

K'ELA SUKDU

¹Suk gheli luq'u Dena'ina qghelach'. Tak'hneht'eh ch'u tan'i qelchin ch'u luq'a uquqel'an tach'enil'i el. Yeh luq'a naqaqelash tach'enil'i el. Heyi nihtu k'qezdelgha.

²Ts'elt'an quht'ana yeh qheyul ch'u ch'qidetnik'. Heyi nihtu k'usht'a q'u niynik'eset'. Yethdi k'elaggwa gheni q'ileshteh qheyul ch'u q'inggwa iditnal'un. Yigheni yighetneq ch'u dan'i jenyeghelghel.

³Yegheni shughu hey qwa qizdlan ch'u chik'enaq qbetudinzet. Na'uni qizdlan ch'u yadi ninya qbek'uhdi'u ch'u. Heyi nihtu niqeydalkidi qwa k'qusil. Qdichin. Chik'enaq qwa dinzet.

⁴Yin kil ghunen k'elaggwa dani jenyeghelghelen ghun qil'i nihtu tiniyu. Dghilikenh tazü. Yeghu qheyul, qheyul, qheyul, ch'u nichilka aniyu. Ch'u dasgedi qughe'u. Yeh dukaq'di qul hq'u yuqech'hdi, "Aa, hunch'dal'an. K'tu'ushch' naqanlghe ch'u qinldush," yelni. K'tu'ushch' naqalghel ch'u yethdi naqandalghel. Yethdi dakaq' ch'ak'tnintun. Qighel'ets. Qichika yuyuh ezdu. Tuyanq' detsen dazdlu. "Shqen nutuju. Gu zidu. Hunch'dal'an," yelni. Yeghuk'enilkit. "Ch'aduch' hghuda t'ent'an qit'anideshni. Qit'anch'itni," yelni. "Shqen nutuju da yetdahdi nel nuqtulnek," yelni.

⁵K'usht'a k'dit'al k'enli t'et'an. Elnen ghenu. "Aa shqen dungheju," yelni. Uch'en qech' k'kegh'i qt'ingheju.

THE MOUSE STORY

¹Long ago this is the way the Dena'ina lived. They drove poles for a fish weir where they fished with a dipnet. They brought in fish with a dipnet, and they made ready for winter.

²One man only walked around, and he was lazy. He wasn't preparing for winter at all. Then a little mouse was going in the brush with a fish egg in its mouth, but it couldn't get over a windfall. The man lifted the little mouse over the windfall.

³Then winter came to them and sickness struck. Bad weather came, and they couldn't find any animals to hunt, and what they had stored for winter was gone. They were hungry. Sickness struck them.

⁴The young man who had helped the little mouse over the windfall went out walking without hope. He went to the foothills. There he walked, and walked, and walked, and came to a big brush shelter. Smoke was coming out. There was no door, but from inside he heard a voice, "Yes, we were expecting you. Turn around the way the sun goes [clockwise] and come in," someone said. He turned around the way the sun goes, and, as he turned, a door opened. He went in. A big old lady was sitting inside. A fire was burning in the center of the room. "My husband is coming back. Sit here. We were expecting you," she said to him. She fed him. "I know why you are here. We know you," she said. "When my husband returns, he'll explain it to you," she said.

⁵Not long after, it hailed. The earth shook. "Yes, my husband is coming back," she said. From outside, a giant came in.

6“Yaghali,” yełni. “Qit’anideshni ch’aduch’ qghuda t’ent’an. Nełch’indaqna luq’u qdichin. Chik’enaq qutudinzet. Ndesnaqa beł itighełyeshi uqu nughenyuł. “Yaghali, nuntgheshtuh,” yełni. “Nen k’u shnunintun.”

7Luq’u qughesht’a q’inggwa dahdi k’tsenggwa dahdi ghenalgeni luq’a denłts’ek’ ggwah k’eyesggwa yiyelđel. Ts’anesdets’ek’ ggwah diyelđel ch’u. Luq’u ya k’ighalchet. Hał k’u k’ushu k’usht’a ilagh. Ditushi yeł didghełdatl’.

8“Ginhdi nqayeh quht’ana nach’u haztunh gin el nininjuda q’u niditighechel ch’u ditushi gini beyditighełtesh. K’tu’ushch’ naqantghelghełda, ba dinlchetda ndahkugh ni’ilyuh tut’ał. Yethdi nutghejuł ch’u neł ch’indaqna un detghenił ch’u. Yinahdi nen el snuqiditulyash. Neł ch’indaqna beł itighełyesh yina ghutghełket yigheni nagh htusegh qech q’u luq’u nunqiditultesh. Luq’u tik’u nuqtudedel ch’u chik’htuł’ish. Itighedyesh,” yedgheni.

9Yequech’a besukt’a qdilanch’a, “K’ela yethdi luq’u k’qezdelgha luq’u gin ninya en’ishla k’usht’a shqidinil,” yełni. “Nenhdi ch’qidghendnik’. Nughenyuł. Sha ninyu ch’u shighendneq ch’u dan’i q’in el dan’i deshghelgheł. Yethdi yequech’ shnunintun. Yequech’ hguda yech’ nen el niqdالن,” yełni. “Shi sh’izhi K’ela Dnayi shi ghelihdi sh’izhi qdilanch’a Gujun. Gujun dnayi shina’i luq’u yadi ninya qilan.”

6“Hello,” he said. “I know why you are here. Your relatives are all hungry. Sickness has struck them. You are going about to try to save your relatives. Good, I’ll help you,” he said, “because you have helped me.”

7The giant put all kinds of small little fish eggs and little meats and dry fish into a little skin a pinch at a time. Pinch after pinch he put in and then he wrapped it up. It didn’t come to much of a pack. He put down feathers in the pack.

8The giant said, “Take this to your village. Before you arrive, put down the pack and spread out the food. Then sprinkle the down feathers over it. Turn around the way the sun goes, and, when you touch it, it will turn into a large pile of food. Then go to your village and tell your relatives to come with you. They will help you bring the food the rest of the way to your village. With this food you will save your relatives. You will feed them and before it is all gone, they will regain their strength. They will go to the woods and they will kill game. You will be saved,” the giant said.

9“The mouse you saved was getting ready for winter like everything else. But no one took pity on it when it needed help,” the giant said. “You were lazy. You were walking about when you should have been helping. But you lifted me over that windfall when I had that fish egg. You helped me. That is why it has turned out this way,” he said. “My name is Mouse Person, but really my name is *Gujun*.¹ *Gujun* is related to all of the animals.”

1. In this story, *Gujun* is a benevolent giant, but in “*Gujun Sukdu*, The Story of *Gujun*” (5.4), he is a malevolent avenger.

K'ELA SUKDU EGH

Gun kił hdi k'egh t'eynizen, hq'u ch'qidudnik'. Q'ilish teh nuhuk'ulkeł, ch'u k'elaqwa ghen dan'i jeneyghełghel. Yi ghen yaghalich' talghel, ch'u hey k'undet qayeh qadinzet, ch'u yin kił ghen, tik'u niyu yeh ghu nugheyuł, ch'u ninya dnayi gheniyu Gujun qyełnihen, ninya dnayi, kił ghun yeghudgheni. Ch'u yu qadi nuqılchin, beł dnayi yeł ułyeshi. yaghalich' talgheli ghen benuynastun. K'elench'qghe'uyi, k'egh t'ich'eynizeni, ch'qich'dednik'i qil nabut'egh.



Peter Kalifornsky with the late Edwina Troutt McKenzie, a survivor of the *Titanic* disaster, Hermosa Beach, Calif. See story 7.13, para. 14, "Traveling in California." Photo by James Kari, 1979.

ABOUT THE MOUSE STORY

This man is a lazy person, and you would expect something bad to happen to him. But he is also gentle and kind. When he lifts that little mouse over the log, he is doing something good. When adversity strikes his people, it is his proper behavior toward the mouse that brings him to the right place for help. His attitude, that laziness is bad, saves his people.

TUQ'INA LACH'Q'U NIŁTU

¹Tuq'ina lach'q'u niłtu tuq'ina sukdu qaduhdenish. Ch'aduch' niuqelyish ggagga ghen ezga yighuda ch'u hqyigheli. Qeyuhul'ih dghu duqyedetquh "K'usht'a nhu'izdeyeshdle." Guna ggagga ghen q'aditin ił chik'eł'ish.

²Ts'ilt'an ghun "Eda, q'ahnulqeyi q'aditin enda," yełni. "Qil'i ki beteh enk'idalts'iyi shi'i. Q'ahnulqeyi ił bengaheltuhni."

³"Yaghali," yełni.

⁴"Netgheltuh."

⁵"Hninłnunda nghu ditagheshtił."

⁶Ch'u betukda ghun nutihna ighetneq. Tik'teh ch'balaggwa ghen ghu hnidge'uch' q'u qeyezikena t'ghel'an ch'u qyedghełt'ich' ch'u qyedghełket'. Nuqyegh dghełgguk, ch'u hyeghdnałyuch'.

"Dih," yełni. "K'talt'eq' daq'u tuyanq' ditighegget," yełni.

"Yich'ashdetghenił, ch'u tı'ıł ghen, bek'nitagheshq'esh," yełni. Ch'u yenıłtu niniyu ch'u yich'adajuqh tı'ıł ghen yek'ninq'ay, ch'u ch'balaggwa ghen k'talt'eq' ch'u yegh k'tnulkes. Ch'u bentuq' ghu bech' k'eynutił ch'u beł k'iytalt'eq'.

THREE PEOPLE IN SEARCH OF TRUTH

¹Three people would listen to the stories to find the truth about how they should train to hunt brown bear, for those were dangerous and the people feared them. When they would hunt it, they would pray, "I am not equal to you." Those men killed brown bear with reset spears.¹

²One man said, "Father, give me a reset spear. There are some really no good, dangerous ones among them. Let me try to hunt brown bear with a reset spear."

³"OK," his father said grudgingly.²

⁴"I'll try," the son said.

⁵"If you succeed, I'll give the spear to you," said his father.

⁶And the father took his son and another man with him. In the woods, where some small spruce stood, they broke off a limb. And they peeled it and made it limber. They pressed it down and tied it down (they made a spring trap). "OK," the father said to the son, "When it springs, you stab the bear in the middle. You call out to me and I'll cut that rope." So they got ready for that. And the son shouted, and the father cut the rope, and the small spruce sprung, but the son missed with the spear. And the bear struck the son in the forehead and killed him.

1. A long thrusting spear or lance with a wood shaft and a ground slate point.

2. The father did not want the boy to try to kill a brown bear because he was not sure the boy was thoroughly trained.

7Ch'u ki nutihna beł k'ılanen yet qbeghneq ses yeh lik'aha tsadelghuzh q'ahnulq'eyi lyeł ch'u hzah talgguk. K'usht'a hdit'al hq'u lik'aha ghen tsennudidatl'. Ggagga ghen qaduqeyedenesh delggiqh ch'u yet nilqunhdi qeyuhuhtalyu. Beł dghuni t'eygheł'ant ghu elnen ghenk'u nutq'un. Ki yadi nehk'u, k'usht'a qghełnesh. Ełnen il yengheq'un.

8Ch'u ki tuq'ina beł k'ılanen yinhdi k'izhak'i elchin. Ch'u yet ninhdalnen, yi ses ghenq' lik'aha tsadilghuzh. K'izhak'i il tazı. "Shtl'uyeh ch'tedełigu." Lik'aha ghenhdi tsennudidedatl'. Ch'u beldin qul. Kil ghun yeh qigheyu ch'u tuq' qilant benyił'en.

9"Chadaka, k'usht'a nhu'izdeyeshdle. Sheł ghedneshda. Nasukt'a niltu shughu. Dach' nihuneltan. 'Q'u' ndeshni daq'u qughesht'a ch'u shegh nitghelgheł." Qughesht'a duyudutqen, ch'u yet'itazu ch'u yejeghateh qighedneq. Ndahqugh tey t'gheł'an. Yethdi ba nuk'eq'esyyiel ch'u yegełq'a yizgget k'izhak'i il ch'u tsennuhughditnik.

10Ch'u duyeq ghun yełni, "Bedeyes ghen n'ich' t'ent'ana niltu," yełni. Yin k'ghudgheni, bahuch'idudlich' k'usht'a t'ist'e. K'usht'a sheł dghuni t'il'il. Dach'q'u sheł q'antsa dghełnik.

11Gin sukdu Tałin Ch'iltant lu dach' nihdalnen.

7Then the second man who had sought the truth heard dogs barking on the ridge back there, and he grabbed his spear and ran ahead. Not long afterward those dogs came back down. They heard that bear roaring, and they searched there for it the next morning. The earth was all torn up where the man had fought with the bear. They didn't find anything left of the man. He was all ground into the earth.

8Then the third man who had sought the truth made a knife. And when he heard dogs barking on the ridge, he took his knife and went. "Don't follow me," he said to the people. Those dogs came down. And some were missing. That man went there, and the bear waited for him in a clearing.

9"Great old man, I am not your equal. You go easy on me, for this is our story. This is what I have trained for. When I say to you, 'enough,' you must give me a chance." He prayed well to it. And then they met and the bear grabbed him by the ears. For some time they wrestled. Then the man lifted back the bear's neck and stabbed it with his knife in its neck cavity. He was exhausted and barely got back home.

10The man said to the chief, "The skin from it is for the poor people." Then the man told him, "Nothing happened when I challenged it. It didn't fight with me. It just played rough with me this way."

11This story happened at Polly Creek, it is said.