

DENA'INA QULCHILCH'

¹Nulchina yuq' ghanalteni q'es yiq' lu hdults'i, ch'u gduh
jidqwa hnalqenh qbeł łch'itghalkit, ch'u shegh qbet'uh
ch'ak'eghdalnen, ch'u Susitnu Dghiliq'¹ qbeł nuk'dulnen lu.

²Ch'u duch' htazdatl' ch'u Iliamna hnidatl'. Ch'u Dudna
hqetni, Dudna izhi Dudna Qulchilch'. Ch'u ndahduh quht'ana
gheqedeł ch'u yadi unqtsah q'i'ih yeqech' yi hqizhih.

³Ch'u ki ghel'eh qayeh ggugguyni qghe'an, ch'u Ggahyi
hqetni, Ggahyi. Ch'u ki ghel'eh qayeh luq'a kalt'a qghe'an Kali
hqetni, Kaliyi izhi.

⁴Ch'u ki ghel'eh qayeh tuqghaznik baydalgi n'at, ch'u
quht'ana k'qental'in ch'u dnaqul; ch'u yadi nihq'u k'usht'a q'i'il, ch'u
qudi hdi tugghaznik ch'u qudi ch'q'u qak'hdin'un, Tulchina, Tulchina
izhi.

⁵Ch'u yuq' q'es ghanalteniq' hdults'i dghu niq' dehdults'i.
Hagi qyełnih. Yi ni hagi ghen lu. Susitnu dghiliq' qbeł nuk'dulnen
dghu ni hagi ghen qyeq' dults'iyi ghen łch'iyba baniyu, ch'u dghiliq'
hk'ulch'eydinłnen, ch'u Tikahtnu tulch'iydghełnen, ch'u Nutul'i
ezdlan be'izhi.

⁶Ch'u ki k'izhi: Nuhzhi, Nuhzhi izhi; Chixyi, tubugh chix
qilant tugghaznik ch'u yet dalt's'ina Chixyi qahdin'un, Chixyi izhi.

⁷Dach' lu luq'u qak'hdghelak.

1. Also called *Dghilishla*, 'little mountain.' See Kari and Fall 1987: 97-99.

THE DENA'INA CLANS

¹*Nulchina*, The Sky Clan people, they say, stayed in the sky on a frozen cloud; and they drifted over this way to a little warmer place, and the frost melted away from under them, and they landed on top of Mount Susitna, they say.

²And they went down the Inlet, and they came to Iliamna. And they called the people already living there *Dudna*, [literally 'downriver people']. And whatever people they came to, whatever they saw first, that is what they called the people there.

³At another village, they saw a raven, and they called them *Ggahyi*, the Raven Clan. And in another village, they saw a fishtail, and they called them *Kaliyi*, the Fishtail Clan.

⁴And they came to another village in a skin boat, and the people hid away, so no one was at home; and they didn't see anything, so, having come there by water, they named them for themselves, *Tulchina*, the Waterway Clan.

⁵When they were living in the sky on the frozen clouds, they stayed on an island they called *Hagi*, 'basket.' That island was a basket, they say. When they landed on Mount Susitna, on top of the mountain, a whirlwind struck the basket-island they lived on, and it was blown off the mountain and landed in Cook Inlet, where it turned into an island.

⁶And more names: *Nuhzhi*, the Overland Clan; and *Chixyi*, the Ochre Clan, who landed where there was yellow pigment on the beach, so the people who lived there were named *Chixyi*, the Ochre Clan.

⁷This is the way they say they named them all.

QETITL' QWA
THE LITTLE POTLATCH

These explanations of Dena'ina cultural vocabulary were written in English by Peter Kalifornsky.

Dena'ina have stories about them.

The *qetitl' qwa*, little potlatch, it's called.

They use these words:

duyeq dghili k'eli dgheli.

which means, 'the chief sang a mountain song,'

to announce the appointment of a council meeting with neighbors.

And to defend against any falsity that

their thoughts of mind might be wrongly doing.

They protect themselves with that word.

Duyeq dghili k'eli dgheli

'the chief mountain song he sang'

dghili 'mountain,'

dgheli 'he or she sang,'

dghili k'eli dgheli, 'he or she sang a mountain song.'

Qetitl',

The [main] potlatch

Dena'inas, according to the old stories about potlatches, used as friendships and make gifts and have dinner parties and also invite other villagers

Qetitl' Qwa

The Little Potlatch

This is like political suggestions in a convention meeting. If they made a choice, then a representative was sent to neighboring villages and he would say, *duyeq dghili k'eli dgheli*. That would mean 'the chief sang a mountain song,' and they would know what that means. Be no question.

At *qetitl' qwa*

(little potlatch)

With neighbors, if they succeed in their point or suggestion, then they have a potlatch with joy and gifts. If no results, no potlatch, whatever the meeting is about it, may be postponed or opposed.