

89. *Bìsh* *gwèdès'í,* *bèghú* *lá* *gángú* *sés*
 inside her mouth it (area) is strong her tooth/teeth (emph.) just like the bear

yàgh *èsghùnsh* *ìnlhés* *lhàjíd* *gádùghùní* *gúlàh*
 that/um-m yellow glacier lily bulbs very cannot say that cannot

hán.
 (emph.)

Her mouth is so tough that you cannot say whether she has bear teeth or yellow glacier lily bulb teeth.

90. *Àlh'áyédình* *hàts'èdènísh.*
 They are speaking the truth as they say
They are speaking the truth (in telling this story).

91. *Ìyèd* *án* *ìnlhés* *sès* *selín* *yáx* *bé'ìnkwél*
 It was there that (emph.) very a bear she became over there her mother

jèdílhts'ìh *egùn* *gúghéltésèd.*
 where they are living to there she charged away in that direction

It is there that she (the woman) truly turned into a bear and charged in the direction where her mother (parents) live.

92. *Nènk' ègùn* *gúwét'ì* *gájágh* *ts'èdènísh*
 in that exact direction she flew it seemed that she did it is said.
It is said that she moved quickly appearing as if flying there.

93. *Ègùn* *yélh* *sés,* *gún* *béchèl* *yélh* *sés*
 there with the bear him/that one her younger brother with him the bear

xághínlhtìn *èyèn* *gwàntízáh* *yáx*
 she brought it [the bear] out [of the den] him/that one he left over there

tíntèx *xádédàh.*
 in the forest he is hunting among

Her younger brother, the one she helped take the bear out [of the den], went to the forest to hunt.

94. *Èyèn* *lhàgúl* *yáx* *bé'ìnkwél* *íntléd.*
 him/that one he is gone over there her mother she attacked and killed
He (the brother) was gone when she [the woman] attacked and killed her mother.

95. *Bè'àbá,* *ésqàx* *gàts'ìn* *íntléd.*
 her father the children everyone she attacked and killed
She attacked and killed her father and all the children (family).

96. *Gún nádayèdilh'á nèn'iyèn dzành nináyéninlhtin.*
 her/that one she had ordered about certainly her/the one the only one she spared
She spared only the one she had ordered about.

97. *Ègú iyèd yélh gwéech'áni'àz, hink'àn hétsínsh*
 then there with her she began to walk away (dual) and then when she defecates
éyi gún bèdíz nèntsél éyèn yètsí
 that then her younger sister small that one her head

bitséldèldish.

she wipes her behind with

Then she (the woman) walked away (dual) with her (the girl) and every time she defecated, she used her (the girl's) head to wipe herself.

98. *Yètsí téxèlchòg án éyi yítséldèldish.*
 her head she catches (emph.) with that she wipes her behind with it
She caught hold of her head and used it to wipe herself.

99. *Gát'in yètsí gágúnlghén gáyélh'in yád bètsí*
 she was doing that her head very quickly she was doing that to her over there her head
gán séggèn dzánh ájagh ts'édènish.
 utterly dried up only; completely it became absolutely covered it is said

It is said that she continued to do that and the girl's head quickly became covered with dried crap.

100. *Ègú yá'ánxw tl'ètsèn dùlzèn yélhni égúh*
 then outside wild onions harvest for herself she told her around
náyélh'á, "Tl'ètsèn dùghùnlzèn," yélhdénish.
 she orders her about wild onions you will harvest for yourself she tells her

Then she (the woman) ordered her to harvest wild onions telling her, "Harvest yourself some wild onions."

101. *Ègúh gát'in hink'àn gún bèchèl bélh*
 that she is doing that and then that person her younger brother with her
ts'iyínlhtin éyèn yánághínyàh gún ésqì.
 found one with him/that one he came upon her her/that one the child
She, the girl, was doing that when her younger brother, the one who was raised with her, came upon her.

102. *Yàgh* *ètséd* *k'és* *dinsh* *tèsánh* *sétséd* *éyi*
 that/um-m willow grouse or spruce grouse perhaps he killed it that

bèdiz *làyághínlhtìn.*
 his younger sister he handed it to her

It must have been either a willow grouse or a spruce grouse which he killed and gave to his younger sister.

103. “*K'àn* *nèntsí* *húnlht'ih* *án,* *nèntsí* *yángén?”*
 now your head what is wrong with it (emph.) your head (pl) is all dried up

yélní *ts'édình.*
 he asked her it is said

It is said that he asked her, “Now, what is wrong with your head (hair) - it's so dry?”

104. “*Gúyèn* *hètsínsh* *gágúnlhán* *sétsí* *bít séldèldàx* *hást'ì,*”
 her/that person she defecates every time my head she wipes herself with it I am

yélní *ts'édìny.*
 she told him it is said

She replied, “She wipes herself on my head every time she defecates.”

105. *Hínk'àn* *tši* *èlhídághîntsíid* *éyi* *yétsí* *táhyéníndzáy,*
 and then stone(s) he pounded them into those her head he mixed them into
 pieces

ínlhés *gádánlhchùgh* *táhyéníndzáy.*
 completely all of it he mixed them into

And then he pounded some stones to pieces and mixed all of it into her head.

106. “*Gúyì* *nátùghùnlhtí,* *dùghùnl't'ás,”* *nìhyélníh* *“Ìyèd* *sínsh*
 that take it with you roast it for yourself he told her there too

gádùní, *“Húnlhàd* *jíd* *ch'ádínlágh?”* *nélní*
 she will say what did you do to it how you killed it she tells you

hínk'èd, *“Gwèzínlh* *bíd* *béghànìtêz* *lhúghúní,”* *yélníh.*
 if digging stick with you speared through it tell her he told her

He then told her, “Bring that (grouse) back with you and roast it for yourself, and (the woman) will ask you, “How did you kill it?” say, “I speared it using my digging stick.”

107. *Egú* *gájágh* *ts'édènísh*
 then she did that it is said.

It is said that that's what she did.

108. *Yàgh* *yànághínlhtìn* “*Húnlhàd* *jid* *ch’ádínlágh* *nì*
that/um-m she brought it to her what did you do to it how you killed it?” she said

yélní.
she asked her

She brought it (the grouse) to her and she (the woman) asked her, “How did you kill it?”

109. “*Ségwèzínlh* *bíd* *béghànitéž* *àn,*” *yélníh.*
my digging stick with I speared through it (emph.) she told her
“I speared it with my digging stick,” she explained to her (the woman).

110. *Lhà* *yùdídlán,* “*Ànk’án* *yá’án* *téšìnlhtísh* *húníntás* *hínsh,*”
(neg.) she believed her but over there place it on you spear it (emph.)

nì.
she said

In disbelief, she (the woman) commanded her, “Then, place it up high over there and throw (your digging stick) at it.”

111. *Gájágh* *yá’án* *téyélhtín* *yúníntéž,* *gúgùn* *sú*
she did that over there she placed it on she threw (a spear) at it in that location exactly

gwéghàntsí *égùn* *gúghànàntéž.*
where a spear went through it in that spot she speared it through again

She (the girl) put it (the grouse) up there and she speared through it in the exact site.

112. “*Yá’án* *lá* *àlh’ádínish* *láh* *dùghùnl’tás,*” *nìh* *ts’èdènísh.*
over there (emph.) you are right (emph.) roast it for yourself she said it is said
It is said that she (the woman) admitted, “You are absolutely right – roast it for yourself.”

113. *Ìyèd* *án* *ìyèd* *gú’én* *ègú* *ínlhés* *ch’ínéniyàn* *sághìní* *ts’èdènísh*
there (emph.) there after that then very she matured possibly it is said

gún *ésqì.*
her/that one the child

It is said, following that (scene) perhaps the child grew up.

114. *Gún* *séx* *hélísh* *tšèl* *nánáyèdílhstín* *ts’édình*
her/that one long duration it happens/it becomes behind she transformed her? it is said

há.
(emph.)

Then occasionally she (the woman) used her (the girl’s) hair to wipe her behind.

unknown term [*nánáyèdílhstín*] which could mean ‘she transformed her’

115. Ègùn dzèlh nèrchágh, nèn nèrchágh bíd dílgwénlh ts'èdènísh.
there mountain large land large with a hill it is said

In that place, there is a massive mountain.

116. “Èyì ìnlhànx néndín gúnish gwélayàx, yáx, égùn
that one (person) this way to the west s\he is going around over there there

yù'ánz, yù'ánz chùh nàsít'áz égùn
the other side the other side too we walk (dual) around it there

éhxénághít'áz égùn élhghènághúqí,” yélníh gún
we meet up (dual) there let's live together; he told her him/that one
let's marry one
another

dìyènz, “Sélh élnàltsán hín.
the boy/man with me see one another (emph.)

He said to her, “One will go around at the west end and from the other side, we will go around, and when we meet up and see one another, we will live together.”

117. Èlhdízìqì háyédình.
they are sisters they are saying

They are saying this and they are siblings.

118. Gáyèjàgh èlhànx jétíz'áz yù'ánz, yù'ánz
they did that in separate directions they walked (dual) the other side the other side

gúyèn ts'íqí éyèn dzành lhá gút'in
her/that one the woman her/who the only one (neg.) didn't want to

ghìni ts'édènísh.
(past tense) it is said

They did that; walked in separate directions and on the other side, the woman was the only one who was unhappy with the plan.

119. Lhà gáwésnàx yènízèn sághint'í.
(neg.) I will do that she thought perhaps

She must have been thinking that she would not go through with this.

125. *Ìyèd* *hádàghìní* *dènísh,* “*Bètà* *náyídlín,* *bázi*
there he was saying s/he says his/her father s/he is his/her nephew
him(?)

náyídlín,” *nì* *ésqì* *nèlhdàsh.*
s/he is him (?) she said infant she is dancing
her/him

It is there that she sang as she danced (the baby) on her lap, “He is (the baby’s) father; (the baby) is his nephew.” [the words to the song are unclear]

126. *Hìnk’àn,* “*Sédánìlhtsáy,* *tùnàghùnyá,”* *ts’édính,* *in*
and then “I’m thirsty get some water she was told (emph)

tùtìlghây.
she went for water

And then he asked her, “I’m thirsty, fetch some water,” and she left for water.

127. *Ìyèd* *bèdzi* *gù’án* *tésélh’àn* *á.*
there her heart out there she had it sitting (emph)

And she had placed her heart up over there a ways.

128. *Èyì* *gún* *gwéché’àngáy* *dành* *yáx*
that in that direction he started walking away in that moment over there

t̀sìlhyèx *yàxágúghînzùgh* *ts’èdènísh.*
in the coals he dug out embers for it it is said

As soon as she left, he dug out a hole in the embers for it (the heart).

129. *Yàxágúghînzùgh* *egùn* *t̀sìyédághînt̀síd* *yèch’ínágúnzùgh.*
he dug out coals for it and then there he threw it into the fire he covered it back
over

He dug out a hole in the embers and threw it (the heart) into the fire and covered it up.

130. “*Sèdzi* *élàhwhá!”* *nì* *yù’ánz* *nàghèlgish,* *ínhès*
my heart (interjection) she cried from over there she is walking back very

dèní *bànanághèlgáy* *ègú* *ègúh* *nàghèlts’èd* *ts’èdènísh.*
the man she walked upon then there she fell down it is said
him

“Oh, my heart,” she cried as she returned and it is said that she came right upon the man before she fell to the ground.

CHAPTER 7

GÙBÀGÚJÁN ‘SUCCESSFUL HUNTERS’

In this chapter, specifics regarding menstruants found in *Sès Ts’iqi Ghàghindá* are combined with present beliefs. *Tsìnlhqút’in* narratives about bears are the only stories which contain the earliest references to *nímính*, and there are remarks from *Sès Ts’iqi Ghàghindá*, for which it was necessary to ask what the bear meant when commenting about the woman’s oldest brothers. It is apparent, from *Ìnkél’s* keen insight, that the bear had indicated that her brothers were *gùbàts’ègúdáh* ‘a state in which hunters are ritually marked by *nímính* energy, therefore could be sensed and avoided by wildlife (mammals and fishes)’. The youngest brother held the opposite status, *bàgúján* ‘a state in which he was untouched by *nímính* energy’; ‘a successful hunter’.

7.1 The history behind respect for bears

Animals, in general, can hear what humans say and know human thoughts; some examples are shown in four of the passages from *Sès Ts’iqi Ghàghindá*: ‘Even though he knew her thoughts, he asked, “What are you thinking about?”’ (lines 24, 33, 39, and 45). The same intuitive ability of the bear is mentioned by Georgina Loucks (2003:220-221). She quoted Catharine McClellan (1975) who said “... people believed persons must always speak carefully of bear people, since bears have the power to hear human speech no matter where the humans may be ... the bear will certainly take revenge ... (127).” There is a *Tsìnlhqút’in* phrase used to warn hunters *lhà ch’àn nézìnggìh* lit. ‘do not carry

your backpack in advance’ which means that ‘hunters should not foretell a successful slaying prior to going on a hunt’ because the animal may hear him and will avoid him. Similarly, Kwesi Baffoe (2005) remarks concerning the Sayisi Dene: “the Dene people assume human-like qualities in animals. Thus one should not be boastful or arrogant, especially in connection with hunting and the treatment of animal carcasses”. In the north, Jean-Guy A. Goulet’s (1998) findings among the Dene Tha mirror *Tsìnlhqút’in* experience in that “animals constantly monitor the actions and speech of human beings for signs of respect or disrespect toward themselves. Lack of respect toward an animal is followed by retaliation” (87). *Ìnkél* says animals *gùbàdzèd hélísh* ‘they are easily offended’.

Nothing is specifically mentioned in ancient *Tsìnlhqút’in* stories, to my knowledge, about detailed animal teachings on how to respectfully treat creatures and their remains, so it is interesting to discover such accounts preserved. One instructive passage is quoted by Georgina Loucks (2003:222) who cited from Catharine McClellan’s documents:

In the Tlingit version the bear gives the girl specific instructions as to how his body is to be treated. His head is to be put in the fire and burned. McClellan notes that ‘Tagish and Inland Tlingit hunters sometimes burn the bear's head and then sing to it... It is sung explicitly so that the spirit will go back into the bear’ (1975:128). Jackson included another ritualistic element peculiar to this area in an addition to his story. He said that the bear instructed the girl in this manner, When your brothers kill me, you call for my knee bones. And when my kids are hungry for something to eat, you put my knee bones into the fire. And my knee bones are going to show you where the bears are (McClellan, 1970:21).

Robert B. Lane’s (1953) “Cultural Relations of the Chilcotin of the West Central British Columbia” is summarized in “Chilcotin” in the Handbook of the North American Indians

(1981) and Lane's discussion about *Tsinlhqut'in* bear ceremonialism is quoted. He noted that this event involved "special songs while skinning, placing the bear skull streaked with charcoal in a tree, ritual feasting, and other ritual acts" (409). *Ìnkél* says that long ago, during my grandmother's youth, when bears were killed, while skinning it,¹³ people would sing the following verse:

"*Gághènilh*

you were going to do that; that was going to happen to you

xèyáh

because of the fact that

nénch'itéxágwédíséz,

... withered behind you

ts'inâ"

[refrain?]

this was going to happen to you anyway, (because the vegetation) withered behind you

The only clarification given for this verse is that the vegetation withered in all the places behind the bear as it moved and this expression is understood to indicate the bear's demise and possibly a reference to the termination of any future descendants it might have had. The core element in the above recitation, *díséz* 'dried'; 'dead' is often expressed to indicate dead trees and it could also be used to illustrate how berry bushes wither following the presence of *nímính*. The withering of bushes as a result of *nímính* presence could also be an explanation as to why vegetation withered following the bear's presence. The withering of vegetation could be due to the bear's strong spirit, as well as to the immediacy of its death.

¹³ While reading many of the ancient stories from the Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Alaska, I always wondered why hunters cut off a bear's paw. Richard K. Nelson (1983:180) explained this custom in his book, *Make Prayers to the Raven: a Koyukon View of the Northern Forest*. He explained that "before he starts butchering a bear, the careful hunter will slit its eyes so that its spirit will not see if he should violate a taboo. And he may take off its feet to keep its spirit from moving around (180). Among *Tsinlhqut'in*, the eyes of any animal or fish are slit before roasting. As well as showing respect, this is to prevent the eyes from bursting. When roasting animal heads or whole fish over a fire, it could be dangerous for people around the fire if an eye explodes.

After skinning the bear, the bear meat is roasted over a long row of fireplaces built and this meal is offered at a community feast. It is necessary to smudge or smoke a prepared bear hide for a long time before sleeping on it because it retains the spirit of the bear,¹⁴ hence causes one to dream¹⁵ about bears. If a campfire is the only method for smudging the hide, the hide should be draped in the direction of the smoke. Bear skulls are dried and retrieved on dry, hot summer days, and placed in a stream to bring rain for hay crops. Georgina Loucks included another passage of additional instructions for bear skulls and bear skins from another bear story (2003:232):

And the man told his wife, ‘Those are your brothers. They are going to kill me, but when they do kill me, see that you get my skull! Get my whole head. You go get it. When they stretch my skin, make a fire right along where they are stretching it, and put my head in the fire and burn it up.’

There are no such detailed accounts in *Tsinlqhút’in* stories, but it is generally known that bones from beaver, muskrat, salmon, and bears were either burned or thrown into streams or lakes. This was to prevent dogs from chewing on them and *Īnkél* always says:

¹⁴ Richard Nelson noted in *Make Prayers to the Raven: a Koyukon View of the Northern Forest* that “bear skins retain their life, their extreme spiritual potency, for several years. Female contact during this time is strongly tabooed and will bring bad luck to the hunter” (180). He explained as well that bears are skinned and eaten away from the village. *Īnkél*’s father used to skin fur-bearing mammals outside to keep them from contact with women. In *Tsinlqhút’in*, a hunter is said to become *bàts’ègúdáh* and this is often translated as bad luck. *Īnkél* describes *bàts’ègúdáh* as being an ‘unsuccessful hunter; a state in which a hunter is ritually marked by *níminh* energy, therefore can be sensed by wildlife, thus is avoided’.

¹⁵ Noted by Wendy Wickwire from Teit’s “Thompson Indians”: Grizzlies “will often appear repeatedly in the dreams of women expecting twins” (2001:204).

Sès-gwéd *táts'élhgósh* *xàghìnt'í* *ùndidánh,* *déni*
 bear bones ones throw them into water (past tense) long ago person/people
 ítlig *gwéqà* *sú* *té'énáts'élh'in* *ghìnt'í.*
 it attacks for the reason that well it was treated (past tense)
**the bones of bears were thrown into the water; this was the considerate thing to do
 because bears attacked people and killed them**

Lhà *bègwéd* *lhìn* *yùlh'ilh* *ts'égút'in,* *bèdzi*
 not its bones dog(s) chew them ones didn't like to do that its heart
 néntsén *gwéché'èz.*
 bad/mean because of that
one did not want dogs to gnaw on its bones because (bears) are ferocious

Kwesi Baffoe, on Sayisi Dene traditions, explained that “the Dene believe in the reincarnation of the animals so the bones are carefully preserved under stones for the animal to reclaim in the afterlife, and consequently bones are never fed to dogs or used as fuel” (2005). I have not interviewed other *Tsinlhqút'in* elders on this topic, and the same understanding could very well exist. I have only heard one statement on reincarnation in my community, but coming back to life is a common theme in ancient *Tsinlhqút'in* stories. On the topic of life force in regards to bones, Joseph Campbell (1960) discussed at length an ancient Blackfoot story and noted how the bones of a man were used to bring him back to life. He went on to say that there was a verbal contract between humans and animals in which procedures were agreed upon as to how animal remains were to be handled. Within this agreement, he says that hunters must “perform a ritual of renewal, so that herds may be restored to life” (14). He explained this in detail:

The resurrection of the dead man was made possible by the finding of a particular bone. Without this, nothing could have been accomplished, but with it, he returned just as he had been before. We may regard this bone as our token of the hunter's nuclear idea of the miracle of renewal. The bone

does not disintegrate in the womb of the earth and germinate into something else, like a planted seed, but is the undestroyed base from which the same individual that was there before becomes magically reconstructed, to pick up life where he left it. The same creature comes back by way of an actual fragment or element of his former body (14-15).

It is fortunate that writers have documented so much knowledge about this early era and have preserved the discussions and agreements between animals and people. It seems that this early knowledge, for some reason or another, was not shared with *Ìnkél*. This does not mean that all *Tsìnlhqút'in* are uninformed about such things. There may be *Tsìnlhqút'in* elders who are fully aware about these ancient events. It is interesting, however, that *Ìnkél's* knowledge is based on the fear of bears, which suggests that bears were instrumental in the preservation of these agreements. Ivaluardjuk, an Igluluk, explained in the chapter “Ways of Thinking About the Sacred” that “no bone of any animal might be broken. To do so would be an insult to the souls of the caribou, and was punished by death or disaster” (Beck and Walters 1977:13). In *Tsìnlhqút'in*, one cannot “make noise upon bones” while cutting or sawing bones; otherwise, the implement used will thereafter be sensed by game. Respectful treatment of bones is further discussed in chapter 9 *Dé'áts'èt'insh*. The only indirect *Tsìnlhqút'in* reference about the soul of an animal is in another ancient story in which a bear was killed and its intestines were strung from branch to branch and from tree to tree by a hunter. After death, the bear's spirit is said to have called out to its relatives to retaliate against the hunter. The bear's relatives carried out the bear's wish and after killing the hunter, the bears strung out his intestines through the trees as well.¹⁶

¹⁶ A Igluluk Inuit is quoted in the section “All Things are Dependant on Each Other” by Beck and Walters (1977:12) explaining the retributive nature of creatures: “The greatest peril in life lies in the fact that human food consists entirely of souls. All the creatures that we have to kill and eat, all those that we have to strike

Tsìnlhqút'in have noted the bear, the wolf, and the otter to have spirits which alter human health¹⁷; but generally, all mammals and fish require respectful handling of their remains. The consequence for a hunter who is not respectful is usually alienation¹⁸ (and as we know this also occurs between the human populations), so this type of mammalian reaction to an offence to their body is not beyond belief. This subject goes beyond the range of what is considered to be *nímính*, although it is said that a hunter can become *bàts'ègúdáh* 'unsuccessful in hunting' by causing mammals or fish to suffer. This type of misconduct is explained in chapter 9 "*Dé'áts'èt'insh* 'causing ritual obstructions". It is considered disrespectful for anyone to strike a live or dying mammal or fish, and deemed offensive to the spirit of the fresh kill to cut its meat or saw its bones. *Tsìnlhqút'in*

down and destroy to make clothes for ourselves, have souls, souls that do not perish with the body and which must therefore be [pacified] lest they should revenge themselves on us for taking away their bodies." This seems to hold true for *Tsìnlhqút'in* as well. There are many known experiences surrounding the spirits of the dead, including animals. There are vulnerable individuals, mainly children, who have encountered such spirits and others who have been disrespectful to animals have also encounter spirits of animals which they have offended.

¹⁷ Richard Nelson (1983:22), talking about the Koyukon tradition, briefly lists some of the mammals which have vindictive natures:

Not all spirits are possessed of equal power. Some animal species have very potent spirits called *biyeega hoolaanh*, which are easily provoked and highly vindictive. These dangerous spirits can bring serious harm to anyone who offends them, taking away luck in hunting or trapping and sometimes causing illness, disability, or even death. Animals possessed of such spirits include the brown bear, black bear, wolverine, lynx, wolf, and otter. The beaver and marmot have similarly powerful spirits but are not so vengeful.

¹⁸ Jules Jetté and Eliza Jones (2000:307) include the term [le+k'aan] in the Koyukon Dictionary and defined this as "[animal] becomes aloof, taboo, offended, elusive, unattainable... [and add further details]":

Said of game, with respect to the hunter, and expressing the sanction, or punishment, which in Ten'a belief is attached to the violation of the taboos of the hunt, and which consists in this, that the species whose taboos have been disregarded, keeps aloof from the offender and eludes his pursuit. The aloofness may be limited, or may last for the lifetime of the offender. It is caused by the yeeg'e' or protector spirit of the species. Thus a hunter who lets the bones of a beaver, which he has killed, be given to the dogs, shall be incapacitated by circumstances beyond his control for the beaver hunt. He may hunt as much as he wants, either he shall not find beavers, or they shall escape him.

consider the mere handling of fresh meat and fish to be considerably more “dangerous” if done by one who is *nímính*. Kwesi Baffoe (2005) noted among the Sayisi Dene that “there are no special rules for fishing save the general prohibition on gratuitous waste [and in his footnote, included that] some elders claimed that the fish scales and guts had to be buried”. On the contrary, it seems that *Tsìnlhqút’in* have more rules and ceremonies for fish than they do for meat.

7.2 *Nímính* energy retained by silverweed roots

The fact that the bear left uneaten those parts of the silverweed roots the woman had held (line 13) suggests that the woman may have handled the roots while she was menstruating. There is no distinct *Tsìnlhqút’in* term to express the fact that food objects have come into contact with *nímính* energy; *Ìnkél* used the phrase *gwènilhmìh sághìní* ‘it is likely that (the bear) considered (those food parts) to contain the *nímính* energy’.

7.3 Human beings retain *nímính* energy

When commenting about the status of the eldest brother, the bear said:

47. *Hìnk’àn* *gádình,* “*Ìyèn* *hálhìníh* *bèdàzàx*
and then he said him you are referring to his breath (?)

qítìl’ùgh *tìs’èšèl* *ìyèn?”* *nì* *ts’èdình.*
 footwear-grass one is keeping warm him he said it is said

And then it is said that he haughtily retorted, “You mean him, the one whose grass insoles are being kept warm close to his face.”

This remark makes no sense to modern *Tsìnlhqút'in* listeners. The eldest brother is the main subject of this sentence and naturally, it makes sense that it is his wife who must be handling his insoles. The bear likely knew about this brother's whereabouts¹⁹ and even his personal daily interactions because he is married, therefore is in close contact with his wife who carries *nímính* energy. In the version of the story that she describes, Georgina Loucks (2003) quoted the woman as saying, "'My eldest brother will find you.' But the bear replies, 'He will not be able to do so, for he does not purify himself and when he sees a woman he turns back to look at her'" (235-236). The latter sounds to be a reference to a lustful or promiscuous man, and there is actually a complete *Tsìnlhqút'in* narrative about a bear's dealing with such a situation which I did not include in this thesis.

In *Sès Ts'iqí Ghàghìndá* the bear's subsequent remark about the middle brother is:

51. "Ìyèn hálhínih bédàzàx ch'ìxáts'égwèltish
 him you are referring to his breath one is taking [an infant] out [of a baby basket]
 ìyèn?" nì ts'èdình.
 him he said it is said

It is said that he haughtily retorted, "You mean him, the one who is near an infant who is being taken out of a basket."

In Loucks, "the bear replies, 'He does not clean the fern roots which he is eating, he cannot see far'" (2003:236). The cultural variation is interesting to see. As a *Tsìnlhqút'in* listener, I would never have guessed what the bear meant by his remarks about the woman's brothers. To my surprise, when I asked for clarification for these comments, *Ìnkél* defined at length the term, *bàts'ègúdáh*, the state of the woman's eldest brothers, as

¹⁹ Female bears are known to abort their unborn cubs when a hunter is approaching its den.

an explanation for the bear's remarks (see below). I translated *bàts'ègúdáh* as 'he is sensed by game' in the following excerpt even though the term means much more.

Ègú *lá* *bàts'ègúdáh,* *lhàjíd* *núlh*
for instance? (emph.) he is sensed by game cannot game animals

ghànághúnyá *gúyàh,* *gú* *nádédàh*
you come upon impossible for example he is hunting

sáts'égwédình.

the term is in reference to hunting

one likely meant that (the hunter) was ritually marked by *nímính* energy (therefore could be sensed and therefore easily avoided); that one in this state cannot come upon any creature while hunting

Nàts'ègúdáh *jǐjégùzìh* *háydènìsh* *lhàjíd* *sés*
you are sensed by game they call it that that's what they say cannot bear

dághúnyáh *gúyàh* *lhàjíd* *béqúng*
you enter its entrance impossible cannot its den

gùghùn'in *gúyàh.*
know the whereabouts impossible

(the storytellers) are saying that you are ritually marked by *nímính* energy – that you cannot enter a bear den – and you cannot even know the location of its den

Èyèn *bàts'ègúdáh* *lhàjíd* *yádáwéyá* *gúlàh*
him he is sensed by game cannot he enter its entrance impossible

dènìsh *sádìny,* *ègú* *lhàjíd*
he says it must be saying then cannot

bédághúnyá *gúyàh* *jíyálhtig*
you enter its entrance impossible it must be expressing that

sádìny.

when it's saying that

(the bear) is probably saying that because (the hunter) is ritually marked by *nímính* energy, (the hunter) cannot enter into his den; (the bear) is expressing that you cannot come into his den

Nàts'ègúdáh *ègú* *lhàjíd* *yáx* *bé'ànx* *béts'én*
is sensed by game then cannot over there its den toward it

ghúnyá *gúyàh.*
come to it impossible

while you are ritually marked by *nímính*, you will not be able to approach (the bear) in his den

Georgina Loucks (2003) further documented that there were actually four brothers and three of the eldest took turns hunting alone for the bear each day and were unsuccessful and “the youngest one was only a kid” (232). Among *Tsìnlhqút’ín*, the term *èsqì* could include infants, children, and youth. In the *Tsìnlhqút’ín* version of the bear story, there were three brothers who were referred to as *sùnàgh èch’àn ghèzèlh* ‘my older brother, the eldest one’ (line 46), *sèchèl àtìsh ghèzèlh* ‘my younger brother, the middle one in age’ (line 50), and *sèchèl èch’ih ghèzèlh* ‘my younger brother, the youngest one in age’ (line 54). The youngest brother was already a good hunter so one could assume that he was a youth, an unmarried youth. The bear in *Sès Ts’iqí Ghàghìndá* had no response about the woman’s youngest brother except to say “*Sènàch’iz nízán*” ‘he grew up without my knowing about him’ and at that very moment the brother was at the bear’s entrance (line 55-56). The woman described each of her brothers as *lhà bèch’á wéli gúyàh* ‘he cannot be surpassed/outdone’. In other words, she thought they were *gùbàgúján* ‘untouched by *nimính* energy’; the expression most used today to indicate that a hunter is always successful.

7.4 Hunters’ methods for maintaining success

Success in hunting is mentioned throughout this document, and basically, success, in *Tsìnlhqút’ín* culture, implicates having wealth²⁰, youthfulness, and good health, besides

²⁰ During *Ìnkél’s* youth “wealth” meant simply owning a horse – having ready access to her environment. Nancy Turner (2005: 24-25) defined wealth in *The Earth’s Blanket: Traditional Teachings for Sustainable Living*:

...Wealth – real wealth – is found among people who have a sound sense of their place in the world, who link their own actions and thoughts with those of others, and who are strong, vigorous and cooperative actors in their communities and ecosystems. Rich are those people who balance the benefits they receive in life with the responsibilities they assume for themselves, their families and

being surrounded by family, and having the necessary food and household possessions. The ancient guidelines to continual success in hunting (trapping and fishing) is given in the overall *Tsìnlhqút'in* term, *súwh-tî'éghèdúđinh* lit. 'preserving oneself'; 'taking care of oneself'; 'safeguarding oneself' and this entails many observances, but for this next section, Part Four: The Care of Subsistence Gear, I will bring together the aspects related to success in hunting. Kwesi Baffoe (2005), in his overview of the Sayisi Dene, noted that "the hunt is replete with proscriptions for correct behaviour, before, during and after the hunt. These include personal initiation ceremonies, ritual offerings and sexual purification".²¹ The prescribed *Tsìnlhqút'in* methods for achieving success as a hunter and maintaining this status include: cold water conditioning during childhood training; puberty training; treating animals with respect; expressing gratitude and offering choice, fresh food to ancestors; attracting fur-bearing animals to oneself;²² preparing fur-bearing animals outdoors;²³ and avoiding contact with menstruants, infants, and dead bodies.²⁴

communities and their environment. Wealth dwells in people who know about, appreciate and respect the other life forms around them and who understand the importance of habitats for people and all living things.

²¹ Kwesi Baffoe (2005) noted that "the most serious offences generally relate to hunting and are dealt with by the gravest of sentences: banishment". Banishment in this context is not mentioned by *Tsìnlhqút'in*; instead, there are other accounts in which humans who have treated animals disrespectfully have seen animals to *nìghà'èts'én át'insh* 'often transform themselves outright for hunters in ways which can be frightening and traumatizing to see'. The species which are related to the mistreated animals are also known to alienate themselves from disrespectful hunters.

²² Fur-bearing animals were mainly killed for their fur to trade and skins for making clothing. There is one restriction mentioned for hunters and that is to refrain from selling fur collections either until the fur season is over or until the decision is made to cease trapping for that particular season. The accumulation of fur is said to attract animals: *nènts'én nínt'i gát'insh* 'they pull towards you'. It is also said that *nùlh nènch'àn ànàt'insh* 'the animals turn against you' (and avoid you) if you do not abide by this rule.

²³ Concerning the preparation of fur-bearing animals outdoors, *Ìnkél* says that one hunter would always build a fire outside and then would skin his fur-bearing mammals and dress the skins outdoors. It never occurred to him to ask women to help him, because he likely thought they were *gùbàts'ègúdáh*. He did this and when he set his traps, his traps immediately attracted mammals.

The *Tsìnlhqút'in* principle of *súwh-tš'éghèdúdính* was enforced by bears. In the distant past, bears killed individuals who did not adhere to traditions of 'self-care' and these examples of the hunter's code of conduct has been passed down mainly through examples in stories. *Ìnkél* says elders always advised hunters:

Súwh-tš'éghèdúdính hínk'àn jid lhá sès níástlèlh.
 preserving oneself only then in that way (neg) bear(s) will not attack you
'bears will not attack you if one safeguards oneself'

Ìnkél tells another *Tsìnlhqút'in* bear story, *Sès Nít'ásé'iz* 'a bear's gaze caught up with someone', in which a hunter is said to have kissed his newborn baby and he slept with his wife. It is said that *sès yèt'ásé'iz* 'a bear's gaze caught up with him'. While in the mountains hunting one day, the man saw bears with cubs on the other side of a field and he went to spear the bear. As soon as he sent his spears flying, the bear attacked and killed him, and ripped out his mouth, genitals, and limbs - the parts of his body which were in contact with his wife.

Along with many other restrictions, a male hunter is prohibited from touching his wife. If a man even does as much as touch his wife, a bear would kill him.²⁵ A hunter is not to

²⁴ More research is required for suggestions on what a hunter is to do in the case that he is a twin, or becomes a widower. In instances where one must carry a dead body, I have heard that smudging with juniper considerably lessens the duration of the *nimính* energy.

²⁵ It is also noted that *sès, ts'iqí ts'enz izélèx* 'bears display extreme dislike for women's clothing': *Yádáwh inlhch'èsáh ts'iqí ts'enz nít's'énìlàh, sès yínlhtsán án ts'enz èlhtáh-xásèggánz.* '(it was on the news or rumoured) in the west, that in a specific location, a bag of woman's clothing was placed somewhere, and a bear found the bag of clothes and immediately tore up the clothes.

Gúlá *súwh-xédúndính* *gú* *ts'iqí* *lhà*
 for example (emph) when you're preserving yourself for example women (neg)

ánájèníśdāgh *chùh* *lhà*
 they are living apart and cannot return too (neg)

ixèdétézàghènàx
 you cannot touch them

when (hunters) are practicing self-care, they cannot touch women who are in seclusion

Lorna J. Marshall (1999) noted the same observation under “Hunting and Hunters” for the !Kung. During a menstruant’s first menses, she wrote that “to touch a hunter would be unthinkable among the !Kung. She must not even look at men or boys” for fear that “animals would see them from afar and run away” (192). In *Tsìnlhquí'tín*, a hunter must also refrain from touching newborn infants and from handling or carrying corpses for fear of becoming *bàts'ègúdáh*.

Returning to the term *dézínlhjéd* ‘you are spreading it about’; this term is also used to describe smudging (“spreading smoke”) as in ceremonial practice or in curing dried fish and meat. The term *híjéd* has the same root and could be used in the sentence *ày híjéd* lit. ‘the fog has dispersed’; ‘it is foggy’. In terms of the acuteness of animal senses, whatever is “dispersed” is obviously powerful enough for animals to sense a hunter who has been subjected to such manifestations and these hunters thereafter become *gùbàts'ègúdáh* ‘unsuccessful as a hunter’. The term also expresses that a hunter will be ‘sensed by animals’ and ‘avoided by animals’ (also noted in other traditions; Marshall 1999:192), and the hunter will not be able to approach game, and would also be vulnerable to bears.

We can assume from this chapter, that bears consider women to be *nímính* and her energy seems to permeate everything she touches. In chapter 8: Defining *Nímính*, the energy of *nímính* is further discussed, defined, and categorized.

PART THREE: THE CATEGORIES OF NÍMÍNĪH

CHAPTER 8

DEFINING *NÍMÍNĤ*

Nímính is a state of being, a condition in which one is imbued with sacred power, and for the sake of simplicity, one could gloss the expression *nímính* as ‘energy-carrier’. I use the words ‘sacred’ and ‘energy’ in translations here although there are no such terms in the *Tsìnlhqút’in* language. The description ‘sacred power’ is more fitting than ‘spiritual power’ because the latter can be confused with *shèn* (also *-yèn*) ‘shamanistic power’, which *nímính* is definitely not. In the *Tsìnlhqút’in* worldview, all is considered to be sacred and everything has energy, yet no specific terms are applied to all these forms of energy with two exceptions; we only have the collective noun *nímính* which is usually expressed using *bìgwénìjèd* ‘s\he\it is dangerously powerful’.

Nímính individuals are called *gùbìgwénìjèd* lit. ‘they are powerful’; ‘they are dangerous’. The term “dangerous” is not meant literally in the sense that *nímính* are feared, but that their energy is so powerful that it is avoided by wildlife. The energy can change the sacred or natural condition of plants, fish, and human bodies. It can cause deterioration to human conditions (health, internal organs), accelerate the aging process (noted in human hair and skin), cause plants to wither, cause the extinction of fish, and even cause the death of humans. The energy can cause imbalances to life forms - conditions which are irreversible and the same energy can also be used to heal people and to enhance plant growth. There are some rituals performed by *nímính* individuals to undo the effects of the energy. The term *gùbìgwénìjèd* is an indicator of the power of this energy; and it conveys

a forewarning and at the same time, it carries a deep respect for the energy. Basically, the term suggests an awareness of the capability of this energy. A possible cognate term in Diné *baha dzid* means ‘dangerous,’ ‘tabooed,’ or ‘sacriligious’ [sic] quoted from Mindeleff (A.R.B.A.E. 17th:488) and the context in which it was used was: “it would be *baha dzid*” to adorn common living quarters as done by the *Diyin dine’é* ‘the gods’ (Beck and Walters 1977:293).

The definition of “*nímính*” has been somewhat elusive because *Ínkél* in this study clarifies the meaning depending on context. In my experience, speakers vary their definitions using only one example and it is common for menstruants to be the standard prototype for defining *nímính*, and this selection may be because the instruction was for my own benefit. In instructing hunters, for example, elders likely give information on the care of guns. It is rare for *Tsìnlhqút’in* speakers to include all the possible categories when defining the term, however, shown in the following passage, *Ínkél* describes *nímính*, excluding only twins and mother of twins.

Nímính *nígwénijèd* *hèlish* *jíts’égùzìh* *áh.*
 you are dangerous you become they call it (emph.)

When you become *nímính* they are referring to the fact that you have become dangerous.

Ts’ènimính *ts’íqí-násìndlín* *gúh* *jínímính* *ts’èlish*
 when you are menstruating when one becomes

When one begins menstruating, one becomes *nímính* in this way

hàgwèt’insh, *śándínlh* *śínlín* *chùh,* *gú*
 it happens widow; widower you became too in addition to

the same when one becomes a widow or widower

dátságh *tàh* *násínqàn* *tá’ànènjágh*
 dead body as an example you carried you have done such things as this

the same applies to you when you happen to carry a dead body

gú *xénchúh* *nésqì* *tàh* *ìnlhútàh*
 in addition to sometimes your child as an example something
and sometimes when something [death] happens to your child

àjágh *ìn* *àánásìndlin*
 happens to him\her him\her; that person you prepared (the body of)
and you prepare the body [for burial]

gútàh, *gú* *ts'èníính* *jégwédình.*
 and that sort of thing then they call it
these kind of things (which you may experience) are called *ts'èníính*.

Basically, individuals become *nímính* by means of the following ways (see Table 1), and these coincide with some of the rites of passage: birth, puberty, first birth of child, widowhood, and death. Most of these individuals in the table are passing through a vulnerable stage of life or else are mourning. In the case of mothers, they have demanding schedules and are always busy, so its reasonable to allow them to rest. As for twins, they are simply powerful and special, partly because twins are rare. The birth of twin may also be associated with mammalian births. Mammals are highly respected and know things beyond the capacity of the human mind. I provide a table below with individuals arranged from birth to death, and twins and mothers of twins bear the longest duration of *nímính* energy.

Table I: Categories of *nímính*

| <i>yáz-tú ts'inlin</i> | <i>eyùwh- áts'aghint'i</i> | <i>ts'iqih-nàts'èšdlin</i> | <i>šándinlh</i> | <i>dátságh- nánáts'elh- bin</i> | <i>dátságh- nánáts'elhtin</i> |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) lit. 'one is amniotic fluid'; a newborn infant' | lit. 'one was different' 2) 'twins' 3) 'a mother of twins' | 4) lit. 'one has become a girl\woman again'; menstruating women; a menstruant' 5) a new menstruant at puberty 6) after woman's first childbirth | 7) 'a widow; a widower' | 8) lit. 'one who has bathed a corpse; a mortician' | 9) lit. 'one who has carried a corpse; a pallbearer' |
| duration of energy | | | | | |
| the entire month after birth | twins' entire life mother - life after giving birth to twins | seven days normally during first menses at puberty one month after the birth of a baby | one entire year after the death of a spouse | three entire months ²⁶ after handling a corpse | three entire months after being a pallbearer |
| the most potent phases | | | | | |
| | | during first menses at puberty after first childbirth | 'a widow; a widower' | for three weeks after handling dead bodies | |

The wide-ranging categories of energy-carriers in addition to the varying degrees of energy held by individuals make this *Tsinlhqút'in* paradigm unique, because in other cultural knowledge regarding this same phenomena, only three phases of the *Tsinlhqút'in* model are perceived to be comparable, mainly menstruating women, widowhood, and

²⁶ I previously translated the duration of *nímính* energy for both *dátságh-nánáts'elhbín*, and *dátságh-nánáts'elhtin* as being one year in this thesis, and also have this elsewhere in my notes. For both individuals, though, the duration of the energy can be reduced through ritual and I have heard that for Pallbearers, the one year or three month period can be reduced to one week. With *dátságh-nánáts'elhbín*, there is an initial potent phase in which individuals who have prepared corpses for burial must wear gloves while eating, so as not to ingest the energy. More research is required for all the *nímính* categories.

physical contact with the dead (see for example The Old Testament of the Judeo-Christian tradition). For the rest of this chapter, I will define the *nímính* categories and discuss them briefly. I will present more on *nímính* ritual restrictions in Part 4: The Care of Subsistence Resources and Part 5: *Súwh-ts'égghèdúdính* ‘preserving oneself; taking care of self (and others)’ while carrying the energy of *nímính*.

8.1 *Yáz-tú ts'inlìn* lit. ‘one is amniotic fluid; newborn infants’

The first month of infancy is described as *yáz-tú ts'inlìn* lit. ‘one is amniotic fluid’. Infants are considered to be *nímính* in the same way as menstruants or widows, but this is not firmly stated. Babies are generally protected, and are vulnerable to viruses and bacteria, because they have weak immune systems, so it makes sense to keep them somewhat secluded. Infants likely have fewer ritual restrictions since they cannot move about freely, and this may be reason little is said about them. *Ìnkél* explains the term *yáz-tú ts'inlìn* to some extent in the excerpt below:

Yáz-tú jìnlìn ságúts'édénish àh.
 amniotic fluid they are it must be the reason why they're called that (emph.)
it may be that (infants) are actually amniotic fluid, since they are called that

Nèch'àn át'in í yáz-tú hát'insh.
 from you flowing out that amniotic fluid it is that
what flows out of you [during birthing] is amniotic fluid

Àndánh déni jèlish, ìn iyèn sánh jénímính sáyèt'ìny
 immediately person become them them possibly they must be
newly born (infants); it is perhaps they who are *jenímính*

There is one reference regarding amniotic fluid from an Inland Tlingit quoted by Catharine McClellan (2001) in her section “Conception, Pregnancy, and Birth”. She noted that a “‘baby’s water’ is the worst thing for a shaman – worse than menstrual blood. That water is dangerous to the lxt²⁷ [shaman]” (379). This fluid, she says, is further said to drown the shaman’s spirit power. It seems possible, as well, that the baby’s condition is influenced by the fact that the mother is menstruating for one month, during her post-partum period (her most potent time), and the baby is in close physical contact with her during this time. I include *yáz-tú ts’ìnlìn* lit. ‘one is amniotic fluid’ here as part of the *Tsìnlhqút’in nímính* classification because hunters must not touch them, lest they become *gùbàts’ègúdáh*. As an illustration for this form of *nímính*, *Ìnkél* told about a man who was widely recognized as a successful hunter and it is known that he safeguarded this aptitude during his entire life.

27 lxt’ [shaman] (Tlingit) has a dot under the [x] (McClellan 2001;379).

8.2 *Ts'iqí-náts'èdlísh* lit. 'one becomes a women again; one begins to menstruate again'

Ts'iqí-náts'èdlísh lit. 'to become a woman again'²⁸ is a period which is thought to be extremely *gwèníminh* '(the subject matter) is dangerously powerful' (also observed more generally by Starck 1993:38; Wright 2003:4; Beck and Walters 1977:217), particularly more so during the first menses at puberty (see also Marshall 1999:192 on !Kung traditions) and for a month after a mother's first childbirth,²⁹ which is the first post-partum period. These potent times exist until the end of the woman's menses.

Most written documents today seem to affirm the *Tsìnlhqút'in* view of menstruants, for example, Lorna Marshall (1999:188) described the potency of menstruants among the !Kung and noted that "menstrual blood is not believed to be unclean or to defile, as it is

²⁸ *Inkél* says that it appears that women did not always menstruate; that men were the first to experience menstruation and even pregnancy during ancient times, and later a man transferred this condition to women by flicking his finger at a woman. Beck and Walters (1977:226) quoted a similar story under the section "Havasupai Origin of Menstruation": "While coyote was skinning it [a deer] he put his finger in the blood and flipped it on the inside of the girl's thigh" (Smithson, 1971:36-37).

Mary C. Wright (2003:4), a professor at the University of Washington quoted the Shuswap story "Coyote Makes Women Menstruate", documented by James Teit:

Formerly the men menstruated, and not the women. When Coyote was working in the world, putting things to right, he considered this matter, and said to himself. "It is not right that men should menstruate. It is very inconvenient, for they do all the hunting and most of the traveling. Women stay more at home, and therefore it will be better if they menstruate, and not the men." Whereupon he took some of the menstrual fluid from men, and threw it upon the women, saying, "Henceforth, women shall menstruate, and not men. They shall menstruate once a month or with every moon."

²⁹ I provide below loose translations of *èsqí-tsí'álh*, an interesting term which *Inkél* brought up in her discussion of menstruation:

Sà inlhi gú'én hink'án sé'ánáts'èt'insh, èsqí nènts'úgh hêlht'óg chùh.
the menses (during the post-partum period) lasts for over a month, even though you are nursing an infant

Ìd èch'ilh'áh inlhes gèchùgh ts'iqí-násìndlín éyi "èsqí-tsí'álh" jid jégùzih.
After (the post-partum period), when you have an intense flow; they call that (period) an infant's pillow

thought in some cultures. Instead...it is strong - a vital, powerful life substance.” Jean-Guy A. Goulet (1998) cited from Joan Ryan’s (1995:29) report, “Doing Things the Right Way: Dene Traditional Justice in Lac La Martre, NWT”. She used “the term ‘endanger’ rather than ‘contamination’ to refer to ‘a woman’s power to affect men’s ability to hunt, thus endangering the survival of the group’” (95).

Catharine McClellan (2001) connected menstrual tabus to those proscribed for widows in her section “Girl’s Puberty” where she noted that among Dene and Tlingit in the Yukon at the start of a girl’s first menstruation “for a period of roughly two years, the girl was considered to be especially ɫAkas (tabu)” (386). She adds that this period “was a condition that characterized her at every menstrual period throughout her life, at the birth of every child (though most especially the first one), and to some degree on every occasion that she became a widow” (359). For this period, *Tsìnlhqút’in* have the term *nìghèts’è’in* ‘raised in a sheltered way; unknown to men; kept away from men’, to indicate a girl’s traditional upbringing. *Nìghèts’è’in* seems to be related to the period of seclusion mentioned by Catharine McClellan above. *Ìnkél* defines this term in the *Tsìnlhqút’in* story, *Lhìndèsch’ósh* ‘the girl who married a dog’.

... *Ts'iqí* *bèghèts'è'in* *ghíní* *lhà* *dèyènž* *ts'én* *nás'is*
 girl\woman was (neg.) boy\man towards she doesn't look
The girl\woman was *bèghèts'è'in*; she was not allowed to look at boys\men.

ts'inlh'in. *Gú* *lhìn* *éyì* *yélhtsín* *ts'édình,*
 she is disciplined in this way then dog(s) those she gave birth to it is said
It is said that she gave birth to dogs and one became angry with her saying,

bélhts'éghènlch'âgh, “*Nèghèts'è'in* *lhà* *dèyènž* *ghánénts'údíyáh*
 one was angry with her (neg.) boy\man you are not allowed near
“You are *nèghèts'è'in*; you are not allowed to go near boys\men;

jínénts'ènilhyán.” *Ts'iqí* *gùghèts'è'in* *lhà* *dèni*
 that's how you were raised girl\woman (neg.) people
that's how you were raised. When girls\women are *gùghèts'è'in*, they are not

tèx *xájés'is* *gùts'ilh'in,* *gán* *gúnáh*
 among didn't look among they were disciplined in this way only west
to look at people in crowds, instead they must turn their backs.

jèl'àh. *Lhà* *yáx* *néndáts'áyálh* *égùn* *chúh*
 facing (neg.) over there where one is entering there too
They cannot look towards the entryways;

nájés'is, *éyèn* *gùghèts'è'in* *jíd* *gúts'ùzìh.*
 they didn't look there them that's how they were called
and these individuals are the ones who are called *gùghèts'è'in*.

Dèyènž *ghágúts'úlih.*
 boy\man they were kept back from
They are kept away from boys/men.

Charlie Quilt said, “The dog was courting someone without anyone’s knowledge,” specifically, *Ìnkél* said “they thought that no man had a sexual relationship with her.” Livingston Farrand used the term “virgin” which in the language would be “*sèx-náyáh*,” a word also understood to mean “single or without child.” Farrand’s choice of the English term eliminates a culturally significant part of the story. The girl was raised *bèghèts'è'in*,

which refers to the fact that she was prepared for life in the Dene custom. She had to yield to ancient laws and adhere to cultural practices from the time of her birth.

8.3 Èyùwh-áts'âghìnt'í lit. 'one was different; twins; mother of twins'

Èyùwh-áts'âghìnt'í lit. 'one was different' refers to twins³⁰ and 'mother of twins' and this term further designates these individuals as being *gùbìgwénìjèd* lit. 'they are dangerous; powerful' for their entire lives and *gùnychágh jíd jénímí* 'they are exceptionally *nímính*'. The other expression used to indicate twins is *nándính bélh chàn jàghìnqí* 'they were in-utero with two'.³¹

³⁰ In this connection, note that forked trees, forked branches, and forked plant roots are set apart for reasons which are not fully explained. While harvesting pitch from trees, *Tsinlhqút'in* often warn others with them, *dèchèn èlhinìlhjés lhà bà dzáx ts'ésàn* 'one doesn't eat pitch gum from forked trees'. Forked branches are mentioned by the Koyukon in Jules Jetté and Eliza Jones (2000:563) noting a term which means:

Abstaining from eating (animal) heads; it (beaver) is abstaining from eating the head (the top forked end) of sticks [and] this refers to the pregnant beaver for whom it is taboo to eat the top forked end or head of a stick. One can tell if there is a male beaver around by the presence of these stick 'heads' which indicate the presence of a pregnant female.

A forked plant is noted by Lorna Marshall (1999:194) among the !Kung:

The women told us that sha [plant root] is especially favored because it grows in soft sand. However, sha sometimes occurs as a double root, forked, and such a one must be avoided by all young girls. A forked !xwa [plant; storage organ] must also be avoided. No one could explain the significance of the soft sand and the forked roots.

³¹ James Alexander Teit (1900:310-311) noted elaborate twin rituals for the Thompson which are unknown practices to *Ìnkél*:

A woman about to be delivered of twins was generally made aware of the fact beforehand by the repeated appearance of the grisly [sic] bear in her dreams; therefore twins were regarded as different from other children, and were treated accordingly. They were called "grisly-bear children" or "hairy feet." ... [and] were supposed to be under the special protection of the grisly bear, and were endowed by him with special powers. [Parents of twins moved away from other people] until the children were four years of age, [and from the time of their birth the twins received a series of ceremonial treatments including bear song rituals].

The main examples *Ìnkél* brings to the discussion of twins are about their ability to transform events. *Tsìnlhqút'in* twins have the ability to manifest events by their actions and thoughts. As an example, it is said that *gùzì 'àlh'ágwédình jid nájèjèyìsh* 'when they speak, their mouths speak the truth', i.e. if they tell you that you will be healed, you will be healed. They cannot bathe when fine weather is desired because *yájégúnlhtsén* 'they create bad weather' (also in Teit 1900:311 concerning Thompson traditions). Their actions, including splashing water while bathing or washing, is believed to influence the weather and cause rain to fall. Twin children are prohibited from playing in water too often during the summer and, as with all who are *nímính*, must use a cloth to wipe their faces. In addition to this, it is said that in the winter, if a twin sets fire on a specific site where a death occurred, s/he would cause all the snow to melt and bring about early spring weather. These occurrences are called *jélh 'élhígwél'insh* 'like attracts like'; 'they copy'; 'they repeat (human) actions'.³²

³² As a side note, infants are said to *íjél'insh* or *jélh 'élhígwél'insh* 'they copy' or 'they mimic' experiences; and one example, in this context, is if a pregnant woman eats berries during her pregnancy, the berries may attach themselves to an area on her infant's body and appear as a birthmark. This is also called "*nízt'án gùbìts'ilhnih*" lit. 'berries are swallowed onto them'. The birthmark(s) look similar in color and shape to the berry eaten. Other 'copying' or 'imitating' tendencies are given to the weather, to one's intentions, to fish, and to spring beauty, and to berries (*nánátlig* 'berries fall off their bush' when picked). Ceremonies carried out by *nímính* individuals are based on this same phenomena: *bish-ts'édèzòsh* 'putting (fish oil) into (the mouths of fish) to fatten them; and *lhùy xánátàts'èdèlòsh* 'leading fish upstream' past a ritual blockage so as to unblock the stream.

8.4 *Ŝándínlh* ‘widow; widower’

A widow or widower is perceived as *gùbígwénìjèd* lit. ‘they are dangerous’ *inlhéd xì gwèts'én gághènt'ílh; èlhxènàgwèdíndzíd gwèts'én, egú níminh tághènláx* ‘for one year’.³³ *Èlhxèn dézínlt's'ih* ‘as a result of living together’, a *Tsínlhqút'in* couple is considered to *àjènilht'id gúdèl gánt'ih hèlish* ‘become as sharing one-blood’ (also *gúdèl inlhi dzành hèlish*). *Ŝándínlh* has the same root as *nàndínlh* ‘ghost’ and this seems significant in light of the *Tsínlhqút'in* definition which is further supported by the statement: when a spouse dies, the remaining widow\widower *chùh bènès ch'ádéjàgh gágúnt'ih* ‘is as if his\her body was dead as well; his\her body is equivalent to being dead’.

| | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| <i>Ts'ènimính</i> | <i>gwéché'á</i> | <i>nágwédìnt'í</i> | <i>jígwayàjèlhtig,</i> | <i>ŝándínlh</i> |
| | more than | it is more powerful | they say | widows; widowers |
| | <i>ts'élísh</i> | | | |
| | one becomes | | | |

it is claimed that (widowhood) is more powerful than *níminh* energy [and has the same potency as corpses].³⁴

Likewise, Catharine McClellan (2001) noted that among Tlingit and Tagish “new widows and widowers were subjected to various tabus and most of these observances emphasized

³³ Catharine McClellan (2001) noted “four, five, or maybe 10 days after the funeral” (275) [but] “the formal period of mourning expected was said to be two years...” (399). There seems to be a contradiction in the length of time a widow is deemed to be potent. At one point she wrote that “a widow or widower is said to remain łAkas for four, five, or maybe 10 days after the funeral” (375) and later said, “like the new menstruant, the widow could not...eat fresh fish or fresh meat for a year, nor could she eat porcupine or bear for two years, except at the risk of death” (399). There are no such time specifications for *Tsínlhqút'in* widows or widowers in my transcriptions so far, but this does not mean that the same time periods do not exist. This is an area for further research.

the close link between the lives of the spouses. The bereaved spouse was similarly thought to be in a supernatural state and thus his actions would affect his own future and that of his close relatives” [398]. She also stated that “...the widow or widower is ǀAkas [tabu] in much the same way that the girl is at puberty or as are both parents at the birth of a first-born child. Apparently some of the observances also apply to the mother and possibly the father on the death of a child” (375). I suspect that in the latter case, that the observances are built into the culture to allow time for the grieving process after the loss of a child. It is interesting that among the !Kung “...a widow is washed in the first rain that falls after her husband’s death to cleanse her of his death. She should not remarry until she is cleansed” (Marshall 1999:96).³⁵ *Tsìnlhqút’in* elders do not mention ritual washing for widows or widowers except for ones who have handled dead bodies and hunters before a hunt. Some *Tsìnlhqút’in* hunters cleanse in a sweatbath before a hunt. Catharine McClellan (2001) found so much information on widows, and many of the restrictions she noted are much like those for the menstruant.

A widow could not to touch sharp objects (398) nor “eat fresh fish or fresh meat for a year...” (399) ...“does not speak to her children or to others...” (275) a member of the opposite moiety had to comb her hair, and “washed...the ǀAkas out of the woman’s head” (376).

³⁵ Rojas (2003) compared bathing and scratching to meditation and noted that “the practice of “mindfulness” and the pattern of meditation, bathing, and ritual scratching in *Apurowak* are foundational for the regeneration and reformation of spiritual and moral action that can then be carried back into everyday life. In Buddhist tradition this is known as meditation in action” (136).

8.5 *Dèni nánáts'èlhtìn* lit. 'one carried a dead body; a pallbearer'

Dèni nájéqásh 'pallbearers' *chùh èlhxènàgwèdindzíd gwéts'én háyt'insh, ìnlhéd xì* '(are *nímính*) for one year'. There is a bit of an uncertainty about the length of time a pallbearer is considered to be *nímính*. Some have said three weeks, and this may be in reference to the most potent phase. One advantage of being *nímính* is that one has the ability to heal others intentionally and pallbearers also bear this gift. See Part 5: *Súwh-tš'èghèdúdính* for more information for *nímính* traditions.

8.6 *Dèni nánáts'èlhbìn* lit. 'one bathed a dead body; a mortician'

Dèni nánáts'èlhbìn lit. 'one bathed a dead body (for burial)' are individuals who remain *nímính* for one entire year. These individuals undergo an initial potent phase in which they must wear gloves while eating, so as not to ingest the energy. I include much of the information on restrictions for this category and additional anecdotes in Part 5: *Súwh-tš'èghèdúdính* 'preserving oneself; taking care of self (and others)' while carrying the energy of *nímính*, for the reason that much of the observations are shared with the other categories of *nímính*.

There is a lack of detailed documentation on the ancient preparation of bodies for burials among *Tsìnlhqút'in*. There is a one to three week restriction for individuals who prepare the dead for burial and these include not handling fresh meat and fish; not touching or

carrying children, and covering the hands with gloves so as not to touch food while eating.

As mentioned already, there are many more observances for *nímính* individuals which will be covered in Part 5: *Súwh-t̂s'égghèdúdính* ‘preserving oneself; taking care of self (and others)’ while carrying the energy of *nímính*. There are other respectful observances in relation to game animals and fish, including the gear used to obtain these resources. These observances support what has been discussed previously regarding the treatment of animal remains. The sacredness in which these traditional activities are carried out cannot be truly realized without knowing the people’s personal experiences and without knowing about *nímính* energy. Kwesi Baffoe (2005) stated that “traditional religions tend to find the sacred within aspects of everyday life”. There is no *Tsìnlhqút'in* term for “sacred” or “spiritual” likely because everything is considered to be sacred. The natural environment stimulates an energy of gratitude, and for people who have lived for centuries in one area, nature provides close connections to one’s ancestors. Stones, creatures, and vegetation are sacred, and water from the river³⁶ and mountains are ancient ancestors. The yearly journey of salmon, our relationship with everything, and all our activities on the land are spiritual. *Tsìnlhqút'in* life is full of rituals and ceremonies. A hunter begins the day with a purification ceremony, and makes a request for a successful hunt, and calls upon the ancestors. A successful hunt ends with a thanksgiving ceremony where food is shared with the ancestors. *Ìnkél* prays all the time. She prays while she is riding a horse, while she is gardening, walking, resting, eating, and traveling in a vehicle.

³⁶ The *Tsìnlhqút'in* river is addressed as *YèdàDénìlin* ‘Long-Ago-Person’ by elders and is known for its healing properties.

Almost anything a *nímính* individual does is regarded as a ritual including the daily cleansing of self and touching self, others, and hunting items and berry-picking is a ceremony in itself.

The next part, The Care of subsistence Resources (chapters 9 to 14), covers further *Tsìnlhqút'in* ritual avoidances, specifically on subsistence resource. These include, stepping over or touching subsistence tools,³⁷ handling fresh fish and meat, and walking near fish harvest sites. The ritual treatments to hunting and fishing resources together with gear are also covered.

³⁷ Peggy V. Beck and Anna L. Walters cite from a source on Cheyenne “Menstruation Practices and Belief”, an area which is worth looking into with *Tsìnlhqút'in* elders. They quote G.B. Grinnell who noted, “Young men will not eat from the dish nor drink from the pot used by her; one who did so would expect to be wounded in his next fight. She may not handle or even touch a shield or any other war implement, nor may she touch any sacred bundle or object” (221-222).

PART FOUR: THE CARE OF SUBSISTENCE RESOURCES

CHAPTER 9

DÉ'ÁTS'ÈT'ÍNSH 'CAUSING RITUAL OBSTRUCTIONS' (TO SUBSISTENCE RESOURCES)

I use the expression subsistence resources in this section to include game animals, fur-bearing mammals, fish, and hunting, trapping, and fishing gear, and this overall, also includes plants and berries. All subsistence activities are prohibited for *niminh* individuals and this chapter covers only mammals and fish.

From the seasonal round table below, one can assume that game and fish are of equal importance. Fish was the reliable source of protein in the past, likely because of their variety and availability. An assortment of food is the general preference in any home whether in the past or in the present. Plant roots are now gathered in smaller quantities with more reliance on garden vegetables. As always, berries are sought after, even if one has to go a long distance to find them.

The majority of boxes marked in this table suggest that fresh food is being brought in every season and each month, therefore, *niminh* individuals are obligated to always note the freshness of incoming food and take the necessary precautions. In the month of September, for example, hunters may bring home rabbits, grouse, fish, or game animals; women may harvest *chìnsdàd* ‘‘silver weed roots’ and garden vegetables, pick a variety of berries, and milk cows.

Table II: The seasonal round - subsistence activities mentioned in relation to *nímính*

| | Apr | May | June | July | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar |
|----------------------------------|-----|-----|------|------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| trapping | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| fishing ³⁸ | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| hunting ³⁹ | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| root harvesting ⁴⁰ | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | | | | |
| berry gathering | | | x | x | x | x | x | | | | | |
| vegetable gardening | | x | x | x | x | x | x | | | | | |
| ranching | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |

³⁸ Fish species mentioned by *Ìnkél* on the subject of *nímính* include *dèk'ány* 'rainbow trout' (*Salmo gairdneri*), *nìnlhish* 'kokanee trout' (or mountain whitefish) (*Prosopium williamsoni*), and *ts'émán* 'sockeye salmon' (*Oncorhynchus nerka*).

³⁹ Mammal species mentioned in the recordings on *nímính* include: *chèl'ig* 'coyote' (*Canis latrans*), *nábi* 'muskrat' (*Ondatra zibethica*), *nists'i* 'blacktail deer' (*Odocoileus hemionus*), *nùndi* 'lynx' (*Lynx canadensis*), *nùitsíny* 'grizzly bear' (*Ursus arctos*), and *sès* 'black bear' (*Ursus americanus*).

⁴⁰ Wild plant roots, bulbs, and corms which were specifically mentioned in the recordings on *nímính*: *chìnšdàd* 'common silverweed roots, cinquefoil' (*Potentilla anserina* L. ssp. *anserina*), *èsghùnsh* 'yellow glacier lily bulbs' (*Erythronium grandiflorum*), and *sùnt'íny* 'western spring beauty corms' (*Claytonia lanceolata*).

The overall *Tsìnlhqút'in* term *dé'áts'èt'insh*⁴¹ 'causing ritual obstructions' (to subsistence resources) encapsulates all that is outlined below in relation to subsistence resources:

- A. the ritual blocking of any item used to catch or kill wildlife (including fish) can be caused by
 - a. a hunter who has assaulted the fresh remains of his catch\kill by
 - i. clubbing
 - ii. sawing the bones
 - b. a single offence by *nímính* individuals via contact with the
 - i. ...the gun, fish net, etc. by means of
 - 1. touching
 - 2. stepping over
 - ii. fresh remains of the catch\kill via
 - 1. harvesting
 - 2. touching
 - 3. handling
 - 4. retrieving from a net\trap
 - 5. cutting
 - 6. sawing
 - 7. eating fresh
 - 8. stepping over
 - iii. fresh blood of the remains by
 - 1. touching
 - 2. stepping over
 - 3. walking on
 - 4. consuming
- B. the ritual blocking of any resource site where food is harvested can be caused by
 - a. the presence of *nímính*
 - b. the presence of a corpse

These offences are known to have historically set outcomes: objects become *èsqwàyàx*

'sensed by wildlife', leading to the alienation of wildlife; and in a few instances, *nímính*

energy can impair the health or cause the extinction of fish in a particular lake.

⁴¹ *Dé'áts'èt'insh* is a general term which is also used to indicate a premonition, and in that case, it is defined as 'one sometimes experiences a forewarning of a future event, i.e. the experience of an odd vision which forewarns an inevitable future event. In addition, *dé'áts'èt'insh* could be used in other contexts, including future events, i.e. *bédé'ásjágh* 'I caused a halt to his plans'; 'I experienced a precognition\forewarning about him\her\it (an occurrence experienced by one which foreshadows a future event)'.

Table III: Examples of the effects of *nímính* on subsistence resources

There are additional *Tsinlhqút'in* expressions which are used to describe the effects of *nímính* on subsistence resources and on resource sites and these terms are shown in the table below:

| <i>Dé'áts'èt'insh</i> 'one causes ritual obstructions to (subsistence resources) by doing' | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | examples of the effects\visual changes caused by <i>nímính</i> | |
| | subsistence gear | game, fish, or waterway |
| A | B | C |
| 1) <i>bèdèts'èlhtish</i> 'one ritually blocks (fish) by retrieving them from (a net)' | 6) <i>èsqwàyàx</i> 'state wherein a subsistence gear is ritually marked by <i>nímính</i> energy, therefore can be sensed by wildlife' | 11) game - <i>gágúnlhchúgh hèlhdèlh</i> 'it has blood clots all over (its flesh)' |
| 2) <i>bèdàts'éyàsh</i> 'one ritually blocks (subsistence resources) by walking (near butchering site or by walking on blood)' | 7) <i>èqèx nàts'élèx han ts'ùghints'àd</i> 'they were retrieved from (a net and thus) were ritually treated'⁴² | 12) <i>lhùy nèntsùtsèl yánátádláx</i> 'fish will become smaller' |
| 3) also <i>gwèdàts'éyàsh</i> 'one ritually blocks a resource site by walking (near a waterway, or fishing site)' | 8) <i>lhàghèmbínlh nàdísdzáy</i> lit. 'a net became dry' | 13) <i>lhùy bèdánìngèn gánt'ih yánátádláx</i> 'fish will become thin' |
| 4) <i>bèdè'ts'èt'ish</i> 'one ritually blocks (subsistence tools) by cutting (fresh meat\fish)' | 9) <i>èlhtín\ lhàghèmbínlh ts'ètálhtsánx</i> 'one will ruin the gun\fish net\fish' | 14) <i>qwès gánt'ih hèlìsh</i> 'they become like spawning fish' |
| 5) <i>bèdàts'éyínsh</i> 'one ritually blocks (subsistence tools) by eating (fresh fish\meat)' | 10) <i>èlhtín dél bixágòsh</i> 'blood comes out of the gun' | 15) <i>ch'èts'ègwènínt'àz gágújágh</i> 'it appeared as if the area had been severed' (fish stop running upstream) |

Column A: All subsistence resources and related gear can be ritually obstructed (No. 1-5), but the terms listed here do not refer to the effects on plants and berries. There are other terms to describe the effects on plants and berries. Generally, any of the activities No. 1-5 can have an affect on fish (7, 9, 12, 13, 14) and fish nets (6, 8, 9) as well as game (11) and hunting\trapping implements (6, 9, 10).

Columns B and C: Guns and traps (6, 9, 10), game (11), fish (7, 9, 12, 13, 14), fish nets (6, 8, 9), resource sites (9, 15), and plants (7, 9, 12).

⁴² No. 7 *èqèx nàts'élèx han ts'ùghints'àd* can be placed in both columns B and C and in the context of handling fish; the visual effects of this activity includes 8, 9, 12, 13, 14. The broad term *ts'ùghints'àd* or rather *ets'ùts'àd* 'one performs a ritual' is explained in more detail in Part 5: *Súwh-tš'èghèdúdính*. Anything a *nímính* individual does is said to be a ritual because s/he carries the energy and this energy alters life forms and objects, or balances them wherever s/he goes.

Note above that there is only one reference for game animals in the columns B and C, but there are five for fish. I assume that fish are smaller and so are more vulnerable to the effects of *nímính* energy. Today, hunting is done more frequently than fishing, but there are more terms and rituals for fish. As already mentioned, the extended vocabulary for fish is likely due to the heavy reliance on fish in the past. The term *èsqwàyàx* in the table is also used to mean *nímính* or *bàts'ègúdáh* and these variations are shown in the following pages.

Classifications related to *nímính* and to subsistence gathering:

Nímính ‘an individual who carries energy’: this energy, whether retained by a person, object, or place has an element of power which is sensed by animals and fish. If a prohibition is ignored by a *nímính* individual, the restricted action is described as a ritual act, because the contact and presence results either in a balance of energy or an imbalance. The ritual offence may not be a deliberate ritual perhaps, but as effective as if it were intended.

Èsqwàyàx ‘a state wherein objects used for hunting, trapping, and fishing are ritually marked by *nímính* energy, rendering them useless for hunting, trapping, and fishing because animals avoid them’. This also happens with ones who are not carrying *nímính* energy; if one clubs a fish, the offended fish species will thereafter evade the net; and, it is claimed that the fish net will still become *èsqwàyàx* and will from then on be sensed by all species of fish. This is also described as, *nèlàghèmbínlh dé'ánènt'ánx* ‘you are

creating an obstacle against your fish net'. *Nímính* energy is visually undetectable by the human eye, and its not clearly known how animals and fish sense it and how they recognize it on nets or traps and avoid it. It has been noted that guns which are *èsqwàyàx géchùgh tètélh hélísh* 'kick more'.

Gùbàts'ègúdáh 'unsuccessful hunters; a state in which hunters are ritually marked by *nímính* energy, therefore can be sensed by wildlife, thus are avoided'. *Nàts'ègúdáh* means you cannot kill a mammal because they run away from you even if you are a long distance away. It appears that mammals feel the gaze of ones who are *gùbàts'ègúdáh*. *Ìnkél* says, if you happen to see a mammal, *gángú xúlé(ž)d gát'insh* 'they react as if they have been scorched, and *xentsel niljúsh sàt'insh* 'they are perhaps instantly struck by fear', that is, *bíní'iz bélh* 'as soon as your gaze falls on them'.

Ìnkél and others have sometimes used the terms *nímính*, *bàts'ègúdáh*, and *èsqwàyàx* interchangeably. Misplacing of words is likely to happen especially in an oral setting. It is challenging to discuss *nímính* and to instantly recall all its related terms. The human mind sometimes is not quick enough to discharge specific terms when there are too many choices of terms, especially in the case of advanced age, fatigue, or relaying information in the midst of a hectic day. *Bàts'ègúdáh* is sometimes used to refer to *nímính* individuals as well; however, the three terms seem to be differentiated between animate-human and animate non-human. *Nímính* and *bàts'ègúdáh* for animate-human (although sometimes used in reference to a dog and also for guns) and *èsqwàyàx* for animate-other (dogs, objects). *Ìnkél* used *èsqwàyàx* and *bàts'ègúdáh* to refer to a hunting dog which refused to

hunt after being beaten by a *nímính* individual, even though an implement was used as the weapon. To clear the dog, a gunny sack is placed over its body and it is brushed with a juniper bush, while saying, "*Èsqwàyàx sìn lín, nènch'àgwènúwéjùd*" 'You have become *èsqwàyàx*, may you be cleared'.⁴³ This is done four mornings in a row and the gear will no longer be *èsqwàyàx*.

In the following example, in explaining the effects of *nímính* energy and a method for clearing a gun, *Ìnkél* used both "*èsqwàyàx*" and "*nímính*":

| | | | |
|----------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Dèni</i> | <i>nájéžqàn</i> | <i>tá'àjint'ih</i> | <i>ín</i> |
| person; people | they have carried (a coffin) | they are like that; that sort of thing | them |
| | <i>nájíyéz tán</i> | <i>tsínsh</i> | <i>nímính</i> |
| | they carried it | even in this case | <i>tàlax</i> |
| | | | will become |
| | | | <i>sànt'ì</i> |
| | | | perhaps it will |

Even if [a gun] was carried by a pallbearer, (the gun) may become *nímính*

| | | | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------|------------------------|-----------|
| <i>"Èsqwàyàx</i> | <i>sìn lín,</i> | <i>nènch'àgwènúwéjùd"</i> | <i>dìnìh</i> | <i>hátàghènt'ínlh,</i> | <i>gú</i> |
| ritually marked | you have become | may you be cleared | you say | you do it this way | then |

xútàghènlhtîêê.

you whip it (more than once)

You say to it, "You have become *èsqwàyàx*, may you be cleared" then you brush it (lightly more than once with a smouldering juniper bough)

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------|------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>"Nènch'àgwènúwéjùd,</i> | <i>nímính</i> | <i>sìn lín,"</i> | <i>ts'ediny;</i> | <i>"Nènch'àgwènúwéjùd"</i> |
| may you be cleared | | you have become | one says | may you be cleared |

ts'ediny *ts'úlhtîsh.*

one says It is whipped

It is told, "May you be cleared, you have become *nímính*"; it is told, "May you be cleared," and then it is brushed (lightly)

⁴³ *Nímính* individuals clear items and other life using positive words which may be called prayer and Kenneth Cohen (2003) stated that "breath is related to speech and prayer. To speak is to combine thoughts or feelings with sacred breath. When we think good thoughts and speak good words, we spread blessings into the wind" (228).

I give the translation for *nèch'àgwènúwéjùd* as ‘may you be cleared’, although the same root *-jùd* in *gwèch'ànúghújùd* means ‘let’s chase it\him\her away from there’. Similarly, the root for both *xútàghènlhtîsêê* and *ts'ùlhtîsh* is actually “whip” but the manner in which this ritual is done can only be described as “brushing”. “Brushing” is the term used by coastal peoples on Vancouver Island.

***Bíghínlhghil* ‘it sat overnight’:** Man-made subsistence gear become *èsqwàyàx* through a number of ways. Prior to the twenty-four hour waiting period, fresh blood is considered to be a living presence, even the blood from animals which one normally considers dead. An animal is not completely dead until a night has passed. One who is *nímính* cannot in any way touch fresh fish or meat, instead must wait until the following day after the fish or meat have been hanging overnight and have turned cold. Fresh meat or fish which is still warm is considered to retain its spirit and so are deemed to be still alive until their blood turns cold; *bedèl ch'áyádit'insh* lit. ‘their blood dies’.⁴⁴ In regards to bones,

⁴⁴ Kwesi Baffoe (2005) documented some of the traditions of the Sayisi Dene and he explained that “since blood represents life force, it has to be handled very carefully and only the elderly are permitted to consume soup made from the blood. Women are never allowed to step over meat, blood or hunting gear and menstruating women and pubescent girls are prohibited from handling either meat or blood”. I have heard that among the *Tsínlhqút'in*, blood was consumed in times of famine.

Mary C. Wright (2003) in her article, “The Woman's Lodge: Constructing Gender on the Nineteenth-Century Pacific Northwest Plateau” paraphrased a passage relating to respect for blood as well. She noted that “among the Cherokee, argues historian Theda Perdue, blood was believed to contain a being's life or spirit and demanded to be treated with the ritual care, whether in menstruation, or a childbirth, or, for men, in hunting and warfare. That many of the same rules—seclusion, purification, prayer—were followed by men during their blood-related war or hunting activities as by women during menstruation underscores that the blood was at issue, not the sex of the human interacting with it (4). This passage comes from Theda Perdue’s (1998) book, *Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700-1835*.

this length of time is not long enough. Animals simply dislike their bones being sawed.⁴⁵

Ínkél explains this further:

Ínlhéd *tèž* *ghìnlí* *chùh* *gùntsén,* *bègwéd* *ídíntš'íny,*
once night long (past tense) too it is bad its bones you make noise upon

gúchúh, *šád* *tsíny* *ghìnlí* *egúchúh* *bègwéd*
even then a long time (emph.) (time) passed even then its bones

ídíntš'íny, *gùntsén,* *jédènish.*
you make noise upon it is bad they say

it is said that it is bad (disrespectful) to “clunk” upon bones whether bones have sat overnight or longer

When animal bones are sawed by an individual, *nímính* or not, the gun used to shoot the animal will become *èsqwàyàx*. Disrespectful acts such as this or *betšédé'inlht'ì* ‘clubbing fresh catch on the head’ are expressed as *nì'inlhtín dé'anènt'anx* ‘you are (breaking a prohibition and) causing an obstruction against your gun’ and *èsqwàyàx hèlax* ‘will cause animals to sense your gun’.⁴⁶

Nich'an nánit'ish lit. ‘(animals) will turn away from the hunter’ is discussed in chapter 7: *Gùbàgúján* ‘successful hunters’. It is difficult for the hunter to find animals if s\he disregards hunting and trapping rules. There are respectful observations which are

⁴⁵ Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant (1996:109) noted the phrase “bone of my bones” (Genesis 2:23). There is another curious section in the Judeo-Christian Bible, Leviticus 19:10-13, which refers to the eating of blood. Chevalier and Gheerbrant listed many traditions, unknown to me, which have customs regarding bones; some which are similar to *Tsinlqhút'in* traditions on the respectful treatment of bones. They list: Finno-Ugrians, Karaga, Karghinz, Lapps, Mongolo-Turkic, Orok, Sagay, Soyot, Tubalar, Telingit, Tungus, and Yakut (109-110).

⁴⁶ On treatment of mammals, Kwesi Baffoe (2005) indicated that “traditionally, the Dene believe that it is imperative an animal be killed with a single spear and under no circumstances should a wounded animal be clubbed to death”.

mentioned for trappers which are different than those for hunting and these rules are not necessarily confined to just *nímính* individuals.

***Dèl bixágòsh* ‘blood will come out of (the gun)’**: There is a phenomena of massive bruising on the flesh of game when a gun which is *èsqwàyàx* is used to kill game, and this happens quite often today because fast moving vehicles are used in hunting and it is easier to get close to game even though hunters carry rifles which have become *èsqwàyàx*. An animal shot with such a gun will have considerable bruising on the site of its wound. In some cases, a single bullet can cause massive damage, *bèch'èz gágúnlhchúgh xúlhdéllh sèlín* ‘causing the whole side of the animal to be blackened with clotted blood’, and what is originally flesh is soft, almost jelly-like. The damage is on the flesh around the entrance to the wound and *ìnlhch'ès yàxághíntsi ègwènz chùh k'ésél gágúnlhchúgh* ‘all around the exit as well’. There are two phrases for this occurrence: *dèl bixágòsh* ‘blood will come out of the (gun)’ and *gágúnlhchúgh wélhdéllh* ‘it will have blood clots all over (its flesh)’. This phrase *dèl bixágòsh* implies that the gun, which is *èsqwàyàx*, is believed to somehow have the capacity to inject blood via the bullet.

CHAPTER 10

**BÉDÉTS'ÉLHTISH 'ONE RITUALLY BLOCKS (HUNTING GEAR) BY
RETRIEVING REMAINS OF (FISH/MAMMALS)'**

As shown previously in Table III which shows the examples of the effects of *nímính* on subsistence resources, the act of taking fish from a net, when done by one who is *nímính*, sets off a series of events or circumstances:

1. *Lhàghèmbínlh bédé'áts'èt'insh lhà jid binéts'údlósh gúláh hèlish*
when one obstructs a fish net, one can no longer catch fish with it

- A. *Lhàghèmbínlh nádísdzáy* lit. 'the net became dry'
- B. *Èsqwàyàx* 'the net becomes ritually marked by *nímính* energy, therefore can be sensed by fish; fish become afraid of a net'

2. *Lhà lhàghèmbínlh qéx néts'etàsdlálh, gú lhúy iyì nèntsél yáts'étálhtsilh*
one who is *nímính* cannot pull fish through the net (in the retrieval process) since this will cause fish to decrease in size

- A. *Lhùy ts'àghìnlhtsén* 'one has ruined the fish'
- B. *Lhùy nèntsútsèl yánátádláx* 'fish will become smaller'
- C. *Lhùy bédáningèn gánt'ih yánátádláx* 'fish will become thin'
- D. *qwès gánt'ih hèlish* the remaining fish in the lake 'becomes like spawning fish'; becoming soft and thin
- E. *Èqèx náts'élèx hán ts'ùghìnts'àd* 'one pulled (the fish) through the net, thereby performed a ritual on the fish' refers to the actual retrieval of fish from a net, when done by *nímính*. *Yàghìnjéž láyàghìnlh'in èqènáyé(ž)làh* 'she more or less twisted and pulled them through the nets' and in this way caused the fish in the lake to become thin and flat, like those squeezed and compressed during the initial retrieval from the net. *Ts'ùlúsh èqèx náts'éli sàñqày gú lhàghèmbínlh sàñqày bèghédéts'édèlhcéd tá'àts'èlh'in, gú bédágáns* 'when one catches (fish in a net) and pulls (the fish) through (the mesh) and with difficulty, forces (fish) out of the net, etc.; this causes (fish) to lose flesh'. In some cases, the remaining fish in the lake become smaller; becoming mature, but smaller in size.

Jetté and Jones (2000) offer very concise definitions and explanations in describing the Koyukon culture and the following sums up the restrictions for menstruants in regards to fishing:

During the fishing season, the woman in this condition is debarred from lifting her net, and some one else has to do it for her. She cannot pass in a boat or canoe near the place where the nets are set: this would stop the catch, probably through the action of the **yeege** of the **hutlaa**. She may walk on the beach along the nets, - or avoid these by making a circuit in her canoe, but she is not allowed to pass over them (563).

Inkél gives several anecdotes of "*lhùy nàghìnlhtsén sàjágh*" 's\he likely ruined the fish' which I have summarized in the following. While fishing with nets, fat two-foot long rainbow trout were caught in a lake. Two catches in a row were so heavy that *lhés lhàghèmbínlh lhùy dèzàn jínìl'in* 'really, the net emerged as fish' when the nets were drawn out of the water. Unfortunately, these fish were *iyédínlhtín* 'retrieved' and *yèchànts'ènlht'àz* 'gutted' by a *nímính* individual. As a rule, almost immediately, fewer fish will be caught because fish will avoid the fish gear. The following day, no fish were caught using the same net and this occurrence is expressed as *lhàghèmbínlh nàdìszáy* 'the net became dry'; and the net becomes *èsqwàyàx*. The fish in the lake thereafter became smaller and appear to become skinnier. Twins can fish but their hook *néntsén táláx* 'will be ruined'; *lhùy bínìljèd táláx* 'fish will be afraid of it'; and if used again, fish will avoid the hook. *Jéns dé'áts'èt'insh* 'one causes a ritual obstruction to the hook (by handling and eating the catch)'. After such obstructions, some families have continued to fish in the same lake for two years in a row in the spring, but have been unsuccessful, so

have abandoned the site. It is often said of *nímính* individuals, "*Lhùy nàghìnlhtsén sàjágh*" 's\he likely ruined the fish' when these types of changes occur.

The effects of *nímính* energy (ritual obstructions) on animals and fish are quite similar between animals and fish, but there are more expressions for fish as noted earlier. The fish net is described in *Tsìnlhqút'ín* as becoming "dry" and there is the occurrence of fish decreasing in size; and the examples of the mere handling of their remains as being harmful; and in more drastic cases, the energy causing the extinction of fish. Animals escape such effects, but instead have the massive blood clotting. This could be explained as resulting from an impact of a bullet against a bone, but how does one account for the excessive bruising to a deer's whole side?

There are four ceremonies for clearing nets and affected areas: smudging nets with juniper, leading fish upstream, blowing fish roe through nets, and expressing oil into the mouth of fish. *K'ún béqèx-nàts'èdèzòsh* 'one blows fish roe through it' is performed in the spring. The whole length of a fish net is stretched out, upright, and left to dry. A *nímính* individual (usually a menstruant or a twin) is to fast all night in preparation for the ceremony. The following procedure is repeated four mornings in a row. The *nímính* fills her mouth with fish roe, approaches the net, and *k'ún yéqèx-nàdèzòsh* 'expels the fish roe and blows them through (the net)'. S\he does this four times, each time, stepping back and *yèbèn nàlgish* 'going forward to the net', *èlhàn x yéqèx nà yèdènàghìnzòsh* 'covering all angles'. *Ègú náyùts'àd* 'in this way, s\he is performing a ritual on it'; clearing the energy, as well as encouraging fish to imitate the manner in which the fish roe readily

move through the net. In the case where fish have lost physical condition, there is one other ceremony. A *nímính* individual *tlàgh yìsh-déžòsh* ‘expresses fish oil into the mouth (of a fish)’. This ritual serves to encourage fish to *lhèk'ágh, nèrchágh nàwèdláx* ‘become fat and grow large’.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Gabriel Horn (2000), a talented writer who wrote about Native ceremonies explained that ceremony is a way of life:

We enter into a ceremonial state of consciousness with respect for life, and for the purpose of well-being and balance, not only within our own lives, but for the Earth, our Mother, as well. A ceremony, even of one, than becomes an expression of gratitude and an acknowledgement and entreating the spirit. It is a way of living (8-9).

CHAPTER 11

***BÈDÉTS'ÉT'ISH* 'ONE RITUALLY BLOCKS TOOLS BY CUTTING (FRESH MEAT AND FISH)'**

The examples for *bèdets'ét'ish* refer to *nímính* individuals in general, who by cutting fresh meat, cause traps and guns to become *èsqwàyàx*. Both *bèdets'ét'ish* and *èsqwàyàx* refer to the effects of *nímính* energy on hunting gear. The former term is used to clearly specify the manner in which an item is obstructed [the root *-t'ish* means 'cuts; slices; fillets'].

If one who is *nímính* happens to cut fresh meat or fish, it is said that s\he *yèdétízt'áz* 'is causing the specific gun used, to become *èsqwàyàx*'. Subsequently, a hunter cannot approach a mammal carrying that gun. The rifle *ínhés lhàzówh hèlish* 'becomes absolutely useless'; becomes *èsqwàyàx*; and mammals come to fear it. Mammals run from the hunter, *yidéédính* 'sensing (the gun)' from a long distance. Mammals cannot simply stand and wait for the hunter to approach.

There are two methods of clearing guns. A strong concoction such as Absorbine Junior, Minard's Liniment, or *xilhdilh* 'Indian Hellebore' (*Veratrum viride*)⁴⁸ can be poured into the barrel of the gun, plugged, and left sitting in a vertical position overnight. The gun

⁴⁸ *Xilhdilh* 'Indian Hellebore' (also known as Indian Poke, False Hellebore, Green False Hellebore, etc.) is a highly toxic plant. A decoction of its roots is mainly used externally for a number of ailments and when used in the bath water, it is said to refresh the body physically and mentally. It is not recommended for internal use, although with proper preparation, *Tsìnlhqút'in* have used it for expelling worms from the stomach. Warning: Do not attempt to use any part of this plant without consulting an herbalist or consulting your medical doctor. Even a small portion of the plant can cause death.

can also be smudged with a juniper bough. To clear guns, traps, or fish nets of *èsqwàyàx* using juniper, the item(s) are placed under a protective covering, usually a gunny sack, and brushed off with a juniper bush, while saying, "*Èsqwàyàx sìnlin, nènch'àgwènúwéjùd*" 'You have become *èsqwàyàx*, may you be cleared'. This is done four mornings in a row and the gear will no longer be *èsqwàyàx*. This ritual treatment is also called *bèch'àts'ègwènlhtîshish* 'one brushes (the energy) away from it'.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ In "The Book of Ceremonies: A Native Way of Honoring and Living the Sacred", Gabriel Horn (2000), a writer and professor, wrote an inspiring book about ceremony. He said:

"...Not everyone can enter into a ceremonial state of consciousness. To do this one must be of good heart.... The purity of the heart and the sincerity of intentions are the master facts; they are essential. They are vital, as is a conscious awareness of one's relationship to all the things within the ceremony – for we enter into a ceremonial state of consciousness out of love and reverence for the sacredness and the beauty and the power of life and life's journey, no matter how grand or small that life may be, or how wonderful or difficult that road is to walk" (8).

CHAPTER 12

BÈDÁTS'ÉYÍNSH 'ONE RITUALLY OBSTRUCTS SUBSISTENCE GEAR BY EATING FRESH FISH/MEAT'

The consumption of fresh meat or fish by *nímính* individuals, ruins guns, traps, and nets, causing guns to become *èsqwàyàx* and the remaining fish to decrease in size.⁵⁰ If a gun is *bèch'èts'ághìnyán* 'blocked by eating' it will become *èsqwàyàx*; and *ts'èlhtsínsh* 'one ruins them', similarly with traps, and fish nets. In regards to a girl's puberty, Catharine McClellan noted "for at least six months all the [menstruating] girl's meat had to be dried for at least a day or two so that it had no fresh blood on it" (2001:363); and Jules Jetté and Eliza Jones noted the period being only "five or six days" (2000:563).

Ìnkél mentions few restrictions for twins, although, restrictions for *èyùwh-ájàghìnt'i* are likely the same as others who are *nímính*. I provide her discussion below regarding the restriction of the eating and retrieval of fresh fish:

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Èyùwh-ájàghìnt'i</i> | <i>èsqàx</i> | <i>iyèn</i> | <i>chùh</i> | <i>gángú</i> | <i>jénímính</i> |
| twins; mother of twins | children | them | too | it seems that | they are <i>jénímính</i> |

| | |
|---------------|----------------------------|
| <i>hélìsh</i> | <i>jígúbàyàts'èlhtish.</i> |
| they become | it is said about them |

It is said that twin children also become *nímính*.

⁵⁰ Catharine McClellan (2001) noted another reason why eating fresh fish is forbidden: "widows had certain dietary restrictions that extended beyond the initial ritual isolation... For example they could not eat fresh fish, so that people would go on living longer and not 'leave quickly like a fish'" (376). There may be similar warnings among *Tsìnlhqút'in*, although I have not heard this observance, but, this consequence may be connected to the belief that a widow or widower is "as if dead".

"*Dìdá* *jághinyán* *èyi* *nèntsél* *yánátádláx,*" *gùts'édénish,*
 whatever they ate it/them those small they will become it is said about them

èsqàx *èyùwh-ájàghint'í* *în* *chùh* *hàh.*
 children twins; mother of twins them too (emph.)

It is told about that whatever they eat will become smaller, even (when eaten) by twin children.

Jàdèd *èyùwh-ájàghint'í* *ègúh* *gèchùgh* *jígwénijèd* *áh.*
 themselves twins; mother of twins that (state) it is too dangerous (emph.)

If they are themselves *èyùwh-ájàghint'í*, this (state) is especially dangerous.

Èyùwh-ájàghint'í *lhùy* *jìyàghiyán,* *èqèx-nájíyé(ž)lágh,*
 twins; mother of twins fish they ate they retrieved it through (a net)
 it/them

nèntsútsèl *yánátádláx* *jèdénish.*
 small they will become they say

It is said that if *èyùwh-ájàghint'í* eat fish and have also retrieved them from a net, the (existing) fish will become smaller in size.

Bíghínlhghil *gúnk'ân* *jíyèyàn* *gùts'inlh'in* *án.*
 left overnight only then they eat it/them (emph.)

They are only allowed to eat (fish) which have been left overnight.

Èyùwh-ájàghint'í *în* *gájágh* *ghínih.*
 twins; mother of twins them did that (past tense)

A certain *èyùwh-ájàghint'í* did this. [mother of twins?]

Nímính *šèlín,* *gúyì* *lhùy* *nìnlhish* *nèntíl,* *nènáž* *síny* *yánlín*
 became that fish white wide long very they became
 fish?

èyi *nèntsútsèl* *yánádlín.*
 those small they became

Upon becoming *nímính* s\he (caused) those (existing) mature white fish to become smaller in size.

Èyèd *tèghínlá* *hágújágh.*
 there where s\he set her nets that is where it happened

This happened in the place where s\he set her nets.

Tèghìnlá *gwèch'ìh* *iyèd* *nánágwadžèd*
 where s\he set her nets next time there the same time the following year

hágújágh.
 that is where it happened

This happened in that area where she set her nets after a year had passed.

"Nèxwèlùy *ghínlhtsén,"* *ts'èdènísh* *ghìní.*
 our fish s\he ruined it is said (past tense)

"S\he spoiled our fish," it was said.

It is not definite whether *Ìnkél* is referring to a mother of twins or to twins in this conclusion. She begins by describing children eating fresh food, and then she says, "If they are themselves *èyùwh-ájàghìnt'í*, this (state) is especially dangerous." One could assume from what follows that she is referring to a mother of twins, because she goes into describing the actual fishing activity which is usually carried out by mothers. In her second last line, she indicates the passing of one year before the consequences set in and she also mentions this time frame in the example of a widow berry-picking. As well, it appears that the change to the existing fish in this area was not immediate, contrary to the instantaneous effects on hunters, hunting equipment, and hunting dogs.

CHAPTER 13

BÈDÁTS'ÉYÀSH 'ONE RITUALLY BLOCKS (SUBSISTENCE TOOLS) BY WALKING NEAR OR STEPPING OVER THEM'

Nímính individuals are to avoid sites where fresh mammals or fish are being prepared, and if this is disregarded, the gun or fish net will become blocked because mammals and fish will avoid these items. One cannot walk *yáx díchén bènàdàs* 'in front of (the barrel of a gun)'. The gun becomes *èsqwàyàx; bédáts'éyàsh*; sensed by mammals.

A hunter is not to leave a gun on the floor, but must *jíyéghéníwétán* 'lean it against an upright surface'. A trapper must also be concerned about his traps and prevent them from becoming *èsqwàyàx*. 'one must not place a sack full of traps in places where women walk. If a woman should step over the traps, mammals will thereafter know where the traps have been set. If traps become *èsqwàyàx*, when mammals approach such traps, *yà'èyùd gówh nádéltálh* 'they will step around it', and be able to eat the bait. There seems to be a difference in the potency of *nímính* energy between traps and guns. Fur-bearing mammals come near traps which are *èsqwàyàx*, but game run from hunters who carry an affected gun. *Gú gágúnlhched jid égwíhyiyènižèn hèlish* 'that's how aware (mammals) become'.

Ones who are *nímính* are told *lhà dèl ch'èd dájúságh* 'not to walk on blood'; for the reason that *èlhtín í lhàzówh hèlish* 'the gun becomes useless'. *Dèl ch'èd dányá ink'èd* 'if you walk on blood' ***bàts'ègúdáh*** *tàlax èlhtín, lhá bínúlh ts'én tézàghènyàlh* 'the gun will become *bàts'ègúdáh* and you will not be able to come upon mammals. *Bígwénijèd hèlish ghilígwét'in* 'it appears that (the gun) becomes dangerous'.

CHAPTER 14

***GWÈDÁTS'ÉYÀSH* 'ONE RITUALLY OBSTRUCTS AN AREA (WATERWAY: RIVER OR STREAM) BY WALKING'**

Assuming from the transcribed accounts under this heading, ritual blocking of an area may be brought about only by widows, widowers, and the transportation of corpses across waterways. In anecdotes regarding the handling of fish, a widow is said to be much more potent than a pallbearer. The *nímính* energy lingers in the area for one week *égú gángú gwèch'ìgùdížig gágwèt'insh* 'before (the *nímính* energy) appears to dissipate'.

A widow or widower is not to go near an area where people are fishing, or walk over a bridge above a watercourse where salmon are running and corpses should not be carried across waterways on bridges, otherwise, fish will stop going upstream. Salmon will sense the lingering *nímính* energy and will not pass through on their way upstream,⁵¹ consequently, fishermen are forced to abandon their fishing. In some cases, it likely happens that a widow\widower comes upon fishermen fishing and takes part in the consumption of freshly caught fish, and *égú jid jégwèlhtsínsh ts'édènísh* 'in that way, it is said that they ruin the area'. *Lhùy lhàn ts'iqásh id gájégwèlh'in* 'they do that in areas where lots of fish are caught (using a dip-net). *Lhènèts'úsqásh háyt'insh jédènísh* 'it is said that (fishermen) stop catching fish'.

Of the categories of *nímính*, widows or widowers are said to be the most potent and are regarded as such for one year. It was investigated by *Tsìnhqút'in*, unknown to *Ìnkél*, as to

⁵¹ In instances where *gwèdátst'éninyàh* 'one blocked an area (river or stream)', a twin may be asked to catch a fish and lead it up through the ritual barrier and upstream to open a path for the salmon.

which of the two *nímính* carried the strongest energy; a pallbearer or a widow\widower. The pallbearer was asked to walk across a stream where fish were running and nothing happened; the fish kept running upstream. Then a widow or widower was asked to walk across and *lhà lhùy chùh ègùn télhtlàd gwé(ž)lín* ‘the fish immediately stopped running’; *gángú ch'éts'ègwènt'âž gágújagh* ‘it was as if (the stream) was severed’. Since then, in comparison to other *nímính*, widows or widowers *gwèchùh gùbígwénijèd jègúnlh'in* ‘have been considered the most potent’. In observation of this fishing site for a longer period, the fish in this circumstance did not pass through until *gwèch'inàgùdìsdžéd ilín gágújagh* ‘it appeared as if the (energy) had dissipated’. From similar occurrences thereafter, it is said that it takes a week before fish *ègùn nágúwédilh gát'insh* ‘will continue upstream’. Fish will sense the presence of *nímính* energy along the shore for up to a week and will avoid the area. *Gwèdàts'éyàsh* ‘one obstructs the area’ refers to sites where widows have caught fish using a dip-net or have crossed over a waterway on foot or by watercraft. A widow’s or widower’s presence at an active fishing site is enough to repel fish, whether s\he is within range of the waterway, consuming fish, handling fish, or simply walking across a stream.

The phrase “a widow or widower is as if s\he were dead” is significant in light of the fact that the same events outlined above were observed at several fishing sites near the river, after a corpse was brought across a bridge. After such an occurrence, the river below was observed closely. Fish were obviously visibly active: *gángú tishyánish gát'in*, *gángú sùk'án chówh xádélh* ‘appearing to be flapping and surfacing frequently’. Similarly, the fish ceased moving upstream, and one week later, they continued upstream. Among the

Thompson people, James Alexander Teit (1900) documented that “when a corpse is taken across a river in a canoe, no fish will be caught for four days. When a person is drowned in the river during the salmon-run, the fish will cease to run for several days” (374). In one instance, *Tsìnlhqút’in* observed that when a corpse was taken across a river, the fish stopped moving, and it was commented:

“*Áy jìgwénìjèd ágúnt’ih*”
 (interjection) it is dangerous (emph.) it is
this occurrence must be utterly dangerous

When *nímính* individuals have been near fishing stands, fish sense the presence of *nímính* energy along the shore for up to a week and they avoid running close to that part of the shore. Instead, fish are noted to run in the middle of a river to avoid these areas. Twins or a mother of twins are usually asked to *lhùy xánátàjèdùlòsh* ‘lead a live fish along the shore (and past the fishing stand and upriver along the fishing site)’ to restore the path for the fish. This is accomplished by catching a live fish and tying a twine to it and then throwing it back into the water and leading it upstream past the affected area. It is said that this clears the path for the fish.

The next section, Part 5: *Súwh-tê’èghèdúdính* ‘preserving oneself; taking care of self (and others)’ while carrying the energy of *nímính*, is about observing *Tsìnlhqút’in nímính* traditions. The *Tsìnlhqút’in* term *súwh-tê’èghèdúdính* ‘preventative self-care; self-preservation; abiding by ritual restrictions’ includes the care of the physical self, others, and food resources. This concept follows two of Ernesto Alvarado’s principles of three commandments in life which are essential to living a spiritual life (Freke 1999).

Alvarado, Gavilian Mexican-Apache, is a shaman and has a doctorate in Psychology. The first law, he says, is “to take care of Motherearth” [and its inhabitants]. The second, the prerequisite for physical health is “to take care of our bodies” (123). In a roundabout way, *nímính* and *súwh-tš'éghèdúdính* are set out to preserve and protect all life. When life is held sacred and the principles of *nímính* are observed, the individual and collective rewards are youthfulness, good health, continuity, and balance.⁵²

⁵² There is a common saying among native people that ‘what you do affects others’ and this concept is applicable to ‘self-preservation’ as expressed in *Tsinlqhút’in* and basic to hunters and gatherers, the idea of following such cultural codes are not unique to *Tsinlqhút’in*.

Beck and Walters (1977) note that “Basic to the Pima and Navajo ways of life...is the idea that if you ‘live right,’ live according to certain ‘do’s’ and ‘don’t’s’ you will enjoy good health” (106). Beck and Walters take this discussion further (279):

It is important to know that the central Navajo’s (Diné) religious ideas are concerned with health and order...these two concepts are in fact inseparable. Moreover, the kind of order conceived of is primarily of ritual order, that is, order imposed by human religious action, and, for the Navajo (Diné) this is largely a matter of creating and maintaining health. Health, on its part, is seen as stretching far beyond the individual: it concerns his whole people as well as himself, and it is based in large part on a reciprocal relationship with the world of nature, mediated through ritual.

Similarly, among the !Kung as described by Lorna Marshall (1999:93):

...the !Kung give visible expression and affirmation to three social ideals. One ideal is obedience to social law. A second ideal is self-control and restraint with respect to food. The third is to take care of oneself. ...one should do what one can to keep oneself strong and well. Any individual’s sickness, injury, or weakness weakens the group.

**PART FIVE: *SÚWH-TŜ'ÉGHÈÚDÍNĤ* 'PRESERVING ONESELF; TAKING
CARE OF SELF (AND OTHERS)' WHILE CARRYING THE ENERGY OF
*NÍMÍNĤ***

CHAPTER 15

***SÚWH-TŜ'ÉGHÈDÚDÍNĤ* ‘TAKING CARE OF SELF’ (AND OTHERS)**

Nímính energy affects all things and one must remember always to be cautious of mixing energies. One must be constantly attentive to self, to fingers, hair, animals, fish, waterways, and harvests. Others take over the feeding of children, the harvests, and the fresh food preparation; even to combing one’s hair, and letting one grieve or rest as needed. Abiding by cultural constraints and having respect for self and others is called *súwh-tŝ'égghèdúdính* which entails numerous practices.

Súwh-tŝ'égghèdúdính is arranged collectively because it is difficult, at this point in the research, to separate out the observations for each category of *nímính*. At this point in my research, I suspect that most of the traditions apply to all *nímính* categories. As well, *súwh-tŝ'égghèdúdính* is likely part of a larger subject, covering other codes including ones for non-*nímính* individuals. Ones who are *nímính* are prohibited from touching themselves and touching others, (especially hunters and fishermen) and in some instances they are restricted from carrying children. They cannot touch their own hair or skin nor those of others; and individuals must avoid touching hunting and fishing tools, fresh fish and meat, and cannot cut or in any way harvest or prepare fresh food.

There are other *Tsìnlhqút'in* prohibitions for non-*nímính* individuals. It is said *lhà nìtès nàts'ésàh* ‘one must not step over people’, otherwise *nìts'èn ch'édèlhjig* ‘one’s leg(s) will rot off’. This seems like a precautionary notation, where individuals are protected from possible harm. There are numerous other safety measures taken by women during

pregnancy. *Tsìnlhqút'in* mothers in general love babies and in the past, it was likely crucial to have descendants carry on cultural traditions and lineages. Another warning *Ìnkél* repeatedly gives to both non-*nímính* and *nímính* individuals is to be quiet and respectful around *dìyèn*, otherwise one may bring on a harmful encounter with the *dìyèn*'s spirit. A well known warning is *lhà dzhínâs sâdànx náts'égwèlhnig* 'no one tells stories in the afternoon.' *Èlh'ì sèlín hínk'àn sâdànx náts'égwèlnish* 'one tells stories only after nightfall'.

CHAPTER 16
THE CARE OF ONE'S HAIR AND FACE

Most individuals seek beauty, youth, and good health rather than their opposites: ugliness, old age, and poor health. *Tsìnlhqút'in* had a preference for fair skin and thick black hair, and in some cases, the perception of beauty has changed from ages past in that people no longer practice face and body tattooing and they no longer wear labrets, although these could become fashionable again. Protection of the face, hair, and body is especially important if one wishes to remain youthful. *Ìnkél* says that her great grandmother was not deeply wrinkled in her old age nor did she have much gray hair. In preserving one's hair, *nímính* individuals, especially menstruating women, are not to touch their own hair. Menstruating women are able to maintain the colour and thickness of their hair through to old age by not combing their hair or touching their hair during their menses. Whatever parts of their hair they touch will turn gray before they reach old age and they may also experience rapid hair loss or baldness which is called '*nèntsíghá gàts'ì hèlish* lit. 'your hair will vanish' meaning 'your hair will become thin'. The period during the first menses is a particular potent time and a girl's hair is combed by others in the household; men or other women combed children's hair.

***Ech'an nímính šinlin nigwenijed* 'you are most powerful in your first *nímính* state'**

Nímính individuals cannot touch their own or anyone else's hair and the first instance of *nímính* is considered to be the most potent period. *Ìnkél* told about a woman who prepared and dressed her deceased infant for burial and this woman was deemed to be

very dangerous because this was the first time she was *nímính*. She was not allowed to comb her existing child's hair. This restriction regarding hair-grooming is the same for pallbearers who cannot comb their own hair or touch others' hair. If they comb their hair after carrying a coffin, *àghál jédèntághish* 'their hair will gray quickly'. *Lhà gwèchùgh t'ágùltìn jèšdláx chù gùtsíghá lhèk'èl yátálàx* 'their hair will whiten before the onset of old age'. This occurrence is called *nìtsíghá chùh gát's'i hèlish* lit. 'one's hair thins (to the point of baldness)'; and this also means *àgwél'iny xádádèdlád hèlish* 'your hair (becomes brittle) breaking off easily.'

If one should forget this tradition, or if there is no way to avoid combing one's hair, one can perform a ritual called *nìtsíghá náts'ùts'àd*⁵³ 'clearing one's hair'. In many cases where there is no one around, women have no choice but to comb their own hair. The ritual can be carried out as frequently as one wishes. Women customarily collect their hair which fall out during combing, and occasionally burn it because there exists a belief that one will search for their hair after they die, so women in general keep their hair. No hair is to be left loose on the floor or left anywhere around the house. During the ritual,

⁵³ There is nothing either absolutely good or absolutely bad in *Tsinlhqút'in* culture because there are some natural conditions which simply exist, and all the rest are situations in which one can choose resulting in good outcomes or resulting in negative outcomes. Peggy V. Beck and Anna L. Walters (1977) also noted that "among the Native American sacred tradition, the idea of good and evil is not as important as the problem of balance and imbalance – or harmony and disharmony. Evil is essentially seen as excess or imbalance, and it can be adjusted and corrected through various means" (15). Among *Tsinlhqút'in*, it is known that what is good for one may be bad for another, but this can be a healer's own choice. For example, 1) choosing to harm or to heal in the case of working as a shaman, or 2) working in other areas of *èts'ùts'àd* 'one performs a ritual' as outlined in this thesis. 3) In the case of ceremonies for babies which are performed to heal a child from a previous trauma or to prepare a child for future success (also called *èts'ùts'àd*); these are performed with utmost respect. 4) Choosing to use *èts'ùts'àd* to cause negative outcomes was often used in warfare, either to protect families from enemies or to protect territories. *Èts'ùts'àd*, in its all-encompassing form, serves both "good" or/and "bad" outcomes. They are simply methods to bring on psychological, physical, or spiritual healing or transformations. Magic and witchcraft also fall under the overall term *èts'ùts'àd* and these types of rituals can be done by anyone. A ritualist has the choice to use ritual to cause positive results or negative results.

women roll their hair into a ball, singe it, and coat their hands with the char from the hair and apply this to their head, saying, "*Lhàn sínsh nàghùndlâx*" 'become thick again' and this procedure is called *nîtsîghà nàhùnts'àd* 'clearing one's hair', a ceremonial prescription which prevents graying and thinning of hair. This ritual is also called *nènch'inâts'èdèlhc'ànsh* lit. 'a burning\smudging is done (with the hair)' and it is carried out in the morning. *Gú lhá nîtsîghá gèchùgh xúlhnâx* 'then nothing happens to one's hair (aging very little)'.

***Lhà géchùgh nènín ùtèzàghènish* 'you are not to touch your face too often'**

A *nímính* individual is not to touch her\his or others face otherwise *gùnín wîlhch'àh-gwèl yágúlish* 'they will get wrinkled' before old age. *Tsìnlhqút'in* elders tell women to *súwh-xédúndính* 'lit. preserve yourself' meaning: let someone else comb your hair and use a cloth to wash your face. *Lhà géchùgh gùnín ijètâsnish* 'they must not have a lot of physical contact with their faces' and must not wash their faces too frequently.

On one's first menstruation, one must not touch one's face with bare hands. Never use the household sink to wash up, instead, wet a cloth by pouring a cup of water over it and use this to gently wipe your face. *Gú nènàgh táh ts'én gúnzùn jèdènish* lit. 'they say this is good for the eyes'. *Èlghèn nídîndâx gwánès ághál nènín t'ágúltìn hèlish jèdènish* 'they say your (face) ages quickly from washing too frequently'. *Gágúnlhchéd jid ts'égwènilhmih jid dèni ts'àghìnlí ùndídánh* 'that's how dangerous this was considered during the lifestyles of those people of long ago'.

Shás bélh ts'ètèyólh 'one blows on warts'

Menstruants are the only ones who deal with warts and to my knowledge, *Tsìnlhqút'in* women do this by blowing on one's warts for four mornings in a row. It is said that this makes warts disappear. *Ìnkél* explains how the treatment is done:

Àbén *bélh* *téshólh* *hèsts'éd,* *bélh* *téshólh.*
 in the morning at it\with I blow I scratch it/them at it\with I blow
I blow on (the warts) and scratch them in the morning

Gwèlàn *tsínsh,* *dìn* *hást'insh* *yénéshèn,* *àbén.*
 many times (emph.) four times I do this I think in the morning
I do this many times; I do it four mornings in a row

Gúchúh *gáts'èlh'insh* *ts'édènish* *gwèch'èz* *ághèst'in.*
 even then this is done to it it is said for this reason I did this
It was said that this was done; that's why I did this

Gángù *lhà* *ègwìnìzìnl* *gágújágh* *lhà*
 it seems (neg) you weren't aware of it happens (neg)

gájít'ish *nágùbúghúnltàsàx* *gáyèt'insh.*
 they are no longer like that you will see them again that happens to them
(the warts) seem to disappear without one's awareness and one day, you'll realize there are (no warts) on them

Ày *sè'ágwét'in* *yènèshínsh.*
 (interjection) it is an odd occurrence I think
(interjection) I think this is an odd occurrence

This method of curing warts has been mentioned by many *Tsìnlhqút'in*. Curing warts is also described by Peggy V. Beck and Anna L. Walters (1977:222-223) quoting from Vizenor (1970) regarding the Anishinabe. There, the procedure is also done by a menstruant. They quoted, "she wet her fingers with her saliva and touched all the warts on my hands. ... In five days, all the warts on my hands disappeared" (223). *Ìnkél* said

that children who lived at the Residential School often returned home with many warts on their hands.

CHAPTER 17

FOOD

Exclusively, menstruants use special dishware (also in Beck and Walters 1977:221) which are stored apart from other tableware and these were called *qùnlh tš'áy* '... plate', *qùnlh bídáqásh* '... cup' and *qùnlh qánish* '....spoon'. I do not know the meaning of the term *qùnlh*. A menstruant's cup becomes *lházówh hèlish* 'it becomes bad' in the sense that *lhà dèni èyùn yí'ètàšdínlh* 'no one else can use it';⁵⁴ likewise with the spoons and plates. *Sè'ánánènjágh égúh súnínátâghènlilh* lit. 'you put (your dishware) away when you get better (when your flow ceases)'. ...*èyì nìyèx gwèt'ágwédèlts'ig jìgwádánìjèžèd* 'it is thought that (dishware) will impair the oesophagus' of others who use them. The digestive system, according to this tradition, seems to be vulnerable to the effects of *nímính* energy. There are more accounts of this occurrence below.

Nilá nígwédènètl'ig lit. 'it stains the hands'

Ìnkél mentions a unique experience and ritual treatment for ones who have prepared dead bodies for burial. She says *gùlá nígwédènètl'ig* 'their hands get stained' and these

⁵⁴ Lindsay McArthur (1999) noted among the Northern Athapaskan groups that funeral assistants... "drink only through a bird-bone tube... for at least ten days". *Tsinlhqút'in* individuals must use a cloth or a glove to handle food while eating for one week. *Tsinlhqút'in* individuals who have prepared the dead for burial generally live in their own home. It is possible that these certain individuals offered to do this type of work only because they were childless. More research is required for more data on this. Drinking water through a tube is not mentioned as an observance by *Ìnkél*. In fact, she says it is said *tl'ùgh bíd èts'èdàn* 'drinking through a grass (straw)' will cause *lhà tináts'ésdàsh* lit. 'one will never come out again; meaning 'one's urinary system will become obstructed.' For this reason, and in addition to that, drinking through a hollow stem will cause pregnant women to have difficulty giving birth.

individuals must not eat food using their bare hands for one week. These individuals could use plastic gloves or a cloth so as not to touch food while eating. She heard one person who bathed dead bodies say, “*Sègán gángú ch'édénè'idzún gát'insh*” my arm begins to ache’. This painful condition is known to occur before the onset of old age in individuals who have frequently prepared dead bodies. She elaborates on this occurrence:

Dèni nánájèlbìsh, gùlá nígwédènèt'ig inlhéd-ch'inlhghìlh
 person they bathe their hand(s) becomes stained one week

lhà gùlá dézàn éjètàšínlh.
 (neg) their hand(s) bare they must not eat

ones who bathe corpses do not eat using their bare hands for a week because it is said that their hands “get stained” (retain the energy from the corpse)

Néndíd nèlá lá gwètòwh nígwédènèt'ig,
 this/these your hand(s) (emph.) something it \they become stained

... *gú bédíldílh tàh.*
 and things like dye and that sort of thing

for example, when something is absorbed into your hands, like dye; that sort of thing’

Gúyì chùh gúh gát'insh à(n).
 that too in that manner it does that (emph.)

‘that (which I’m speaking about) does that too

... *nánágúbìnlbìh tù nížél bí nánágúbìnlbìh*
 when you bathe them water hot with when you bathe them

when you are using hot water to bathe them

Gú lhá nèlá néndúwh gánt'ìh
 then (neg) your hand(s) around here like that
ètèžàghènyínlh.
 you cannot eat

then you cannot eat with your hands like this (using your bare hands)

There are those who have prepared corpses who treat their hands after touching a dead body. They do this by washing their hands in gasoline or smudging with juniper,⁵⁵ to prevent the painful affliction also known as *nìlá t'ágwédélt's'ig* 'one's hand becomes afflicted (with pain)'.

***Bád-yí èjùbásh* 'they pick berries while wearing gloves'**

Some women who were menstruating wear gloves while picking berries and also tie pinegrass⁵⁶ to berry branches. These women likely thought *gùts'èd-gwèts'úwéláx xájégúlih* 'they fear that others may not want to eat their berries'. If they do not pick while wearing gloves *dèni ìjégùtsìd xáts'égúlih* 'one's afraid they may taint the digestive tracts of those who eat the berries'.

Diet: *Lhà lhàn ts'ètàšínlh* 'one is not to eat too much'

At puberty, both boys and girls are told not to eat too much. *Ìnkél* says, "*Gwèch'èz sághit'i lhà gwèchùgh ts'iyàn húst'in déni ghilí* 'that must be the reason I didn't really like food during my lifetime'. *Ts'iqí-nàèsèdlín dánh lhá èzèsàn* 'I didn't eat during my

⁵⁵ Certain plants are used to clear or balance the effects on objects, plantlife, and animal life which have come in contact with ones who are *nímính*. *Dàtsán-k'áchilh* lit. 'raven's arrow ; juniper' is a common plant used in these and other purifications. To cleanse objects which are *èsqwàyàx*, the objects are brushed with a burning juniper bough. In addition, juniper is used to prevent illnesses and purify spaces. To ensure good health to occupants of a household and to purify a house from unwanted energy, a small juniper branch is often placed on a stove as a smudge for the entire house. For the same reasons, it is also placed on hot stones in sweatlodges.

⁵⁶ *Nùwìshìtl'ùgh* also *nùwìshìtl'ùgh* 'lit. soapberry grass; pinegrass' is used by *nímính* individuals to ensure the preservation of existing berries on their branches and also to stimulate the plant to be fruitful in the upcoming years. The grass serves a practical purpose in the sweatlodge as well, as a scouring pad to scrub away dead skin. The soiled pinegrass is burned afterwards so that others cannot use them to harm the individuals who used them. Historically, pinegrass was used as stuffing for footwear as well as for stuffing the hollow in an individual's abdomen during severe famine. This stuffing was for physical support, allowing one to stand upright, rather than being stooped over.

period'. For girls, the first menstruation is considered to be one of the most potent periods in her life. The second most potent period is after the birth of her first baby. Menstruants are to only eat dried food. *Lhà èt'sén lhish ts'ésàn* 'one does not eat fresh meat'.

In addition to the fear of bears being a motivation to adhering to prohibitions, it seems that more recently, the traditions or cultural laws have been combined with other consequences which do not make sense. At some later point in time, when *nímính* and hunters may have voluntarily strayed from ritual restrictions, it may have become necessary to implement other ways to enforce traditional observances. As one example, *Ìnkél* has often said that one must not eat meat during menses unless it's dried meat, and if one disregards this, one's flow will be continuous, causing death. It is more probable, these days with accessible health care, that one could become anaemic from losing an extensive amount of blood, but not to the point of death. *Ìnkél* often gives the following warning to convince a menstruant not to eat fresh meat:

Dèl gù'àt'ìn àhúts'ètàlht'ilh
 blood flows from them one will continue to do that
one's blood will always continue to flow

Lhà t'áts'égúltín ts'èsdláx chù gùchànx
 (neg) one is not old one has not become yet their internal organs

gwèt'ágwédèlts'ig
 is afflicted

before old age, one's internal organs will become afflicted

Gùchànx gwètàtsánx
 their internal organs (area) will spoil/degenerate
one's stomach will spoil (degenerate)

Lhàjíd *chúh* *sà'ánáts'ùdànx* *gúyáh* *hèlish* *jédình*
 cannot (emph)? one (neg) improve cannot becomes they said

háyághìnt'í.
 they were that way

they used to say that one would never get better

Èsqì *ts'èt'insh* *ègúh chúh* *ètсэн-ségèn* *sèbiz*
 infant\child one has\one gives birth to then too dried meat boiled

ts'ètàyình.
 one will eat

one must eat boiled dried meat after one has given birth to a child

Ègú *lhà* *gáts'ít'ish* *šèlín* *hìnk'àn* *ètсэн-lhish*
 then (neg) one is not like that she becomes then fresh meat

ts'ètàyình.
 one will eat

one can eat fresh meat only after one is no longer menstruating

These extreme illustrations are the reasons why present youth choose not to abide by cultural traditions and elders often complain about this trend, and bemoan the lack of subsistence resources, blaming those who have abandoned traditional practices. The point about eating only dried food possibly has more significance, but little scientific research has been done in this area. Women generally require more iron than men and it is possible that dried meat contains more iron than cooked meat.

CHAPTER 18

FEEDING INFANTS AND CHILDREN

Under this section, *nímính* individuals mentioned are menstruants and one's who have handled corpses. These individuals must refrain from cooking food, because it is said that *dèni ish-ts'égwètsig* 'they taint another's digestive system; they transmit (negative) energy into one's digestive system'. This provision is mainly noted for feeding infants, children, and the sick. There are more accounts of children being affected by *nímính* energy through food than any other age group. Peggy V. Beck and Anna L. Walters (1977) state that "in the past of the North American Indian, a child was lavishly protected in order for that child to reach old age" (199) and this may explain much of the caution taken during pregnancy and childrearing. There are several *Tsìnlhqút'in* accounts of children; *gùchàn x yágúnlhjèd* 'their digestive tracts degenerated' as a result of being fed by *nímính* individuals. In particular, there is one ancient story of a man who killed his wife and later intentionally caused his children to die. After killing his wife and handling her body, and while his hands were still bloody, he prepared a meal and fed his children. As a result, the children *gùchàn x gátî'i yágúnlìn* lit. 'their internal organs (stomach; digestive tract) were reduced to nothing; they had chronic diarrhea' and eventually died. *Guchanx yagunlhjed saghini* 'their digestive systems must have rotted (disintegrated)'. The restriction for meal preparation is not noted in other documented sources. *Ìnkél* explains more about *dèni ish-ts'égwètsig* 'one contaminates another's digestive system' below:

Gúlá *súxédúndính* *gú* *ts'iqí-nàšìndlín*
for example you preserve yourself for instance when you begin menstruating

gúh *lhá* *béd* *énázánlilh* *jédénish* *ghìníh.*
then (neg) meal you cannot prepare they say (past tense)

when you begin menstruating, they say that you are not to cook meals

Lhà *nèngén* *ghá* *béd* *énátéžànlilh,* *dèni*
(neg) your husband for meal you cannot prepare person\people

ish-ts'égwètsig.

one contaminates the digestive tract

you must not cook for your husband; one contaminates another's digestive system

Lhà *èjùyán* *jégút'in* *jètàlách,* *jètèjùd*
(neg) they eat they don't want to they will become they will have diarrhea

jètàlách.

they will become

they will lose their appetite; they will have diarrhea

Dèni *ìnlhánxtáh* *gùntsél-jíd* *dénidáh* *ín*
person\people one of them somewhat sick him\her

someone who is somewhat ill

gánínt'ih *béd* *ánlách* *gúbìsh* *nágwâghìntséd*
when you are like that meal you made their digestive tract you contaminated
that area

if you cook [for them] while you are in this condition, you will [intensify their condition] by way of their digestive tract

gú'én jíd *lhá* *éjéšán* *jètàlách* *jédénish.*
more so (neg) not eat they will become they say

and it is said that, [as a result of eating the meal you prepared] they will eat considerably less (or none) [aggravating their condition]

Ts'iqí-náyèdlísh *lhà* *béd* *énájéšdlí* *gú* *gwínésèn.*
ones who start menstruating (neg) meal not preparing that I know

I know that menstruants do not cook meals

Ínájìs *bíd* *lhíz* *ts'énú'ásh* *gùts'édénish* *ghìní.*
dish cloth(s) with dough\bread one will mix they are told (past tense)

they were told to use a dish cloth to mix bread with

One man known by *Ìnkél* used to cook for himself when his wife was menstruating and he cooked for everyone when he had visitors.

Long ago, mothers chewed food and gave these masticated pieces to infants and this was the common method of feeding small children. There is an example of a menstruant who gave chewed food to an infant. It was noted that for the baby *jèd bèghàx xéníntl'id* lit 'diarrhea passed through her\him; s\he had diarrhea'. *Ìnkél* refers to this particular menstruant as *ts'iqi-sèlín* lit. 'became a woman; menstruant' rather than *ts'iqi-nàsdlín*. The infant she fed did not want to eat and there was nothing anyone could do. Menstruants and ones who have handled corpses must not give children food by sharing the food in their mouth or by feeding with their bare fingers, but spoons may be used.

***Xilhdilh candy nìghàgwèdetálhqélh* 'Indian Hellebore emptied one's (digestive tract)'**

The remedy for the above mentioned childhood affliction is to give a preparation called "*xilhdilh* candy" (also *qilhdilh*) 'Indian hellebore' candy. *Ìnkél* says this highly toxic preparation was made only by her mother and she herself does not know how to prepare this. The combination is said to *nìghàgwèdetálhqélh* 'will expel all the contents from the bowel; will work as a laxative'. This treatment is also known to expel worms.

CHAPTER 19

SELF-CONDUCT AROUND OTHERS

The avoidance of children is included as part of *súwh-ts'égghèdúdính*. Pallbearers must refrain from touching or carrying infants and children, especially physical contact with the head. It is said that children lose their appetite and may become listless after such contacts. There is no way to undo the effects of this disability. Another child is said to have vastly deteriorated and became very thin and even had difficulty breathing. It is said that children become skinny after being carried, and this is called "*gùk'èx gátâ'i hêlish*" their body fat dissolves'.

***Gutsanx ts'enentedash* 'you accidentally walk behind them (walking behind *diyèn*)'**

The avoidance of *diyèn* is included as part of *súwh-ts'égghèdúdính*. Menstuanants must avoid *diyèn*. She must not walk near a *diyèn*, and above all, not walk behind a *diyèn*. This includes walking behind the bed of a sleeping *diyèn*. It is said, *gùtsánx nèntéžinjà* '(if) you accidentally walk behind them' the following will happen to you:

Nin nénchànx gwèt'ágwédètàts'èlh, ts'èdènish hàgúghint'í.
 you your internal organs will become afflicted it is said it used to be that way
it was said that you yourself will experience an affliction to your stomach

Jígwénijèd jègúnlh'in ghini ùndídánh dèni.
 it is dangerous they deemed it to be (past tense) long ago person\people
the people of long ago deemed this to be dangerous

Ts'iqí-nàndlish *lhà jíd* *ts'á'ánághùndàn* *gúyáh* *gwà*
 when you begin to menstruate cannot you cannot get better impossible from that

ch'áts'édèl'insh.
 die from that

your flow will be continuous until death

Nèrchàn *ts'iqí-nàndlish* *lhà* *gánànt'il*
 your internal organs when you begin to menstruate (neg) you don't stop

tá'àgúnt'í, *gán* *nánághintsàn* *gwá* *ch'ádúghúnlàx*
 that sort of thing but you are tired from that die from that

jèdènish *hàjàghint'í.*
 they say they used to be that way

it was said that if your flow doesn't stop, you'll become weary and die as a result

"Dèni *dèl* *gáts'ì* *hèlish"* *jégwédinh.*
 person\people blood all becomes\disperses they call it

they call it, one's blood (veins) become empty

Lhà jíd *chúh* *sà'ánághùnlàx* *gúlih* *jígwáyájèlhtish* *á(n)*
 cannot (emph)? you cannot get better impossible they mention this (emph)

diyèn *jàdèd* *chùh* *nélh* *héjèn* *chùh.*
 shaman them too with you singing too

they say that you cannot undo this (condition) even if shamans were to sing over you

For good reason menstruants were secluded away from their village. Women, while menstruating, are purifying physically, mentally, and spiritually and carry energy considered so powerful that it must be contained by being separated from others (also in Beck and Walters 1977:221). As well, in some traditions, menstruants are not allowed to participate in ceremonies where men and women are gathered (also in Wright 2003:4), because of the likelihood that the energy may suppress or overpower others, and in some cases, this energy may cause the death of another. Kenneth Cohen (2003) noted that “the logic of these customs is increasingly acknowledged by Western scientists”. He added,

from a book written by Joan Borysenko (1996) *A Woman's Book of Life: the Biology, Psychology and Spirituality of the Feminine Life Cycle*, that moontime is "... a period of 'expanded connection with universal energy...' so powerful that it could effectively short-circuit a ceremony or affect the energy bodies of other people" (366). There are some individuals, primarily *diyèn* 'shaman', who feel *nímính* energy from menstruants and this awareness is usually physical in nature, i.e. pain in part of the body. These examples suggest that the energy from women can actually permeate a room, and likely for this reason, women are not allowed to walk about in public and definitely are not allowed in ceremonies. It is reasonable to assume that there is opposing energy or power between menstruating women and *diyèn*. One *Tsìnlhqút'in* woman told me that when she was becoming a *diyèn*, "Young woman were not allowed to walk around me, or they could die, and I myself could die." There is an ancient *Tsìnlhqút'in* narrative about such an encounter, called *Ts'iqih-tî* 'Lady-Rock'. A menstruant in seclusion one day met a *diyèn* 'shaman' on her way back from the river carrying water. It is said that *diyèn yènàhtàh nì'iz* 'the shaman stared right through her', and she immediately turned into stone. These references suggest that, among *nímính* individuals, only a menstruant is to keep her eyes shielded in case her gaze falls upon a *diyèn*. Today, *Ts'iqih-tî* 'Lady-Rock' is considered to be very powerful and she gets frequent visitors who make prayer requests to her for healing and good luck. I have also heard that gamblers playing *lehal* (a bone game) or poker usually do not like women to be seated directly behind them for fear of losing the game. Women must sit to the side.

CHAPTER 20

**NÀTS'ÛTS'ÀD 'RITUALLY TREATING IT; SMUDGING IT; BRUSHING IT;
CLEARING IT OF ENERGY'**

The energy of *nímính*, although it is not referred to using this term in other traditions, can be used for intentional healing (for menstruants, see Starck 1993:38; and Beck and Walters 1977:221, 222) and the same energy can cause involuntary imbalances or act spontaneously to subdue other forms of power. Quoted by Peggy V. Beck and Anna L. Walters (1977) in the section, “Girls’ Puberty Ceremonies”: “a Cibeqe Apache explains how a pubescent girl ‘is just like a medicine man, only with that power she is holy’” and “she can make you well if you are sick even with no songs. Anyone who doesn’t feel good can come to her” (223).

Among *Tsinlhqút’in*, the energy of *nímính* is also known to have an effect on wild plants, berries, and garden vegetables; therefore, there are traditional rituals in place to prevent negative impacts on wild plant resources. There are additional expressions used to describe these effects. For one example for Saskatoon bushes, there is the phrase *ch’in yádítsèz* ‘the berry bushes withered’. For both Saskatoon bushes and soapberries,⁵⁷ there are two terms: *jélh’élhigwél’insh* ‘(berries) duplicate (human actions)’ and *nánátlig* ‘(the

⁵⁷ In “*Lhindsch’osh* Said, ‘Become Spring Beauty and Yellow Glacier Lily’” (2004), I wrote about plant terms and noted for burning of fields. The *Tsinlhqút’in* cultivation on berry patches and *gweziny ch’ed* ‘root fields’ included extensive burning; some digging and turning of sod; reseeding and replanting; and ritual treatments. Burning was restricted to root fields and berry patches, while tillage was done on wild potato and yellow glacier lily crops. These activities were carried out during harvest to aerate and enrich the soils. Cultivation practices was believed to increase and optimize crop yields.

Soapberries are dried as cakes and were historically traded or sold to neighbouring nations. Several types of soapberries are known: *nùwîsh* ‘soapberries’ and *nùwîshibà* lit. ‘white soapberries’ which are mature and edible. *Nùwîshibà* is found in valleys and the mountains of Nemiah. The term *t’ax* ‘fresh or raw’ is used to indicate uncooked berries. (Excerpt from my paper “Plants”, Linguistics 403, University of Victoria, 2006)

berries) fall off (the bush)'. Garden vegetables are said to *lhà sú xénélyàx* 'they do not grow well' and this phrase could also be said of other wild roots and corms.

Tsìnlhqút'in menstruants, and *nímính* individuals in general, are required to tie pinegrass⁵⁸ around four branches from the berry bush they gather berries from. The branches chosen must be laden with berries. This procedure *ténéts'énélh'úsh* 'the (berry branches) are tied' is a form of *nàts'ùts'àd* '(berries) are ritually treated'. Berry branches are tied while one is presently picking berries. The treatment is done while saying to the berries, "*Lhàn tsínsh nághùndláx*" 'become plentiful' and it is said that the berries will dry on the branches and remain on the branches even through the winter. The berries will *jéllh'élhílyágh* 'they will imitate it' and the berries on the tied branches will remain on the branches. *Jéllh'élhígwél'insh* 'they copy'; 'they repeat (human) actions' is a term used to describe the imitative tendencies of berries. When *nímính* individuals pick berries, the unpicked berries will fall off the bushes within a week or so. This is referred to as *j'éllh'ilhígwél'insh* 'it copies; it mimics'. The act of taking berries off a plant causes the berries to *nánánùtlùd* 'fall off the bush' shortly after the harvest, similar to the way they were hand-picked off the bush. In some cases, berry bushes will not grow as abundantly, become barren within the following year, or will wither and die, that is, without an immediate ritual treatment. In one case *Inkél* narrates that a more drastic change fell upon a berry patch. In fact, it is believed that *ch'in yádítsèz* 'the berry bushes withered' where a mother, who had handled the body of her recently deceased twins, gathered berries. Prior to gathering berries, she bathed and dressed the body of her

58 The plants used to ritually treat plants, berry shrubs, subsistence gear, and humans affected by *nímính* energy are *dàtsán-k'áchilh* 'juniper', *nùwìshìt'l'ùgh* 'Pinegrass', and *xìlhdìlh* 'Indian Hellebore'.

deceased twin child in preparation for burial. She did not believe in food harvesting prohibitions and during the same year that she buried her child, she gathered a large quantity of Saskatoon berries in a patch where it was abundant. She was forewarned about picking berries before she left and her reply was, “How could nature abide by such beliefs?” It is from her own confession that it is known that the following summer when she returned to the same patch, she found only withered Saskatoon bushes from the berry bushes she had gathered from the previous year. If she had known about the ritual treatment, she would have preserved the long-term fruitfulness of berry bushes.

Ìnkél recalls that in her youth, the Saskatoon bushes across the lake from *T'èt'ághintil* (a place along Konnie Lake, *Xèni*), used to get so heavy with berries that one could mistake the berry patches for black bears, and the flowers from the spring beauty patches appeared as if covered in snow. Now, there are many Saskatoon berry patches and spring beauty grounds in the *Tsìnlhqút'in* territory that are less productive and the plants in some areas have completely died out.⁵⁹ *Tsìnlhqút'in* elders often blame this scarcity on people who are *nímính*, saying they are ignoring traditional codes. There are many who are not receiving the essential cultural education and some simply do not believe in these cultural restrictions, therefore few practice it. Saskatoon and soapberries are two of the most common berries gathered, and Saskatoon berries⁶⁰ were a popular trade item along with western spring beauty corms.

⁵⁹ Excerpt from my paper, *Lhìndesch'osh* Said, "Become Spring Beauty and Yellow Glacier Lily" Linguistics 403, University of Victoria, 18 Dec. 2004.

⁶⁰ *Dig* 'Saskatoon berries' were very important food sources for *Tsìnlhqút'in* and they still remain the most widely picked berry among all age groups. Many people traveled long distances to gather them prizing them highly as a favorite trade item. *Ìnkél's* mother-in-law who was from Stone remembered trading *súnt'íny* 'spring beauty' and *èsgùnsh* 'yellow glacier lily' in exchange for *dig* with the people of *Tl'esqox*

***Súnt'íny nàts'ùts'àd* 'western spring beauty corms are ritually treated'; 'clearing spring beauty corms'**

After harvesting *súnt'íny* 'spring beauty corms', *èsgùnsh* 'yellow glacier lily', *sáchén* 'tiger lily',⁶¹ and *chìnšdàd* 'silverweed roots', *nímính* individuals are to gather the plants and return a handful of the harvest back to the fields. The ones still attached to the plants are replanted and covered over with soil. The remaining plants are strewn about with their seeds intact, and are told, "*Lhàn tsínsh nàghùndláx*" 'become plentiful.' These observances are called *nàts'ègùts'àd* 'the area is treated with a ritual' and this ensures

(Toosey) at Farewell Canyon. The people traded at a place where the river flows through a narrow channel. The bagged trade products would be thrown across, and the people on the other side would throw something back in return". (Excerpt from my paper, Traditional and Modern Uses for Saskatoon Berries and Saskatoon Wood by *Tsilhqut'in* in British Columbia. Environmental Studies 416, University of Victoria, 2000.)

Five varieties of *dig* are known to *Tsilhqút'in*: *Súwh-dig* lit. 'real saskatoon-berry' are very sweet, have small and fewer seeds and can grow up to 8 to 10 meters tall usually found in clearings on higher slopes. *Tl'ùgh-ígút'in* lit. 'it looks like grass' can grow up to 2 meters tall and are like *súwh-dig* in that they have smaller seeds and are sweet and are also found on higher slopes in open areas. *Gwènèench'inidig* lit. 'slope-saskatoon-berry' can grow very tall and are found growing in clumps below Riske Creek, along the Chilcotin and Fraser rivers and river benches. These berries ripen faster due to the warmer climate, and are reddish in color, seedy, and *ch'in zálqèn hát'insh* 'taste like the bark of the saskatoon bush'. *Gwènèench'inichùgh* lit. 'large, slope-saskatoon-berry' are usually tree size and grow mainly along the slopes of the Fraser River. The berries are very large and seedy. *Gwèk'ènidig* lit. 'fire-saskatoon-berry' grow after a wild fire. When speaking about saskatoon berries, *Tsilhqút'in* use the common term *dig* and the other names mentioned are generally not used. (Excerpt from my paper, Traditional and Modern Uses for Saskatoon Berries and Saskatoon Wood by *Tsilhqut'in* in British Columbia. Environmental Studies 416, University of Victoria, 2000.)

The *Tsilhqút'in* term *dig* 'Saskatoon berry' is similar to the Dene Sulhine word *di* 'prairie chicken', and I assume from the Kaska term *dihcho dzidze* 'blue grouse berry' that the former *Tsilhqút'in* term for berry (*dzidze* 'jije\geege) could have been *dínsh-gige* which has been contracted to its present term *dig*. *Tsilhqút'in* have developed specialized possessed terms for the parts of saskatoon bush. For example, *digích'in* or simply *ch'in* 'saskatoon bush', *bèdànshùz* lit. 'its mouth; *-nshùz* may refer to the tooth-like growth on the berry', *diglàlgi* 'saskatoon berry bossoms', *digít'án* 'saskatoon berry leaves', and *digíghèd* 'saskatoon berry roots'. (Excerpt from my paper, *Lhindsch'osh* Said, "Become Spring Beauty and Yellow Glacier Lily", Linguistics 403, University of Victoria, 18 Dec. 2004).

⁶¹ *Sáchén* Tiger Lily (*Lilium columbianum* Hanson) lit. 'sun stick', sometimes called *tsáchén* lit. 'beaver stick'. *Sáchén* is only found in one location in the mountains towards Lillooet, a place known as *Sáchén Gúnlin* 'Where There Are Tiger Lilies'. *Tsilhqút'in* spent every summer camping there and the surrounding sites to gather food, berries, and medicine, and to hunt. (Excerpt from my paper, *Lhindsch'osh* Said, "Become Spring Beauty and Yellow Glacier Lily", Linguistics 403, University of Victoria, 18 Dec. 2004).

continuous plant yields. If these procedures are not followed by harvesters who are *nímính*, the plants will not grow well. There would be decreased yields and smaller bulbs, corms, and roots in the years following the harvest.

Observances on the farm

There are other limitations to some farming activities as well, which have been incorporated into the *Tsìnlhqút'in* concept of *súwh-tî'égghèdúdính*. Two activities banned exclusively for menstruants, for example, are horseback-riding and milking a cow.

Tsìnlhqút'in menstruants cannot ride on a horse. Menstruation is considered to be *ìnlhés gùntsén* 'very bad' in regards to horseback-riding. The horse *gùdènètálh hèlish* 'will frequently stub its foot or stumble (while being ridden); will no longer be sure-footed' and *ètsèndèdiny chùh hèlish* 'it also becomes lazy; sluggish'. The horse's limbs *lhà gúzúh yálish* 'become bad (defective)'. On this topic, *Ìnkél* also mentioned that she experienced headaches while riding a horse which had been used for packing a corpse. This seems to suggest that the energy of corpses affect animals too, but, the dead are not specifically said to be *nímính*.

Tsìnlhqút'in menstruants cannot milk a cow. If she should express milk from a cow, *t'ágúltìn ghèlìlh* 'during its later years' *èsdán lhà bèts'úgh gúlih tàlax* 'the (cow) will produce less and less milk'. *Bèts'úgh lhàn éyì chùh gát'insh* 'this happens even to those (cows) which are heavy milkers'.

The third restriction under farming is walking on a vegetable garden and this is banned for menstruating women, widows and those who have handled dead bodies. These particular individuals cannot walk on or weed vegetable gardens. If they should, the garden vegetables will become stunted in growth and elders have said: *lhà jid sú xénúlhyàx gúyáh* ‘(the vegetables) cannot grow very well’. If one walks on a garden anyway, *gángú ts'égùts'àd gágúnt'ih* ‘it is as if one is performing a ritual on it’.

Berard Haile (1943), a priest, documented in “Soul Concepts of the Navaho” that agriculture “is a secondary culture trait and receives comparatively scant consideration in their ceremonialism or religious worship” (64) and this holds true for the *Tsìnlhqút'in* as well. *Tsìnlhqút'in* resource gathering and rituals from this research includes only fish, game, and plants. There is no ritual for horses, nor for gardens, and the ritual for a cow’s udder is transferred from the ritual women perform on themselves in the occasion they should express their breast milk while menstruating.

Kwesi Baffoe (2005) published an overview of Sayisi Dene traditional laws and in that, he noted, “from generation to generation the laws of the spirit and the land are passed down through oral traditions and ancient stories”. Cultural memory and ceremonies are important to *Tsìnlhqút'in* who use their histories and personal experiences to balance, understand, and improve their own lives and their environment, and ceremonies which have been passed down from stories provide an ancient source of psychological and spiritual strength. If *Tsìnlhqút'in* develop a strong sense of their language, culture, and world view, they will be more able to share their knowledge to the larger society. Many

people are in search of ceremonies and efficient ways to deal with present environmental problems and *Tsìnlhqú't'in* are among many who have in their care, significant data which have withstood the test of time.

PART SIX: CONCLUSION TO THE STUDY

CHAPTER 21

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TERM “*NÍMÍNĤ*” AND ITS TRANSFORMATIVE ROLE

This study touches upon the thematic principles of *nímính* and self-care. These are several ancient *Tsìnlhqút'in* stories, the categories of *nímính*, *nímính* proscriptions for subsistence resources (hunting, fishing, and trapping resources and gear). Respect for wild animals, preserving one's wellbeing, and ceremonies are mentioned. There are universal energies which we know little about and we can generalize and say that everything is energy and that life-forces are connected. *Nímính* individuals are highly respected because of their energy, and are recognized as healers, and also have the privilege of performing certain ceremonies. Kenneth Cohen (2003) defined energy stating that “in both Western and indigenous science, energy can be defined as (1) the capacity to act or to cause damage from one state to another and (2) usable power such as heat and electricity, or a feeling or perception of power in the body” (218). It is difficult to describe *nímính* by using categories because the energy affects a number of objects and other life forms in multiple ways.

Nímính and its surrounding concepts are significant in that they bring together ancient values, duality, and cultural traditions. *Nímính* is a term which is associated with spirituality, reciprocity, and respect and the continued knowledge and practice of these cultural elements are necessary for the preservation of all species and the environment. The specific terms related to *nímính* are not being learned among younger English

speaking generations, and *Tsìnlhqút'in*-speaking elders who have this knowledge are dwindling in number, making this study all the more crucial.

The *Tsìnlhqút'in* concept of *nímính*, as I understand it, is comprised of six ritual states which can be further divided into at least ten distinct categories. There seems to be six transformational stages including birth, puberty, one has become a woman again, motherhood, widowhood, and death. The suggestions of duality or transformations are in the terms *èyùwh-áts'ághìnt'i* 'one was different' and in *ts'iqí-nàts'èsdlin* 'one has become a woman again'. 'One was different' seems to indicate a distinctly different state of being, completely different from the average human being. The term *èyùwh* could also refer to the isolation from others, being set apart, but *Ìnkél* does not say this specifically.

I reflected on the differences of *nímính* individuals as compared to non-*nímính* individuals and thought: Although one is still living among others, it seems that a veil has somehow fallen, as if one has entered a different world; yet the world is as one has always known it to be. One is required to behave as if one is not a part of this world even though one is still in the physical body. However, these phases or time away allow one to contemplate, to be aware, to rest, to re-orient oneself. People often forget the most important things in life when possessed by hectic daily schedules - quality time for children, for others, for love, for sharing, and for helping. These often go by the wayside in the effort to simply survive. From this perspective, abiding by these ancient laws is a privilege.

One could speculate that the term *ts'iqi-nàts'èšdlin* 'one has become a woman again' implicates a reverting to another state - a cyclic transformation. This could also mean that the woman at the start of her menstrual cycle, whether at puberty or not, is actually believed to transform into *ts'iqih* 'girl; woman; female', possibly symbolizing the first woman. Is it then likely that *Ts'iqih* is the name of the first woman? Why else would a female 'become a woman again'? I speculate now about the *Tsìnlhqút'in* term for menstruant because I watched the video "Harmony and Balance: Working Towards Peace" produced by Signe Johansson (1991) in which Inés Talamantez, an Apache\Chicano woman, described the puberty ceremony and what she said really struck me. Inés is a professor of Religious and Women's Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She said that the pubescent girl is believed to actually become *Isánáklésh*, the first woman, during her puberty ceremony. She is powerful and she has the ability to heal.

I found a term for menstruants which is inspiring. Mary Virginia Rojas (2003) used the Yurok (northwestern California) term for menstruant in her title, 'she who bathes in a sacred place' (130). In *Tsìnlhqút'in*, 'women become women again' and it is absolutely odd that *Tsìnlhqút'in* menopausal women are said to become the opposite sex, to 'become men again'. *Ìnkél* says, *ts'iqi-nàšindlin gwàntéžinyàh* 'when you have passed the menstruation stage, *lhà ts'iqih nàšindlax šélin* 'when you no longer have periods' *égúh déyènž-nàts'èdlísh ts'égwédinh* 'this is called becoming a man again; "èsqì-ghà-ts'ètèyàsh" *chùh jíd ts'égùzìh* 'and it is also called leaving a child behind'.

There are many transformations in *sàdànx* stories as well. I provide lists of transformations and magical abilities from the two stories *Lhìn Nìts'én Nánàydásh* and *Sès Ts'iqih Ghàghìndá* in the appendices. The idea of transformation seems to be central to the rites of passage; one is entering a new phase and is becoming new and different following the series of transformations or transitions from birth to death. At one spectrum, the spirit enters a physical body at birth, that is, a body is charged with energy, and at the other end, at death, the spirit departs from a body and temporarily leaves energy with the corpse. Death includes the 'widow\widower' who is 'as if dead'; and those who have touched the dead; and those who have carried the dead. Among northern Dene, discussed in great detail by anthropologist Jean-Guy A. Goulet (1998) in *Ways of Knowing: Experience, Knowledge, and Power Among the Dene Tha*, is the belief in reincarnation after death. Peggy Beck and Anna L. Walters (1977) also referred to death as a transformation in documenting that "death was conceived to be more-or-less a state or time of transition" and they cite the famous words of Chief Seattle who said "There is no death. Only a change of worlds" (206).

CHAPTER 22

THE TRANSLATIONS INTO ENGLISH

Translations from *Tsìnlhqút'in* to English are generally not exact in most instances, and one has to be satisfied with achieving only the gist of the meanings. The translations often lose special cultural elements, become merely outlines, repetitious, and disorganized, but this is not the case when told in the original language. Reflecting back, unlike any of my writing experiences involving incorporating data from my *Tsìnlhqút'in* research notes, I felt wedged in-between the *Tsìnlhqút'in* oral transcripts and academic expectations. The *Tsìnlhqút'in* transcripts ruled out anything I attempted to do beyond translating excerpts. The English text format conflicted with the *Tsìnlhqút'in* oral approach. What was superbly told in *Tsìnlhqút'in*, in English, became cluttered, disorganized, confusing, and even unmanageable as preliminary data for this thesis. Even my translations seemed flawed. Older *Tsìnlhqút'in* speakers are very expressive and creative in their language; an eloquence which my generation lacks. I found in several instances that providing tables served as an alternate solution to reduce repetition. I brought in quotations from other sources, and on the other hand, I was gripped with the feeling that I could not impose my own analyses upon my readers by adding my comments and even to provide text. *Tsìnlhqút'in* elders normally respond through story and listeners must mull over what is offered and figure things out for themselves. Whatever conclusion listeners come up with is sufficient. What are suitable answers for one may be wrong for another. In addition to this cultural distress, reluctance, and uncertainty, it was very difficult to sort out *nímính* from unrelated data within the

transcripts, for example, the practices and observances for human burials, preventative health practices of pregnant women, and the safeguarding of infants from known age related occurrences. I made several close assessments, before I realized they did not relate to the topic, although, the dead may be to some extent connected to the topic of *nímính*.

There is an element of vagueness in the way *Tsìnlhqút'in* elders express events beyond their own experiences and this is quite evident in the bear story and in general, in the recordings of *nímính*. There are terms like *tesájágh* 's\he may have' and *tèsánh* 'perhaps' which indicate that the story is not the storyteller's own experience. The expressions may normally create scepticism in English, but do not detract from the authenticity of the stories in *Tsìnlhqút'in*. The terms are actually balanced out by the use of: *ân* 'it is', *lâ* 'you know; it is obvious', *ts'èdènish* 'it is said', and *ghîni* 'it happened' (a marking for past tense). There is one general rule about making statements about events: One cannot state with certainty those things which one has not seen.

Occasionally, *Ìnkél* contradicted what she said previously. Slips of the tongue or partial utterances in initiating a sentence are actually quite common in storytelling and for people in general conversation, and rephrasing are actually part of "everyday oral communication." Saying, for example, "The arrow too, the arrow, that arrowhead" is not unusual in everyday speech.⁶² Words are limiting when contrasted with what normally flows in the mind. This imperfection of speech is most noticeable when converting

⁶² There are a few sentences in the above text from my paper, *Storytelling: The Power Of Voice In Lhin Nits'en Nanayidash*, Linguistics 505, University of Victoria, 21 April 2005.

memories, or images into words, and worth mentioning is that *Tsìnlhqút'in* stories are primarily based on verbs.

In studies like this, what comes across as lack of persuasion, periodic blunders, and the impossibility of translation could weaken the overall research outcomes, especially in the case with my research; the dependence on only one participant. Nevertheless, the education passed down by *Tsìnlhqút'in* ancestors is based on systematic observations of the environment. The people had access to the most efficient laboratory: intact, and virtually untouched nature and specialized guides from the universe (nature spirits). The inherited assessments have been time-tested and re-experienced time and time again from generation to generation.

CHAPTER 23

THE VALUE OF THIS STUDY

The *Tsìnlhqút'in* language has not been studied extensively, as other Native languages have been. The language is a living language that linguists can profitably study to aid in their studies of other Dene languages in which the languages are extinct or almost extinct. Ancient *Tsìnlhqút'in* concepts and stories, in the original language, are of particular interest to linguistics. The languages used by the characters are archaic, unique, expressive, and often indirect. Ancient stories may reveal cultural borrowing, modern influences to the language, and changes to *Tsìnlhqút'in* culture. Linguists can use such *Tsìnlhqút'in* resources to study patterns in oral narratives, find derivation of words, preserve present unused terms, and compare similar terms and stories between Dene language communities. People in general, including linguists, can use these *Tsìnlhqút'in* concepts of *nímính* to compare with terms from other cultures. Each generation borrows, adapts, and coins new words, and individual speakers make conscious decisions as to what terms to discontinue and how to pronounce every word used. Not having a comprehensive *Tsìnlhqút'in* dictionary in addition to the fact that the language is not fully documented forces language learners to rely on oral communication to learn new vocabulary and to self-correct pronunciation differences.

It is unfortunate that the course of events since contact has had a huge impact on *Tsìnlhqút'in* traditions, and the most detrimental change to *Tsìnlhqút'in* culture has been the discontinued flow of knowledge from generation to generation. *Tsìnlhqút'in* elders

often lament about the younger generations not adhering to *Tsìnlhqút'in* traditions, thus, display a disrespect toward themselves and to other individuals and to their environment. Elders no longer tell ancient stories as they did previously. Charlie Quilt grew up in the days when stories were told for hours after dark, and at times, he said that stories were told until sunrise the following morning.

Regrettably, there has been no widespread research for the sole purpose of preserving the language and culture. This particular study will add to the pool of *Tsìnlhqút'in* knowledge, and in the case that the *Tsìnlhqút'in* language becomes extinct, all recordings and documentations will be crucial to maintaining, revitalizing, and preserving the language for future generations. Whether *Tsìnlhqút'in* youth learn the language or not, documented studies on the culture will soon be the single most important link to the *Tsìnlhqút'in* past. *Ìnkél* will benefit from the satisfaction of knowing that her knowledge of vocabulary relating to *nímính* and cultural ceremonies are documented, learned, and passed on to future generations, as well as to society, and to the state of knowledge. For these reasons, this study is a valuable contribution to *Tsìnlhqút'in* communities and to their educational institutions. Every scrap of information on our culture, gleaned from our elders, is precious. So much needs to be collected, so little work has been done. The *Tsìnlhqút'in* language is also in danger of extinction. The *Tsìnlhqút'in* communities, for the most part, are not yet aware that their language is endangered, and there are *Tsìnlhqút'in* speakers over the age of 25, yet English is the dominant language being spoken in the communities.

CHAPTER 24

FUTURE RESEARCH ON *NÍMÍNĤ*

It seems apparent to me now that the knowledge concerning widows has not been given to me because I have not come upon that stage in life. *Tsìnlhqút'in* parents are usually very busy and one cannot learn anything unless one helps with daily tasks and asks questions. Although asking questions is not customarily done, this was the only means which enabled me to learn about my culture. For more information on asking questions, see “Not Asking Why” in Beck and Walters (1977:50). *Tsìnlhqút'in* people generally give information relevant to immediate tasks and this makes me think about the story, *Lhìn Nìts'én Nánàydásh* ‘the dog who courted someone’, which actually contradicts what I just said about asking questions but confirms the relaying of knowledge at appropriate times.

Knowledge was shared in *Lhìn Nìts'én Nánàydásh* not only when individuals asked, but when they were ready to carry out the tasks relevant to the information. When the boys asked their mother how certain animals were killed, she answered them immediately and told them where to find traps and made them hunting tools. When they wanted to know about how animals were transformed, she waited until spring, when they were ready to travel. It is interesting that the young woman in this story, who is said to be *bèghèts'è'in* ‘in puberty seclusion’, had so much knowledge at this early age. As the father and the young men traveled among the animals, it is her sons who recall what their mother said

about each creature, and they caution their father as they meet each task. The woman apparently possessed immense traditional knowledge about her environment. Unmistakably, it was only her knowledge which was received for the critical responsibilities ahead. This could be an indication of the benefits of early training.⁶³

In present times, some of the *Tsìnlhqút'in* ways of life is not being passed down to younger generations, and this can definitely change. *Tsìnlhqút'in* do not like to predict future events. I will continue to do my part. It was after the death of my paternal grandfather that I realized our greatest loss. He was raised by his grandmother, and sadly, he chose not to pass her knowledge down to us. His life is an undocumented library and my grandmother's teachings died with him. In my grief, I made a silent promise to preserve our history onto pages. I love the picturesque beauty of my first language. I am constantly amazed at the way *Ìnkél* seems to create concise visual "video-clips" with mere words. I have scrawled her words, phrases and stories while driving, sometimes on scraps of tissue paper, and on envelopes.⁶⁴

Definitely, more participant interviews will be done on *nímính* among *Tsìnlhqút'in* people in the near future, especially with elders. These studies on *nímính* could include additional *šàdànx* stories, historical accounts, personal experiences, and general discussions on the topic with small groups, as well as presentations at large gatherings.

⁶³ Excerpt from my University of Victoria course papers, *The Right to be Dene: Restoring Ancient Concepts*, Linguistics 596, 19 November 2004; and *Culture Within Names*, Linguistics 403, 17 Dec. 2004.

⁶⁴ From *A Silent Promise*, a paper I wrote for Creative Writing 335, University of Victoria, 25 Sept. 2003.

I had originally prepared research questions (see appendices) prior to interviewing *Ìnkél* and the following are ones she did not answer, so the suggestions below are offered for future research. Seek a clearer more concise definition of *nímính* energy. In the bear story, only women and infants are indirectly referred to as being *nímính*; men become *gùbàts'ègúdáh* as a result of being in the presence of women. Request information on the time periods, the source, and the method in which the other categories of *nímính* were initially transmitted. Determine if the principles of *súwh-tš'èghèdúdính* pertain to all who are *nímính*. Obtain clarifications for duration of *nímính* carried by individuals and its presence in hunters, items, plants, and places. Document other observances and impact on additional objects, for example, war implements, medicine bundles, and dishes, in addition to the energy's impact on people. If animals can sense the energy, then it is possible that some individuals can also sense *nímính* energy as well. Find connections between stories and twins and explain why twins are considered to be *nímính*. List more restrictions for twins. Explain how twin energy and *nímính* energy differ from *diyèn* (shaman) power. Can non-*nímính* people walk on fresh blood and step over hunting or trapping tools? Search for linguistic features or terms present in other ancient *Tsìnlhqút'in* stories which relate to *nímính* ceremonies and to transitional ceremonies. Determine if the infant is actually *nímính*. If the baby is accidentally placed on hunting, fishing, or trapping items, would these items then become *èsqwàyàx*? Deer *xúžléd lájâgh* 'deer reacted as if it was scorched' - What do deer see? Request prescriptions on ways to subdue or lessen the energy carried by *nímính* individuals. Is there a ceremony to undo the energy transferred to hunters? What is a hunter to do in the case that he is a twin or becomes a widower? Can he lessen the impact or duration of the *nímính* energy? Can he

smudge with juniper? Actually, in *Lhìn Nìts'én Nánàydásh*, the main historical figures sweat-bathed all winter in preparation for their journey among the animals. There is no reason given in the story for this lengthy purification.

There are also a number of murky areas presented in the body of this thesis which need to be cleared up and expanded upon in future research. In regards to the story of the bear, translations of a few lines in the ancient bear story marked “unknown”, as well as the bear’s archaic comments about the woman’s brothers, and the bear-woman’s lullaby to the baby, could be extended. The bear song requires further clarification; and descriptions of other bear ceremonies could be added. Documentation of actual known instructions left by mammals or fish as to how to respectfully handle their remains is essential. Enquiries about possible ecological barriers or other deterrents to continuing *nímính* traditions today, would be very interesting. Another area of concern are questions such as, “What happens to the meat from animals which have been exposed to abuse or have been cooped up and are slaughtered in disrespectful ways?”⁶⁵

⁶⁵ A point mentioned by Andy Baggott (Celtic) in Timothy Freke’s (1999:86) *Shamanic Wisdomkeepers: Shamanism in the Modern World*, would be difficult to adapt. This is to revert to eating only home grown or local traditional foods to ensure that one’s vibration is in tune with one’s environment. He said:

We are what we eat. ...whatever you find in creation that’s what you have to align yourself to. If you want to communicate with a tree, then you stand a much better chance of doing that if everything going into you is in harmony with the season. If you start eating citrus fruit, tropical fruits, sugars...and you go up to an oak tree in England – your whole vibration is completely different... We are not eating in harmony with our climate and the seasons...

Tsinlqhút'in are aware of other types of energies which vary according to seasons and places, for example, plants are harvested during different stages of growth, each depending on the plant species and their location. If a species grows everywhere, then, the higher up a mountain, the more powerful the plant is said to be.

There is much written about women and menstruation and there are a number of authors today who are interviewing women themselves on this topic. I found a very interesting article on just the scratching stick. The author searched out images of scratching sticks from all over and interviewed women from different cultures and compiled a fascinating piece of work. I was actually in awe because someone took the time to thoroughly research this single item which seems so insignificant to many. Mary Virginia Rojas (2003), the author of “She Bathes in a Sacred Place: Rites of Reciprocity, Power, and Prestige in Alta California”, brings the idea of scratching to a spiritual level. She noted that “once a participant has achieved a state of unusual mental calm, she would very consciously pick up the scratching stick and very consciously scratch that discomforting itch, remaining conscious of each moment and each movement. Generations of women perfected a methodology and a technology that would permit ritual participants to have a transcendental experience” (136). I had come close to the same realization when I reflected on how useful human hands are for so many tasks and how difficult it is to keep them still. An itchy scalp is a reminder of the energy, and it takes a lot of effort to be mindful.

There is much more to do on this topic and for the most part, due to the lack of space, I provided limited information for the knowledge and categories of *nímính*; with many of the *Tsìnlhqút'in* terms having the capacity of becoming a book. It was unfair to readers to exclude so much. These terms and segments could be considerably extended.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ In my initial search for documentations on energies, I found some interesting studies on the internet (10 Feb 2007). Akhand-Jyoti (2006), Gloria Alvino (1996), Shawn-Thierry Brouwers, and Sivananda Math (1991) describe various energies, and in reading their articles, I decided that the additional data is fascinating, but beyond the purpose of my study. Hopefully, one day, someone will be inspired to carry on

such a study, and incorporate in their study the energy carried by *niminh*. There are many types of energies which have been studied and documented. The following are websites I searched out in my attempt to describe *niminh* energy:

1) Gloria Alvino (1996) in *The Human Energy Field in Relation to Science, Consciousness, and Health* referenced many studies on energy, which can be seen on her website under the title, *The Human Energy Field in Relation to Science, Consciousness, and Health*. She noted that "... there are references made to the phenomenon of the human energy field (HEF) or the aura of the body, in 97 different cultures, according to John White in his book "Future Science." She further summarized data on a range of energies, mentioning a "universal energy pervading all of nature [Pythagorean];" as well as, prana [India], Qi [China]; astral light (halo); human energy field (odic field) in which "the odic force, like poles attract"; yin and yang [female and male]; and somatid (a manifestation of cosmic energy). The most interesting study, Alvino included were about "static images of fingers or leaves... [said to be] flashing, sparkling, steadily glowing, or... diminishing particles of light [seen] with the use of a special optical instrument" and obvious differences were noted in the energy of people with diseases. She also described the work of Walter Kilner, a medical doctor:

"The Human Aura" published in New York, 1965, he states that the appearance of the aura differs from person to person, depending on their physical, mental, and emotional states. Kilner actually developed a system of diagnosis based on the consistent differences he found in persons suffering a particular disease. He successfully treated many conditions, including epilepsy, liver disease, tumors, appendicitis, and hysteria.

2) Sivananda Math (1991), in *Tuning Body and Mind*, stated that "man is not the isolated, separate individual body or person, as he likes to think himself to be. In fact, he is linked or connected to every other living being, animal and creature, down to the invisible microbe- from the grossest physical link of being a progenitor or a progeny to another human being, to the most subtle link of being part of the cosmic soul and the cosmic consciousness."

3) Sivananda Math (1991) in *The Real Nature of our Body*, discussed Ki, chakra points, positive and negative energy, and in the earth's electromagnetic energy, and noted:

Each pole attracts opposite and repels like electromagnetic particles, thus creating energy circuits around the terrestrial plane. The particular movements of these electromagnetic currents affect the energy balance in every form of life. Furthermore, the cycle of these currents greatly affects our entire being, and the particular nature of the charged particles influences the different mental and physical processes.

4) Akhand-Jyoti (2006), author of *Bio-Energy: Medical Imaging to Psychic Healing*, described an interesting energy which was given the terms, the X-energy or para-electricity, and these refer to "aura around the hands of a psychic healer."

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APPENDICES:

APPENDIX A: PARADIGMS OF SIGNIFICANT TERMS

Bàts'ègúdáh 's\he is an unsuccessful hunter'. The term is used to refer to hunters who are avoided by game animals, therefore cannot come upon animals. If by chance, these individuals lay their eyes on an animal, the animal will react as if it has been physically scorched by fire. The term is usually associated with animate-human but it is also used when speaking of a hunting dog. The expressions *nímính*, *bàts'ègúdáh*, and *èsqwàyàx* seem to have similar meanings and often *èsqwàyàx* is usually assigned to animate non-human. In addition to failing to observe hunting rules, a hunter becomes *bàts'ègúdáh* 'avoided by game' if s\he touches newborn babies, menstruating women, and dead bodies.

| ⁶⁷ | past ⁶⁸ | present | future | customary |
|---------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| I | <i>sàts'ègúwédá</i> | <i>sàts'ègúdáh</i> | <i>sàts'ègútádálh</i> | <i>sàts'ègúdásh</i> |
| You | <i>nàts'ègúwédá</i> | <i>nàts'ègúdáh</i> | <i>nàts'ègútádálh</i> | <i>nàts'ègúdásh</i> |
| S\he | <i>bàts'ègúwédá</i> | <i>bàts'ègúdáh</i> | <i>bàts'ègútádálh</i> | <i>bàts'ègúdásh</i> |
| You(pl) | <i>nèxwàts'ègúwédá</i> | <i>nèxwàts'ègúdáh</i> | <i>nèxwàts'ègútádálh</i> | <i>nèxwàts'ègúdásh</i> |
| We | <i>nèxwàts'ègúwédá</i> | <i>nèxwàts'ègúdáh</i> | <i>nèxwàts'ègútádálh</i> | <i>nèxwàts'ègúdásh</i> |
| They | <i>gùbàts'ègúwédá</i> | <i>gùbàts'ègúdáh</i> | <i>gùbàts'ègútádálh</i> | <i>gùbàts'ègúdásh</i> |
| Someone | <i>bàts'ègúwédá</i> | <i>bàts'ègúdáh</i> | <i>bàts'ègútádálh</i> | <i>bàts'ègúdásh</i> |

⁶⁷ I am grateful that I had *Ìnkél* to help me do these paradigms, otherwise, some of them would have been impossible for me to create. *Nímính* and *bàts'ègúdáh* would have been especially difficult expressions to expand upon because the terms brought into the paradigms are not all used in normal everyday usage. In fact, even as a fluent speaker, some of the terms in the columns for *nímính* and *bàts'ègúdáh* look very odd. Writing out paradigms forces speakers to produce terms which are either never used or rarely used. In the introductory period of learning about and doing paradigms, the mental activity seems an artificial application of language, and is an awkward undertaking, but paradigms are useful.

⁶⁸ There are two sets of headings used to separate paradigms within columns and I have used the terms which are not in brackets: past (perfective), present (imperfective), future (optative), and customary. There is an alternative way to represent pronouns as well: I (1sg), you (2sg), s\he\it (3sg), you (2du or 2pl), we (1du or 1pl), they (3du or 3pl), someone (3unspec).

Bèdèts'èt'ish ‘one ritually blocks (subsistence resources) by cutting fresh meat or fish’. *Ìnkél* says that even if a non-*nímính* hunter cuts fresh game meat that he has just killed, *bè'inlhtín dá'èt'ish* ‘he will cut (the meat) and in doing that will cause an obstruction to his gun’; his gun will become *esqwayax* and animals will thereafter avoid his gun. They cannot handle any fresh meat or fish still warm and they must wait until the following day when the meat or fish have turned cold. The reason is that the spirit of the game or fish depart only after their blood turns cold.

| | past | present | future | customary |
|---------|-------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| I | <i>bèdénít'àž</i> | <i>bèdétéžít'àž</i> | <i>bèdétašt'és</i> | <i>bèdé'est'ish</i> ⁶⁹ |
| You | <i>bèdénínt'àž</i> | <i>bèdétéžínt'àž</i> | <i>bèdétághènt'és</i> | <i>bèdé'int'ish</i> |
| S\he | <i>yèdénínt'àž</i> | <i>yèdétížít'àž</i> | <i>yèdétát'és</i> | <i>yèdé'èt'ish</i> |
| You(pl) | <i>bèdéná:ht'àž</i> | <i>bèdétežáht'àž</i> | <i>bèdétá:ht'és</i> | <i>bèdé'á:ht'ish</i> |
| We | <i>bèdénít'àž</i> | <i>bèdétéžít'àž</i> | <i>bèdétághát'és</i> | <i>bèdé'it'ish</i> |
| They | <i>jìyèdénínt'àž</i> | <i>jìyèdétížít'àž</i> | <i>jìyèdétát'és</i> | <i>jìyèdé'èt'ish</i> |
| Someone | <i>bèdé'ts'énìnt'àž</i> | <i>bèdé'ts'etížít'áž</i> | <i>bèdé'ts'ètàt'és</i> | <i>bèdé'ts'èt'ish</i> |

⁶⁹ All the customary forms ending in *-ish* have high tone except for “we”

Bèdàts'èyàsh 'one ritually blocks it by walking' and this could include blocking (subsistence) tools by walking near, in front of, or stepping over tools, or by walking on blood. There is also *gwèdàts'èyàsh* 'obstructing an area (waterways, fishing site, butchering site)'.

| | past | present | future | customary |
|---------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| I | <i>bèdáníyàh</i> | <i>bèdátéžiyàh</i> | <i>bèdátásàlh</i> | <i>bèdásásh</i> |
| You | <i>bèdáninyàh</i> | <i>bèdátéžinyàh</i> | <i>bèdátághényàlh</i> | <i>bèdányásh</i> |
| S\he | <i>yèdáninyàh</i> | <i>yèdátízàh</i> | <i>yèdátáyàlh</i> | <i>yèdáyásh</i> |
| You(pl) | <i>bèdáná:h-shàh</i> | <i>bèdátéžàh-shàh</i> | <i>bèdátá:h-shàlh</i> | <i>bèdáshásh</i> |
| We | <i>bèdáníjàh</i> | <i>bèdátéžáhyàh</i> | <i>bèdátághájàlh</i> | <i>bèdádásh</i> |
| They | <i>jìyèdáninyàh</i> | <i>jìyèdátízàh</i> | <i>jìyèdátáyàlh</i> | <i>jìyèdáyásh</i> |
| Someone | <i>bèdàts'éninyàh</i> | <i>bèdàts'étízàh</i> | <i>bèdàts'ètáyàlh</i> | <i>bèdàts'èyàsh</i> |

Continuing from the above paradigm, there are other *Tsìnlhqút'in* terms for walking shown below; one is dual, the other plural.⁷⁰

Bèdàts'è'ish (dual)

| | past | present | future | customary |
|---------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| You(pl) | <i>bèdáná:h'áz</i> | <i>bèdátézá:h'áz</i> | <i>bèdátá:h'és</i> | <i>bèdá:h'ish</i> ⁷¹ |
| We | <i>bèdánít'áz</i> | <i>bèdátéžít'áz</i> | <i>bèdátághát'és</i> | <i>bèdát'ish</i> |
| They | <i>jìyèdánín'áz</i> | <i>jìyèdátíz'áz</i> | <i>jìyèdátá'és</i> | <i>jìyèdá'ish</i> |
| Someone | <i>bèdàts'énìn'áz</i> | <i>bèdàts'étíz'áz</i> | <i>bèdàts'ètà'és</i> | <i>bèdàts'è'ish</i> |

Bèdàts'édilh (plural)

| | past | present | future | customary |
|---------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| You(pl) | <i>bèdáná:hdìl</i> | <i>bèdátéžáhdìl</i> | <i>bèdátá:hdélh</i> | <i>bèdá:hdìlh</i> |
| We | <i>bèdánídìl</i> | <i>bèdátéžìdìl</i> | <i>bèdátághádélh</i> | <i>bèdádìlh</i> |
| They | <i>jìyèdáníndìl</i> | <i>jìyèdátízìdìl</i> | <i>jìyèdátádélh</i> | <i>jìyèdádìlh</i> |
| Someone | <i>bèdàts'énìndìl</i> | <i>bèdàts'etízdìl</i> | <i>bèdàts'ètàdélh</i> | <i>bèdàts'édìlh</i> |

⁷⁰ I added the last two paradigms on this page by myself, and at this point, I am unsure whether the conjugations *jìyèdáninyàh*, *jìyèdátízàh*, *jìyèdátáyàlh*, *jìyèdáyásh* really exist. There seems to be three plural forms and *-dìl* might be the proper form.

⁷¹ The customary forms *bèdáh'ish*, *bèdát'ish*, and *jìyèdá'ish*, all end in falling tone except for *bèdàts'è'ish* which ends in high tone. Although the first form *bèdáh'ish* is written as *-ah-*, the /a/ here is pronounced as /æ/; hereafter, I will write this as /a:/.

bèdàts'éyínsh ‘one ritually blocks (subsistence resources) by eating fresh fish or meat’.

The consumption of fresh meat or fish by *nímính* individuals, ruins guns, traps, and nets, causing guns to become *èsqwàyàx* and the remaining fish to decrease in size. If a gun is *bèch'èts'ághìnyán* ‘blocked by eating’ it will become *èsqwàyàx*; and *ts'èlhtsínsh* ‘one ruins them’, similarly with traps, and fish nets.

| | past | present | future | customary |
|---------|-----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| I | <i>bèdánínyán</i> | <i>bèdátéžíyán</i> | <i>bèdátásínlh</i> | <i>bèdá'ésínsh</i> |
| You | <i>bèdánínyán</i> | <i>bèdátéžínyán</i> | <i>bèdátághènyínlh</i> | <i>bèdá'ínyínsh</i> |
| S\he | <i>yèdánínyán</i> | <i>yèdátízán</i> | <i>yèdátáyínlh</i> | <i>yèdá'éyínsh</i> |
| You(pl) | <i>bèdéná:hyán</i> | <i>bèdátéžá:hyán</i> | <i>bèdátá:hyínlh</i> | <i>bèdá'á:hyínsh</i> |
| We | <i>bèdánínjàn</i> | <i>bèdátéžíjàn</i> | <i>bèdátághédínlh</i> | <i>bèdá'íjínsh</i> |
| They | <i>jìyèdánínyán</i> | <i>jìyèdátízán</i> | <i>jìyèdátáyínlh</i> | <i>jìyèdá'éyínsh</i> |
| Someone | <i>bèdàts'énìnyán</i> | <i>bèdéts'étízán</i> | <i>bèdàts'ètáyínlh</i> | <i>bèdàts'éyínsh</i> |

Bèdá'éshínsh has another possible plural form:

| | past | present | future | customary |
|---------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| You(pl) | <i>bèdénáshán</i> | <i>bèdátéžáh-shán</i> | <i>bèdátá:h-shínlh</i> | <i>bèdá'éshínsh</i> |

Ch'èts'ègwènínt'áz 'one severed the area (stream, river, lake)'. Fish will avoid areas where widows have caught fish using a dip-net or have crossed over a waterway by foot or watercraft and this occurrence is called *gwedats'eyash* 'someone obstructs an opening'. Transporting dead bodies across a waterway produces the same effects. If a widow walks across a river while fish are running, fish will stop going upstream. The expression for this occurrence is *gangu ch'ets'egwenint'áz gagujagh* 'it was as if (the stream) was severed'. Fish in these circumstances do not pass through to go upstream until *gwech'enagudišdžed ilin gagujagh* 'the (energy) seems to have dissipated'. It takes a week before fish will move through an area which has been impacted by widows. A widow or widower's presence at an active fishing site is enough to repel fish, whether s/he is within range of the waterway, consuming fish, handling fish, or simply walking across a stream.

| | past | present | future | customary |
|---------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| I | <i>ch'ègwènínt'áz</i> | <i>ch'ègwètéžít'áz</i> | <i>ch'ègwètást'és</i> | <i>ch'ègwèst'ish</i> |
| You | <i>ch'ègwènínt'áz</i> | <i>ch'ègwètéžínt'áz</i> | <i>ch'ègwètághént'és</i> | <i>ch'ègúnt'ish</i> |
| S\he | <i>ch'ègwènínt'áz</i> | <i>ch'ègwètížt'áz</i> <i>ch'ègwètížt'áz</i> ⁷² | <i>ch'ègwètát'és</i> | <i>ch'ègwèt'ish</i> |
| You(pl) | <i>ch'ègwèná:ht'áz</i> | <i>ch'ègwètéžá:ht'áz</i> | <i>ch'ègwètá:ht'és</i> | <i>ch'ègwà:ht'ish</i> |
| We | <i>ch'ègwènínt'áz</i> | <i>ch'ègwètéžít'áz</i> | <i>ch'ègwètághát'és</i> | <i>ch'ègút'ish</i> |
| They | <i>ch'èjègwènínt'áz</i> | <i>ch'èjègwètížt'áz</i> <i>ch'èjègwètížt'áz</i> | <i>ch'èjègwètát'és</i> | <i>ch'èjègút'ish</i> |
| Someone | <i>ch'èts'ègwènínt'áz</i> | <i>ch'èts'ègwètížt'áz</i> <i>ch'èts'ègwètížt'áz</i> | <i>ch'èts'ègwètát'és</i> | <i>ch'èts'ègwèt'ish</i> |

⁷² A slight change in the tone in the suffixes for the terms in the present forms, i.e. *ch'ègwètížt'áz* and *ch'ègwètížt'áz* possibly changes the meaning of the verb, but this change is difficult to explain.

Bèdé'áts'èt'insh 'one ritually blocks it by doing' and this is a general term and the activities vary. Generally, animals dislike their bones being sawed, even if their bones are left overnight or longer. If an animal's bones are sawed by an individual who is *nímính*, the gun used to shoot it will become *èsqwàyàx* and animals *nìch'àn nánít'ish* lit. 'they will turn away from hunters' making it difficult to find animals because they will evade that hunter's gun. When *nímính* individuals disregard any hunting or fishing observances this is known as *dé'áts'èt'insh* 'one ritually obstructs' fish and game, and hunting gear become *esqwayax*.

| | past | past | future | customary |
|---------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| I | <i>bèdá'ásjágh</i> | <i>bèdá'ánèst'in</i> | <i>bèdé'átàsnìlh</i> | <i>bèdé'ást'insh</i> |
| You | <i>bèdá'ánjágh</i> <i>bèdá'anènjágh</i> | <i>bèdá'anìnt'in</i> | <i>bèdé'átàghenìnlh</i> | <i>bèdé'anènt'insh</i> |
| S\he | <i>yèdá'ájágh</i> | <i>yèdá'ánt'in</i> | <i>yèdé'átànìlh</i> | <i>yèdé'át'insh</i> |
| You(pl) | <i>bèdá'á:h-jágh</i> | <i>bèdá'anà:h-t'in</i> | <i>bèdé'átà:h-nìlh</i> | <i>bèdé'á:h-t'insh</i> |
| We | <i>bèdá'ájâgh</i> | <i>bèdá'anít'in</i> | <i>bèdé'átàghedínlh</i> | <i>bèdé'át'insh</i> |
| They | <i>jìyèdá'ájágh</i> | <i>jìyèdé'ánt'in</i> | <i>jìyèdé'átànìlh</i> | <i>jìyèdé'át'insh</i> |
| Someone | <i>bèdá'áts'èjágh</i> | <i>bèdé'áts'ènt'in</i> | <i>bèdé'áts'etànìlh</i> | <i>bèdé'áts'èt'insh</i> |

Nàgúján ‘you are a successful hunter, trapper, fisherman’. These individuals are said to approach fish and wildlife easily. As an example of one who is *bàgúján*, *Ìnkél* tells about one man who she says, points in the direction in which he thinks he could find game and he always finds game and brings home game each time he hunts. Hunters maintain their success by *súwh-jéghêdúdính* ‘taking care of themselves’; lit. ‘saving themselves’ and there are several prescribed methods for becoming a successful: conditioning oneself in cold water during early training, avoiding menstruants and newborn infants, attracting fur-bearing animals in the subsistence field, and in general, treating animals with respect.

| | past | present | future | customary |
|---------|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| I | <i>sàgúghéján</i> | <i>sàgúján</i> | <i>sàgútájálh</i> | <i>sàgújásh</i> |
| You | <i>nàgúghéján</i> | <i>nàgúján</i> | <i>nàgútájálh</i> | <i>nàgújásh</i> |
| S\he | <i>bàgúghéján</i> | <i>bàgúján</i> | <i>bàgútájálh</i> | <i>bàgújásh</i> |
| You(pl) | <i>nèxwàgúghéján</i> | <i>nèxwàgúján</i> | <i>nèxwàgútájálh</i> | <i>nèxwàgújásh</i> |
| We | <i>nèxwàgúghéján</i> | <i>nèxwàgúján</i> | <i>nèxwàgútájálh</i> | <i>nèxwàgújásh</i> |
| They | <i>gùbàgúghéján</i> | <i>gùbàgúján</i> | <i>gùbàgútájálh</i> | <i>gùbàgújásh</i> |
| Someone | <i>bàts'ègúghéján</i> | <i>bàts'ègúján</i> | <i>bàts'ègútájálh</i> | <i>bàts'ègújásh</i> |

Nàts'aghìnlhtsén 'one ruined it'. When a *niminh* individual (menstruant, Pallbearer,...) *lhàghèmbínlh édághínlhtí* 'took fish from a net', several things take place. Almost immediately, less and less fish will be caught in that net because fish will avoid the net. After such an occurrence, it has been noted that the fish will become smaller in that lake and this is referred to as *lhùy nentsutsel yanadlin* 'fish became smaller' or *lhùy ts'aghìnlhtsén* 'someone ruined the fish'. The remaining fish in the lake *qwès gánt'ih hèlish* 'will become soft, lose flesh, and become thin'.

| | past | present | future | customary |
|---------|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| I | <i>nàghìlhtsén</i> | <i>nàtéžìlhtsén</i> | <i>nàtàsánx</i> | <i>nàstsínsh</i> |
| s/he | <i>yàghìnlhtsén</i> | <i>nàyetìlhtsén</i> | <i>nàyetàlhtsánx</i> | <i>nàlhtsínsh</i> |
| You | <i>nàghìnlhtsén</i> | <i>nàtéžìnlhtsén</i> | <i>nàtàghelhtsánx</i> | <i>nànlhtsínsh</i> |
| You(pl) | <i>nàghèlhtsén</i> | <i>nàtéžèlhtsén</i> | <i>nàtàlhtsánx</i> | <i>nàlhtsínsh</i> |
| We | <i>nàghìlhtsén</i> | <i>nàtéžìlhtsén</i> | <i>nàtàghèlhtsánx</i> | <i>nàlhtsínsh</i> |
| They | <i>nàjàghìnlhtsén</i> | <i>nàjìyètilhtsén</i> | <i>nàjìyètàlhtsánx</i> | <i>nàjìyèlhtsínsh</i> |
| Someone | <i>nàts'aghìlhtsén</i> | <i>nàts'ètìlhtsén</i> | <i>nàts'ètàlhtsánx</i> | <i>nàts'èlhtsínsh</i> |

Ts'ènimính 'one is carrying *nímính* energy'. *Nímính* is defined as ones who are *gubigwenijed* lit. 'they are powerful; dangerous'. They are not dangerous in the sense that we normally use the term, but it is understood that their energy is avoided by certain people and by wildlife. This energy manifests within individuals who are passing through one of the major rites of passage and there are a number of categories of individuals who carry this energy: newborn infants, twins, mothers of twins, menstruating women, widows, and pallbearers and others who have come in physical contact with a dead body.

| | past | present | future | customary |
|---------|--------------------|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| I | <i>nághimính</i> | <i>nísmính</i> | <i>néntásmílh</i> | <i>nísmínsh</i> |
| You | <i>nághimính</i> | <i>nímính</i> | <i>néntághè mílh</i> | <i>nímínsh</i> |
| S\he | <i>nághimính</i> | <i>nímính</i> | <i>néntámílh</i> | <i>nímínsh</i> |
| You(pl) | <i>nágháhmí</i> | <i>ní:hmính</i> | <i>néntá:hmílh</i> | <i>ní:hmínsh</i> |
| We | <i>nághíbiny</i> | <i>níbính</i> | <i>néntághèbínlh</i> | <i>níbínsh</i> |
| They | <i>jènághímí</i> | <i>jènimính</i> | <i>jènéntámílh</i> | <i>jènimínsh</i> |
| Someone | <i>ts'ènághímí</i> | <i>ts'ènimính</i> | <i>ts'ènéntámílh</i> | <i>ts'ènimínsh</i> |

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

I rephrased the questions in the *Tsìnlhqút'in* language. In English, the questions sound blunt and ask for specific information, but when rephrased and answered by a *Tsìnlhqút'in* speaker, however, each question invites a wide-ranging response.

1. Tell me about ceremonial requirements for ones who are *nímính* who wish to gather berries, or harvest other natural foods.
2. There are restrictions for menstruants. Are these restrictions applied to widows, twins, and pallbearers as well?
3. Can widows and pallbearers do ceremonies on wild potato fields?
4. Is there any other term for twin? *Èyùwh-ájàghìnt'í* lit. 'they were different; twins; mothers of twins'. Why are they called this?
5. Are there any ancient stories about the origin of the concept of *nímính*?
6. How does the energy carried by twins differ from medicine powers?
7. Elders tell men and women to *sù xèdúndính* lit. 'preserve yourself; to maintain a youthful, healthy appearance'. What does this entail for men and women?
8. Are newborn infants also considered to be *nímính*?
9. Can you tell me why fathers cannot hold their newborn babies?
10. In traditional times, a mother and her baby were separated from their family and community for one month. How has this tradition changed among *Tsìnlhqút'in*?

**APPENDIX C: THE BEAR'S INTUITIVE ABILITIES AND
TRANSFORMATIONAL POWERS IN *SÈS TS'ÍQÍ GHÀGHÌNDÁ***

| Character | Out of the ordinary abilities |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bear | “glows” in the dark, and provides nocturnal vision to the woman by rubbing her eyes |
| Bear | always knows the woman’s thoughts, and also knows about her brothers |
| Bear | makes woman’s skin impervious to rose prickles |
| Bear | produces spring beauty corms, yellow glacier lily bulbs; and saskatoon berries from his hip; and scratches the earth and produces spring water |
| woman | transforms into a bear by putting on bear skin twice and transforms herself by slipping into skin of dead hunter’s wife |
| woman | places four tiger lily bulbs into her mouth and they become actual teeth but they break, so she replaces them with four yellow glacier lily bulbs and they become strong teeth |
| woman | places her heart in a tree |
| woman | she comes to life quicker each time she is killed |

Excerpts from Williams (1982), Myers (1977), and Myers (1967).

APPENDIX D: LHÌNDÈSCH'ÓSH'S INTUITIVE ABILITIES AND TRANSFORMATIONAL POWERS

| Character | Abilities |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Lhìndèsch'ósh</i> | transforms himself from a dog into a young man |
| puppies | transform themselves from puppies into boys |
| woman | transforms human figure she created (known as <i>K'úlébi</i>) into a human being |
| <i>Lhìndèsch'ósh</i> | rubs <i>K'úlébi</i> 's mouth to cure her dumb spell |
| <i>Lhìndèsch'ósh</i> | creates birds from entire flesh of elk, a snake from the intestine, and a frog from the brain of the elk |
| <i>Lhìndèsch'ósh</i> | creates an alternate childbirth method for women in substitution to cesarean operation |
| <i>Lhìndèsch'ósh</i> | breaks heron's leg and tells it that it will now have one short leg and that it will be a harbinger of bad news (usually death) |
| <i>Lhìndèsch'ósh</i> | curses rabbit to live in the bush and transforms its ribs turning it facing the opposite direction |
| <i>Lhìndèsch'ósh</i> | his fingers are severed by a sliding door and he declares that people's fingers should be of the same length |
| <i>Lhìndèsch'ósh</i> | revives his sons from death |
| <i>Lhìndèsch'ósh</i> | scratches chipmunk's back and leaves permanent streaks |
| <i>Lhìndèsch'ósh</i> | throws cones to the mountains, creating spring beauty and throws twigs into the forest, creating yellow avalanche lily |

Excerpts from Williams (1982), Myers (1977), and Myers (1967).