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Sharing Our Knowledge

The Tlingit and Their Coastal Neighbors

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Deiki Noow

Tlingit Cultural Heritage in the Hazy Islands

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Tlingit visions of existence stretch to the earliest moments of transformative creation when things as they are now experienced came to be. The activities of Yéil, the being known as Raven, are detailed in a mythic cycle of accounts in which manipulations, duplicity, farce, and unforeseen consequence unfold and produce the contexts of life today. The adventures and antics of Yéil in traditional accounts are invariably positioned in real space and known locations if not chronological time. Often the Tlingit oral tradition includes information about props or items involved in Yéil's antics that continue to be present and confirm the factuality of the account. For example, the Raven mythic account in which Yéil persuades little birds to assist him in tricking king salmon to jump on the beach was told to me by an elder of the T'akdeintaan clan, who added that Raven's footprints could still be seen on the beach north of Lituya Bay. But Raven mythic accounts are but one of many layers through which the Tlingits demonstrate ancestral linkages to places, thereby affirming for non-Tlingits and confirming to other Tlingits the basis for their distinctive relationships to these places, and those relationships establish certain rights recognized in Tlingit legal practice. The various layerings extend from time immemorial, as in the Raven myths, down to the experiences of people living today. While these manifestations of specific places might be seen as separate conceptual and temporal layerings, a more nuanced reading reveals how the layers interpenetrate, influencing and infusing meaning and purpose into experience on an ongoing basis (Thornton 2004, 2008).

The location known to southern Tlingit as Deiki Noow (Far Out Fort) is a site of enormous cultural heritage elaboration, providing opportunities to encounter the characteristics of the Tlingit construction of



Fig. 16.1 *Deiki Noow* from *Kuxk'*. Photograph by Steve J. Langdon.

place and the many meanings through which people and place are connected. In each generation, Tlingit youth (primarily males) raised by families with knowledge of Deiki Noow may encounter a wide range of accounts that will be available for interpretation and at some point may have personal experiences of encounter with Deiki Noow. The knowledge of previous generations as well as personal experiences will in turn be passed on to family members, community members, the larger Tlingit community, children, and grandchildren, sustaining the continuing process of creation so central to the Tlingit practice of *shuká*.

Understanding the significance of place in Tlingit existence has benefited greatly from research undertaken and published by Thomas Thornton. He outlines four "structures of emplacement" through which Tlingit construct relationships between "being and place": social organization, language and cognitive structure, material production, and ritual processes. These are certainly evident in the following discussion, which articulates two additional structures: the interpenetration of levels of meaning and forms of practice and the anatomy of encounter that explores the flow of engagement between persons, ideas, experi-



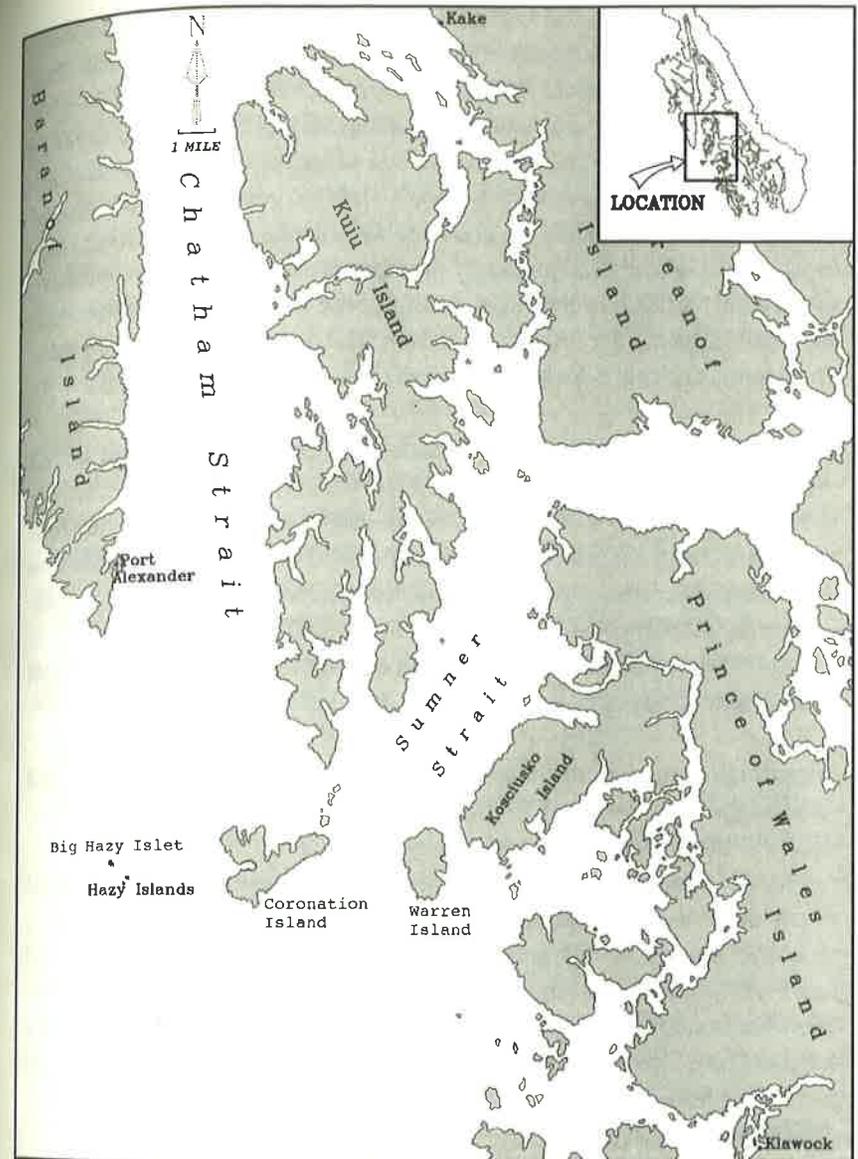
Fig. 16.2 *Deiki Noow* from the air. Photograph by Steve J. Langdon.

ences, and places as an ongoing constructivist enterprise where agency and interpretation matter.

This chapter explores the meaning layers and their interpenetrations that Tlingit associate with Deiki Noow (“Far Out Fort”), which has been called the Hazy Islands since first recorded by George Vancouver in 1794 (Orth 1971). In doing so, the account will stretch from the beginnings of existence-as-it-is-known, through clan traditions, historical documents, and oral traditions, to personal recollections and experiences. A portion of my information derives from the interviews I conducted in 2004 and 2005 with Kake and Klawock Tlingit elders about Deiki Noow. The chapter ends with a discussion of a visit to Deiki Noow by a group of Tlingit men from Kake whom I accompanied in June 2007 that demonstrates how that experience was informed by the past and looked to the future and links activities conducted at that time to the core components of Tlingit culture. It constitutes explication of an anatomy of encounter.

Context: Environment, Society, and Culture

Deiki Noow or Big Hazy is one of five small islands or islets. The Hazy Islands are eight miles west of Coronation Island, which in turn is the most westerly of the islands of the Prince of Wales Archipelago in south-



Map 16.1 Deiki Noow (Hazy Islands).

east Alaska. They are the last land in the north Pacific Ocean between southeast Alaska and Japan or Hawaii depending on the direction chosen. Big Hazy Island, as the largest of the group, rises abruptly and steeply from the surrounding waters and is geologically different from the four flatter islands. Big Hazy also has two sea caves, one facing east and the other south, that are tidally influenced. The U.S. government designated the islands as a refuge in 1912, and they were declared federal wilderness in 1970. The islands are presently administered by the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife as a refuge subunit of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, Gulf of Alaska Unit, into which they were placed in 1980. The islands are characterized in refuge online literature as follows:

Remote, without anchorages or campsites, beaten by frequent storms under high winds, the rocks called Hazy Islands are seldom seen. Far offshore, beaten by wind and wave, Big Hazy Island and her four smaller sisters stick out of the frigid sea, providing predator-free nesting areas for large populations of common murre, pigeon guillemots, glaucous-winged gulls, horned puffins, and tufted puffins. Brandt's cormorants nest here, one of only two islands they inhabit in Alaska. (<http://www.wilderness.net>, accessed March 5, 2009)

Tlingit use of the islands in particular for the harvesting of seagull and murre eggs is not reflected in this characterization of the islands, a point that will be discussed at greater length below.

The ten species of birds that reside in the Hazy Islands are central to the administrative mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to treat the islands as "refuge." Sea lion and harbor seals are also found here. The marine mammals were reported by interviewees to have been harvested occasionally on visits to the islands in the past. Killer whales were also sometimes seen. In the twentieth century, long-line fishing for halibut and salmon trolling periodically brought some Tlingit into the vicinity.

The islands are often covered by fog (hence their name), which makes them difficult to locate. Second, the tides and currents run powerfully around and between the islands due to their location at the crossroads of current movements in and out of Chatham Strait to the north and due to the relatively shallow bottom surrounding the islands. This affects a third observation of significance, namely, the rapidity and intensity of wave action resulting from the shallow waters generate choppy,

short, high waves that must be monitored and carefully navigated. In conjunction with the lack of any protection from westerly and northwesterly winds and the steep rocky shores of Big Hazy Island, these wave patterns make for extremely dangerous landing conditions. The bottom area surrounding the Hazy Islands is poorly suited for anchoring a vessel. Finally, weather conditions change capriciously. Tlingit customarily travel to the Hazy Islands to collect eggs in June and July, which are generally the months with relatively mild weather. Often, however, weather conditions prevent immediate transit to the islands, and therefore Tlingit have been accustomed to waiting in more sheltered bays around Coronation Island for calmer waters.

Linguistically and culturally, a distinction is commonly made between Tlingit groups along geographic lines in which Frederick Sound is used as a dividing point (Emmons 1991; Kroeber 1939; Olson 1967). Above Frederick Sound, the *kwaans* are collectively known as the northern Tlingit, and those below are known as the southern Tlingit. It is evident that far more ethnographic attention has been devoted to the northern Tlingit groups than to the southern (de Laguna 1960, 1972; Kan 1989, 1999; Oberg 1973). However, in his extremely important but as yet unpublished manuscript, "History of Tlingit Tribes and Clans," George Emmons stated the following concerning the Klawock *kwaan*:

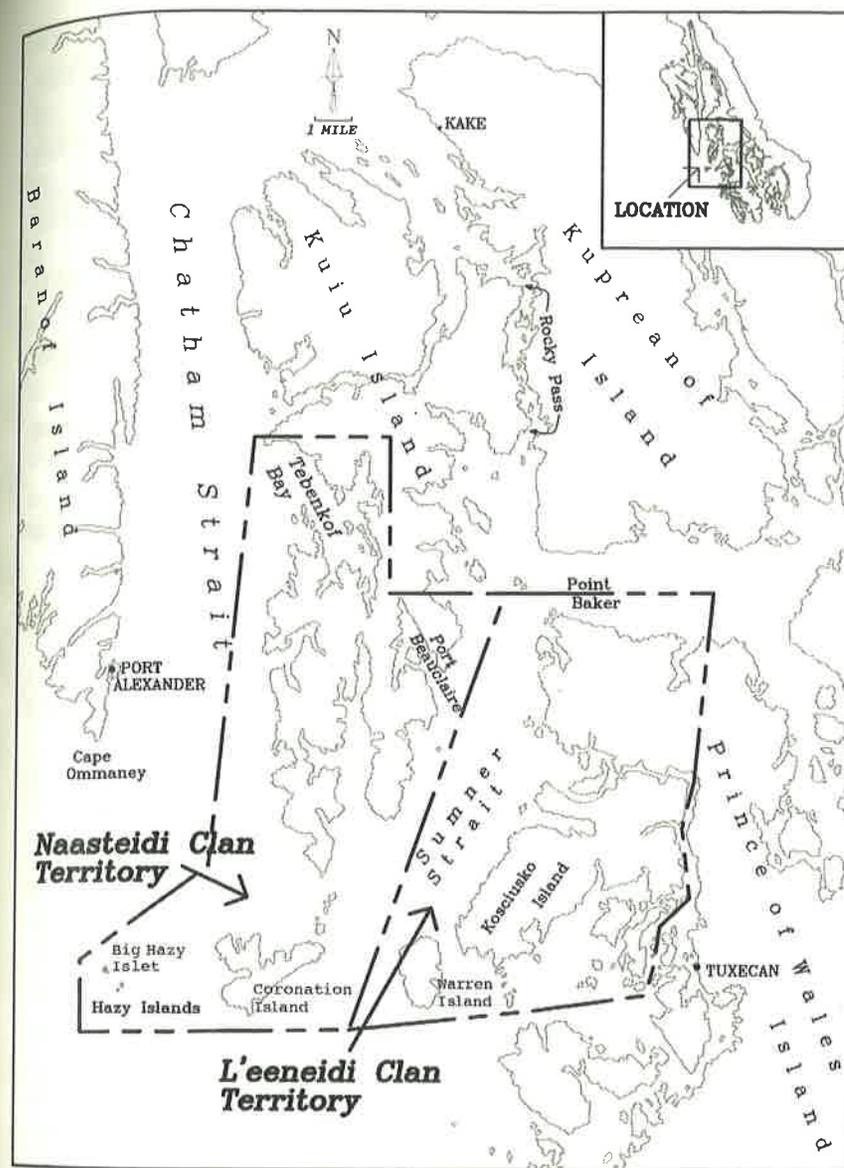
This tribe has never been given its proper place among the Tlingit families, but has been included in the Henyeh *kwan*. It is a very old division, possibly older than the latter people, and included the inhabitants of Port Bucarelli who are described by Maurelle who accompanied the Spanish expedition under Bodega y Quadra in 1775. This region seems to have been a center of life in the early days, but . . . the population decreased until during our occupation this tribe has become almost extinct. Smallpox ravaged this locale several times during the last century and whole villages were practically wiped out and deserted, which may reasonably account for this condition.

This can be read to imply that certain foundational components of Tlingit cultural concepts and practices are likely to be found among the southern Tlingit and that careful attention to materials from these groups could yield new and significant insights. The southern Tlingit *kwaan(s)* of the western or ocean-fronting portion of the Alexander Archipelago will be at the center of this discussion due to the special

knowledge of, experience at, and relationship with Deiki Noow held by their members. The relevant *kwaans* whose ancestors and present members are most connected to Deiki Noow include *Keex'*, Klawak, Heinya, and Kuyu.¹ In the mid-nineteenth century, only the Kuyu and Heinya *kwaan*(s), due to their proximity to Deiki Noow, would have regularly encountered and traveled to the islands; however, the devastating impact of the 1862 smallpox epidemic on the Kuyu *kwaan* and the slightly later relocation of the Heinya *kwaan* clans from Tajik' aan to Klawock where they resided in association with the drastically diminished Klawock *kwaan* has resulted in those groups being now consolidated with the *Keex'* (Kake) and Klawak (Klawock) Tlingit. The discussion of the place of Deiki Noow in Tlingit cultural heritage is of great importance to the members of the Naasteidí clan, who have a special relationship with the island as demonstrated by their *at.óow* and the L'eeneidí with whom they were closely aligned due to intermarriage and proximity of clan territories to Deiki Noow. Through marriage relations and *kwaan* amalgamation, members of other clans also participated in outings to Deiki Noow and absorbed mythic accounts, oral traditions, and stories of personal experience.

Tlingit social organization places a person of the Tlingit nation (speech and cultural community) within a set of relations based on personal name, ancestors who held the name, and the matrilineal institutions of house, clan, and moiety (Emmons 1991; Dauenhauer N 2000; de Laguna 1972; Olson 1967; Thornton 1997). The father and paternal grandfather are also significant in the social position of an individual. Clans, houses, and individuals in turn are linked to specific ancestral events and places, knowledge of which was carefully sustained in the oral traditions of the clans (Thornton 2004, 2008). A person also exists in a social matrix of status or rank positions based on name and genealogical relationship to others of higher or lower status or rank in the house and clan (de Laguna 1972; Emmons 1991; Olson 1967). This social location and position of a Tlingit person are central to the manner in which they are connected to others as well as to the manner in which they can and should behave (Thornton 1994).

Key Tlingit cultural concepts and practices inform the thinking and behavior of individuals past and present. Most important for consideration as they apply to the Deiki Noow exegesis are *at.óow*, *shagóon*, *shuká*, and *kusteeí*; each has an abstract/conceptual meaning and a specific experiential referent.



Map 16.2 Naasteidí and L'eeneidí clan territories.

The concept of *at.óow* is considered the cornerstone of Tlingit culture, as it demonstrates the linkage of living persons to events and places in the past. Nora and Richard Dauenhauer have provided a clear discussion of the nature and import of this concept in Tlingit life (1987, 24–29, 1990; N. Dauenhauer 2000). The essential qualities of this concept are that it constitutes ownership obtained by purchase that is typically demonstrated by a physical object. What is purchased can vary, but it can include locations, events, persons, and things; *at.óow* of the highest significance to a clan has been purchased by the loss of human life. Lily White, widely respected elder of the Chookaneidei clan of Huna Kwaan, described *at.óow* as an event that was experienced by a matrilineal ancestor that resulted in a great loss (often of human lives) from which a story, an object (hat, tunic, robe), a song, and a dance are derived (personal communication, 2003). In her view, only when all of these elements exist and are integrated can the characterization *at.óow* be applied. The physical objects are typically stored with a caretaker and brought out for public display only on occasions of great significance such as the *koo'éex'* (mortuary potlatch) when they may or may not be accompanied by a telling of the oral tradition and/or a performance of the song and dance associated with the object. A “thing” that is *at.óow* is available only to members of the clan for use—any other uses, without clan authorization, are a violation of Tlingit law, and the injured parties will seek indemnification for the material loss and shame that they have experienced.

Shagóon refers to past circumstances with special emphasis on ancestors through whose performance the cultural traditions of the clan were created or sustained. It also encompasses a sense of the general character and practices of the clan, which have been received from ancestors by the present generation. *Shuká* is defined more broadly, as it is “ambiguous faces two directions” referred to as “ahead and before.” Further, it “references those born ahead of us who are now behind us, as well as the unborn who wait ahead of us” (N. and R. Dauenhauer 1993, 19). There is an implication of obligation when this term is invoked, the obligation to sustain cultural practice (*at.óow* and *shuká*) for the use and benefit of future generations.

The concept of *kusteeí* references the collective experiences, materials, practices, and “way of life” of Tlingit people and embeds the foremost value of respect for all and for the collective enterprise of which they are a part. Each of these concepts will be explored as they apply to Deiki Noow as concept and practice.

Raven Myths

There are two Raven myths that pertain to Deiki Noow, one of which was recalled from childhood by many of the elders I interviewed. It concerned Raven’s acquisition of freshwater from a spring located on Deiki Noow. Clara Peratrovitch of Klawock, a Tlingit elder and widely respected culture bearer of the L’eeneidí (Raven dog salmon) clan, had the most detailed version of the story that I was given in Klawock.

I was raised in fishing camps and winter camps, away from the village. We only came by dugout canoe to get supplies probably once a week or once a month. So when the winter nights were long and days were short, a lot of the stories were told to me over and over. One of the stories was where the Raven wanted to bring water to the mainland and there was only one place designated for water and it was out at Hazy Island. They call it in Tlingit Deiki Noow. There was a little old lady that lived on that island that guarded the water. Nobody else was allowed to use it. She had a box and in that box was the water. The mainland people needed water to survive on and to continue life. So Raven volunteered to go out and get water from Deiki Noow for the people. When he told the people he was going out there he said, “I am going to Deiki Noow and bring water to you people.” And the people responded, “You’re never going to make it. She guards it with her life. She never goes to sleep. She guards it so that nobody can have that water but herself. She doesn’t share it with anybody.” Raven argued and said, “I am going to bring water.” So Raven went on his journey to Deiki Noow. And sure enough, Ganuk was there. That was the little old lady’s name. As he approached the island, Ganuk was ready where she sat by her water. Raven walked up to her residence where she was staying and he said, “I had a long flight. I flew from the mainland, and I’m very thirsty.” He said, “I’ve been walking around looking for water, and I can’t find it.” And Ganuk said, “Come on in, sit down.” She opened up her box and got a dipper and gave him a cup of water. And she closed the box again—she put her arm on it, leaned on it, and sat by it. As time went on, Raven said, “I want to tell you a story.” He said, “I’ll tell you a story, and I want you to listen very carefully.” So Raven kept on telling her story after story after story. After three days and three nights, on the fourth day, she started showing signs that she was getting tired. So Raven went and

told more stories; he went on and on and on and toward the morning, her eyes would close automatically. She'd shut her eyes and he'd nudge her. He said, "Hey, Ganuk, wake up. I'm telling you a story. I want you to listen to me." And so Ganuk would sit up; she took her arm off the box—now that was the first good sign or the second good sign. The first good sign was her closing her eyes; she couldn't keep her eyes open anymore. When she took her arm off the box and leaned back, Raven said, "Get comfortable so you can listen to me carefully." And so she did. And he went and told the story continuously. Pretty soon her eyes closed again. And he'd nudge her and say, "Wake up, listen to me. I'm telling you a story. It's not good if you fall asleep before I finish." She couldn't open her eyes. Her eyes were just shut; she couldn't move. She wouldn't move; he'd push her, but she wasn't moving. So after the fourth time, he went and slid the lid over sideways. So here's the box, and he slid the lid over just far enough so he can get his beak in there and siphon all the water he can hold. All of a sudden he was getting to the point where he couldn't hold any more and he was going to close the lid when Ganuk woke up. Raven flew to the smoke hole and almost got stuck because all the water he siphoned up had expanded his body. The smoke hole shrunk up on him, and he barely made it out of there. As he was flying, as soon as he made it out—Kaaw!—he made a sound. Then the box became a rock and the lid remained half over the box. He flew on, and as he was flying to the mainland, the drops that fell from his beak became rivers, creeks so that the people from the mainland were able to get all the water they could use. Lakes, rivers—and that's how Raven got the water for the mainland. To this day, when you go out there, where it is I have no idea, I have never been out there, but my dad said when they went out there, they went looking for that and in this one area, I guess in the middle of the island, is this boxlike well. It's half full and the lid, it's flat and looks like a lid, and the box it has water in there. When you take water out of there, it is pure water. It's not rainwater; it's continuous pure freshwater out there. It's like a box. The lid became a rock." (Peratrovitch 2003)

While there were many less elaborate versions of this myth given in the interviews, two are especially important for the details that they add. Franklin James of the Shangukeidí clan was raised in Kake and later Klawock. He traveled to Deiki Noow once as a child but did not go

ashore. He was told the Raven story on many occasions by his grandparents who raised him. In his version, Raven heads offshore in search of the island, but it is hidden by the fog. Only by following the sound of the waves landing on the shores of Deiki Noow is Raven able to locate the island (James 2004). Charles "Topsy" Johnson, also a Shangukeidí clan member, provided additional elaboration on the myth as well as much additional information, a substantial amount of which was based on personal experiences. His father, who was of the Sukteeneidí clan, took him to the islands as a boy. Johnson states that the water dripping from Raven's beak as he departed Deiki Noow and headed east past Coronation Island was responsible for the ragged shoreline on the north shore of Sea Otter Sound, a body of water sitting between Prince of Wales, Kosciusko, and Heceta Islands and homeland to a portion of the L'eeneidí clan. This jagged coast, termed a "dancing shoreline," was the model for the bottom of the *naxein* (Chilkat robe) that is made by the multiple flowing strands of mountain goat string (Johnson 2004).

In *Tlingit Myths and Texts*, Swanton (1909, 83) provides a version of the myth of the Raven acquiring freshwater that refers to "De Ki-nu (Fort Far Out)" as the location of the story.

The other Raven myth in which Deiki Noow figures is less well known and was not reported by any elder during the interviews.² Louis Shotridge obtained an account which describes a remarkable encounter between Yéil and the other mythic figure, Ganuk. Shotridge's typescript, supplemented by bracketed handwritten inserts from William Paul, reads as follows:

Amid ocean Ye.l and Ganu.k met. While one paddled in opposite direction of the other, . . . Ye.l accosted Ganu.k in a hilarious manner: "Ah, this be thine honorable presence my good brother-in-law." Not allowing the other to voice an opinion on his familiary, the Ye.l went on to relate many incidents which in turn had developed into events, exhibiting this and that from his own point of view. In this untimely hindrance Ganu.k was very much annoyed. To him it was obvious that this crafty being was in pursuit of something, but he was determined not to be persuaded to betray what was sacred. And Ye.l continued "My good friend, this incident then is proof that I am the most ancient in the world." The Ganu.k, who had maintained pride of knowing himself to be the most ancient of all beings, expressed his disapproval only by a grunt, and after a moment of

silence spoke for the first time: "What thou feignest out of thine own mind will provoke truth only out of fool tongue. I beseech my friend, proceed on thine journey." With this remark he pushed his own canoe clear of the other [and put on his "fog hat"]. With great disappointment the Ye.l afloat, looking after the Ganu.k, and only a few strokes thither the departing canoe began to disappear to the Ye.l [while Ganu.k said, "If you know so much you will know how to get to shore."] Ye.l knew what was happening, so quickly made a turn to catch up with his friend, but then the mysterious fog immediately shut off the course in all directions. At last the Ye.l realized that his fool tongue had placed him in danger and knew that unless he apologized and admitted his false pretense, that which annoyed him would go from bad to worse. Thus Ganu.k's power provoked his sense of weakness to entreat for mercy. At first Ye.l expressed his apology in a manly voice: "Sir, I shall have to admit that thou has at present proved by thine power, thine lengthy existence." But Ganu.k did not seem to have heard this and was silent. Again, but this time it was in a manner of beseech, and finally Ye.l had to implore the mercy of the ancient God of Rain: "My good brother-in-law, my brother-in-law, I implore thee, put thine ear to my words. In sooth, it has been told abroad that thou art the most ancient of all beings." Right close behind, the Ganu.k spoke in a very calm manner: "Ah, my good friend, thou still linger, me thinks ere thou has erred well upon thine timely journey." With these words, [Ganu.k took off his fog hat and immediately] there was no fog, and in the shadow of his thought the Ye.l paddled away on his journey.

A fascinating and crucial footnote for this discussion is that Shotridge's typed copy of the legend was at some point reviewed by William Paul, who added the following clarifying note: "Shotridge also omits the site via de-kin (Hazy Island) so of Coronation Id, so of Kuiu Id."³ It can be inferred from this note that Paul had heard the myth, which included the actual geographic location of the event, and felt it to be of such importance that he added the locational information to Shotridge's account.

Swanton (1909, 10-11) provides the following version of the same myth, which he heard in Sitka:

One day Ganuk the Petrel was at sea in his boat when he met Raven. Raven began to question the Petrel, asking him where he came from

and how long he had lived in the world. Ganuk told him he had been living since the world was made. Raven replied that this had been just a short while before and that he had been first in the world. They quarreled until Ganuk became angry and put on his hat. Immediately Raven's canoe was surrounded by a thick fog, and he could not see where he was. Worried at his predicament, Raven conceded to the Petrel shouting, "You are older than I." But Ganuk was not so easily placated and began to sprinkle Raven with rain. The Petrel teased Raven for some time before relenting and removing his fog hat. As the fog lifted, Petrel saw Raven nearby, paddling blindly about in all directions. Thus it is that Ganuk is considered to be the most ancient character in the Tlingit world.

There are several intriguing aspects embedded in this myth that deserve exegesis. One of the aspects is the exchange over who is the oldest being, in which Raven asserts that the beginning of time had only recently occurred. As we were informed in Shotridge's version, Deiki Noow is the site of the exchange, therefore indicating its presence near the beginning of time as well. The primeval quality of Deiki Noow, based on its geological, not mythic, qualities, was also commented upon by elder Leonard Kato of Klawock. He juxtaposed the slippery, shaley nature of the steep rocky formation of Deiki Noow with the hard, jagged quality of the other nearby low-lying islets. In fact, most of the interviewed elders who had climbed up Deiki Noow commented on the slippery, loose rocky surface of Deiki Noow and how it had required them to be extremely careful on their descent to avoid falling. Further, Topsy Johnson referred to it as the "old, old island." He recalls that they were instructed by their elders to take any loose rock they found and "shore it" in order to prevent a rockslide.

A second aspect of the account is that the Ganuk hat, as *at.óow*, is associated with the Kaagwaantaan, a leading Eagle/Wolf clan found primarily among the northern Tlingit *kwaans*. The "purchase" of this mythic account by the Kaagwaantaan and its conversion to their *at.óow* is discussed in the next section.

As arguably the most powerful northern Tlingit clan, it is interesting that the Kaagwaantaan chose to create *at.óow* out of what might be considered a myth of broad general applicability to all Eagle/Wolf clans or even all Tlingit. It is a myth shared widely and passed on in many Tlingit households to this day. The Kaagwaantaan initiative is in

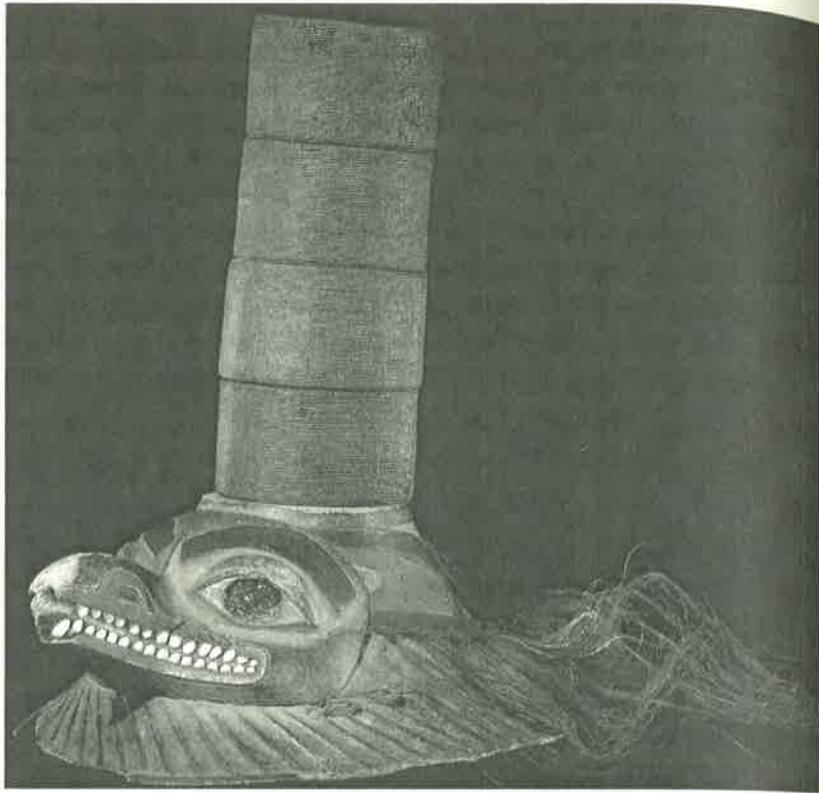


Fig. 16.3 *At.óow*–Kagwaantaan Ganuk hat. Courtesy of the Penn Museum, image no. 150251.

keeping with the possibilities for *at.óow* noted by the Dauenhauers, who state, “It can be an image from the oral literature such as an episode from the raven cycle on a tunic, hat, robe, or blanket” (1987, 25). The representation of this legend, which positions Ganuk as more ancient and therefore, in some sense, “higher” than Raven, as clan *at.óow* by the Kaagwaantaan would appear to be an interesting and perhaps provocative jab at primacy among Tlingit operating at the level of moiety representation and clan position. Berman (2004, 131) points out that this hat is specifically referenced in Louis Shotridge’s article “The Bride of Tongass,” about the marriage of a Kaagwaantaan man from Icy Strait to a high status *Taant’akwaan Gaanax.adi* (Shotridge 1929). Taxsha wears the hat during his party’s arrival at the wedding site. This formal presentation of the Ganuk *at.óow* is indicative of its cultural significance

and perhaps presents implicitly the claim to the highest standing of Kaagwaantaan among the Eagle clans and to the existential precedence of Eagles over Ravens. Finally, the importance of the presentation of the Ganuk hat at the wedding must also be seen in light of the Tlingit principle of “balance” according to which the Kaagwaantaan were under considerable pressure to demonstrate their similar standing to the *Gaanax.adi*, the oldest of the Raven clans. Emmons signified his understanding of this clan’s generally recognized status as the oldest Raven clan (Emmons 1991, 436).

The special *at.óow* relationship of the Naastedí clan to Deiki Noow is more directly experiential than the mythic connection asserted by the Kaagwaantaan. The Naastedí are an Eagle/Wolf clan whose name and oral traditions indicate that they lived on the Nass River in northern British Columbia prior to their migration to Alaska. After their departure from the Nass River, the clan moved to various locations in southeast Alaska before settling down on Kuiu Island (Emmons n.d.). Naastedí traditional clan territory extends from Tebenkoff Bay on the west side of Kuiu Island on down and takes in Coronation Island and the Hazy Islands. Deiki Noow was therefore available for viewing on a regular basis during the travels of Naastedí people throughout their territory. The most significant and sacred of clan *at.óow* are generally those that involve the sacrifice or loss of life of ancestral clan members in association with activities of importance to the clan. In this case, there is a key Naastedí oral tradition concerning a man who traveled to Deiki Noow to collect bird eggs, probably murre eggs, and died on the island when weather prevented him from returning home. In carrying out research on totem pole restoration projects conducted in various southeast Alaska communities in the late 1930s, Viola Garfield recorded the story from an unidentified Tlingit source in Klawock.⁴ The following is a summary of the oral tradition that appears in *The Wolf and the Raven* (Garfield and Forrest 1951, 139):

Long ago a man went to the island but was caught in a storm before he could land. His canoe was wrecked and the wind and the waves washed him right through an underwater hole in the rocks. His spirit still dwells there, where he may be heard during storms. People going to the island put a little food in the water and ask this spirit for good weather and a safe journey. The island spirit helps those who observe the rules of good conduct and respect for wild life. Misfortune is sure

to come to those who are frivolous or who disregard the strict laws of food conservation and proper use of resources. The spirit withdraws his protection from such people, and they are in danger of losing their canoes or their lives.

The Naastedí *at.óow* associated with this account is a totem pole that was erected in the village of Tajik' aan, which was the major settlement of the Heinya *kwaan* throughout the nineteenth century. The pole was restored by Tlingit carvers under the auspices of the federal Civilian Conservation Corps in Klawock and subsequently erected there in the late 1930s.

Pole in Klawock Totem Park

While it is the loss of life that provides the Naasteidí *at.óow* a basis for "purchase," what was purchased was "the exclusive right to gather murre eggs from the island" (Garfield and Forrest 1948, 139). The murre then became a crest that was used as a tattoo design and carved on wooden articles, serving to "publicize their ownership of the island as well as to identify members" (139). The most prominent expression of this aspect of the Naasteidí relationship with Deiki Noow as *at.óow*, however, is in the carved images that appear on the totem pole. Garfield provides the following description of the replacement for the original pole that was located in Tajik' aan but only a portion of which was salvaged when it was moved to Klawock for recarving:

Two mures were carved for the top of the copy. They were painted with black heads, brown backs, and white breasts. Carved models of their eggs were pegged to the front of the shaft. The eggs were painted grey with brown, blue, and green markings or green with brown, white, and blue markings, no two of the twenty-six alike. According to legend, the mures spend much of their nesting time painting their eggs so that each pair can recognize its own among the great number lying about on the bare rocks. (139)

The two mures sit side by side on an attached horizontal piece at the top of the pole, presumably representing a ledge of the island where they are nesting. On the bottom of the pole was carved a human image that represented the man who lost his life at Deiki Noow providing the basis for claiming the island as Naasteidí *at.óow* (139).



Fig. 16.4 *At.óow*-Naasteidí pole originally located at Tajik' aan depicting mures on ledges at Deiki Noow with eggs. Each egg was painted with a different pattern, replicating the actual appearance of murre eggs on Deiki Noow. Photograph by Steve J. Langdon.

It is important to note that Naastedí *at.óow* refers to the right to collect murre eggs at Deiki Noow but not seagull eggs. Members of other clans as well as the Naastedí apparently traveled to Deiki Noow and the other islands to collect seagull eggs as part of a more general pattern of common use.

Additional Clan Materials

Beyond the pole images and crest images used as tattoos and carved on wooden objects, Naastedí property associated with Deiki Noow includes a set of personal names. Raymond Roberts, the caretaker of Naastedí *at.óow* and tradition, states that many Naastedí personal names are associated with activities at or characteristics of Deiki Noow. The following names along with their approximate translations are from members of his immediate family or other Naastedí, and they demonstrate Naastedí relations to Deiki Noow and conditions nearby:

Aanyaaélich: waiting for the right wave, waiting for the smallest of four waves

Daat Awu.aat: walking around the island while picking eggs

Kl'kushi: soil conditions leading to hard luck

Hahlahen: coloration of murre eggs (?)

Gus'han: murre birds sitting on top of the rocks near their nest

Daal ku woox': broad chest (white chests of murre lined up on ledges)

Nashageesh: foam or bubbles on the water

Eehus: fog bank or misty conditions

Najuk: murre birds flying and crying in anger

These names provide information about conditions around Deiki Noow, what to look for, what to be prepared for, and what activities will be undertaken. The first name provides critical information about the dangers associated with landing on Deiki Noow, as failure to attend to wave conditions could lead to people being dumped into the water or canoes crashing on the rocks. Thus knowing when to jump to shore or pull the canoe up was of enormous significance. This pattern of naming is in keeping with other Tlingit linkages between names and environmental characteristics that are elucidated by Thornton (2008) in his examination of Sitka Kaagwaantaan elder Herman Kitka's telling of the Aakwatatseen (Salmon Boy) myth. Among the Naastedí, personal

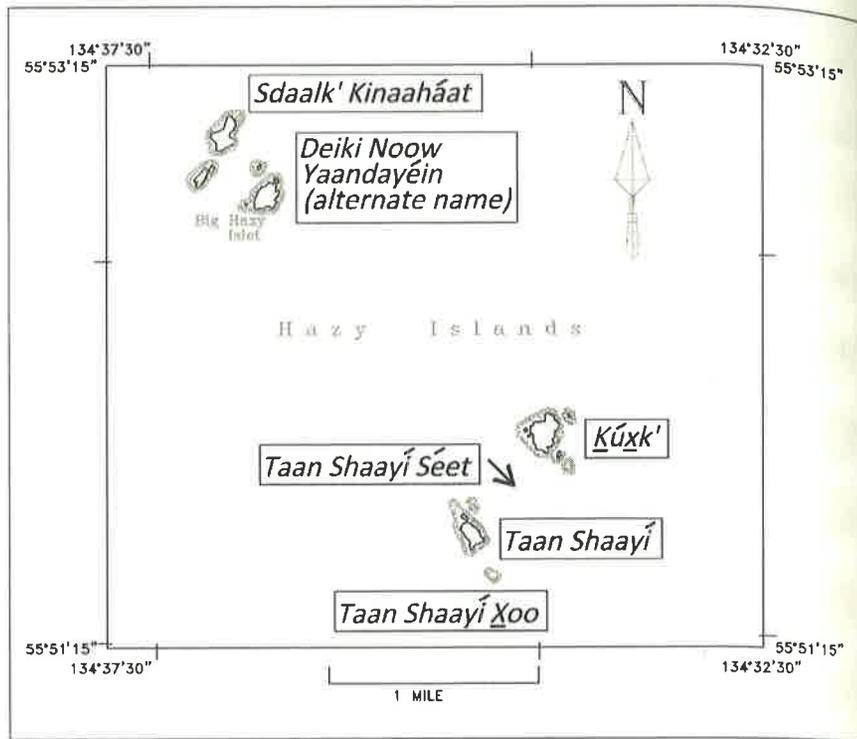
names provide important instructions about behavior and critical information about environmental conditions that must be attended to. By embedding such critical information in personal names, the information would be a constant reminder that would become stored in the habitus of those most likely to need that information.

Roberts provided another oral tradition concerning Naastedí heritage at Deiki Noow associated with the smallpox epidemic in the mid-nineteenth century that killed many people and led the survivors to relocate to Klawock. The Naastedí matriarch who led the remnant band to Klawock to settle insisted on strongly conveying to her descendants the importance of their heritage at Deiki Noow. One of her sons, Robert Peratrovitch Jr., who became the mayor of Klawock and the founder of a salmon cannery that operated there from the mid-1920s to the 1940s, was a receptive vessel of this training. In support of his salmon canning operation, he had a large fish packing vessel built for moving salmon from the fishing grounds to the cannery which he named "Deikinoow." This is one of the very few vessels ever constructed or owned by Tlingit that was given a Tlingit name.

Place-Names

At the very center of Tlingit thought is the relationship between person and place because that nexus is the essence of being and the crucible of character (Thornton 2000, 2004). Given that linkage, Deiki Noow provides a particularly powerful crucible due to the danger and difficulties inherent in travel to and from the islands. To successfully accomplish a mission to Deiki Noow is an important demonstration of ability and will, qualities that are highly regarded in Tlingit culture such that individuals seek opportunities for their demonstration. There are seven Tlingit place-names associated with the Hazy Islands. All seven were provided by elders from Kake, while only Deiki Noow proper was offered by elders from Klawock.

The name Deiki Noow is typically translated as "Far Out Fort," composed of "*noow*" (sometimes "*nu*"), the standard Tlingit reference to a protected constructed locale, separate from a village or camp, that is located on a steep island or promontory and has various constructed facilities for protection and occupation associated with it. The other portion of the word, translated as "far out," refers to things offshore or on the outer coast. It can be seen in the Tlingit name for the Haida, Dekinaa, referring to their residence on lands out in the ocean: Haida



Map 16.3 Tlingit place-names in the Hazy Islands (see also table 16.1).

Gwaii (Queen Charlotte Islands). It can also be seen in the reference to the Dekigaanaxadi, a subgroup of the Klawak *k*waan Ganaaxadi who lived on Baker Island, which is an outer coastal member of the Prince of Wales Archipelago (Olson 1967, 109).

On its surface, the name implies a fortified locale occupied at some point in the past by humans. Garfield's sources said that "a clan of the Wolf [moiety] . . . once had a fortified town on Hazy Island called Fort Far Out" (Garfield and Forrest 1948, 137). Several interviewees gave similar views, notably Clara Peratrovitch of Klawock and Topsy Johnson of Kake, who provided the most information on oral traditions concerning Deiki Noow from their respective communities.

In addition, Johnson (2004) stated that "the Naastedí there have that totem pole on Deikinoow itself, the old island, that totem pole. A totem pole with an eagle's nest on top. That's their Naastedí *at'óow*." This statement is intriguing in that it implies human occupation in association with the totem pole. It might also refer to the original design

TABLE 16.1 Tlingit place-names associated with the Hazy Islands

TLINGIT NAME	ENGLISH NAME	LOCATION	TRANSLATION
<i>Deiki Noow</i>	Big Hazy Island	Largest of Hazy Islands	Far Out Fort
<i>Sdaalk' Kinaahaat</i> (alternate name)	None	Largest of Hazy Islands	No place to anchor or No harbor
<i>Yaandayein</i>	None	Second largest of Hazy Islands	Moving Island
<i>Taan Shaayí</i>	None	Large southern island	Sea Lion Head
<i>Taan Shaayí Xoo</i>	None	Small southern most of the Hazy Islands	Among the Sea Lion Head
<i>Taan Shaayí Séet</i>	None	Channel between two southern islands	Sea Lion Head Passage
<i>Kúxk'</i>	None	Island immediately east of Big Hazy Island	Personal name of ancestor who always went to this island for seagull eggs

of the pole in Tajik' aan or another pole altogether. There is a parallel between the nest on the top of the pole at Deiki Noow and the murre "nest" on the top of the pole in Klawock. In addition, the eagle would also be Naastedí *at'óow*, but it would therefore be a separate pole. There are other possible meanings to Deiki Noow—given the distance to, danger in, and difficulty of traveling to the islands, structures that would be next to impossible to build onsite would not be necessary as the fort's "natural" characteristics—hidden, distant, dangerous—would protect the Naastedí from enemies when they were there. Also, it may have been regarded as a fort for the birds who went there for protection when they were raising their young. No archaeological research has been undertaken on the island to seek evidence of precontact human occupation. Such research might provide further light on the question.

There is a second or alternate meaning that was applied to Deiki Noow proper, or it might also be applied to the entire area of the islands. *Sdaalk' Kinaahaat* informs the speaker that this site has no anchorage, a reality that must be taken into consideration as an account provided by elder Clarence Jackson demonstrates. Several years ago he visited the Hazy Islands in a modern purse seine vessel equipped with a small skiff

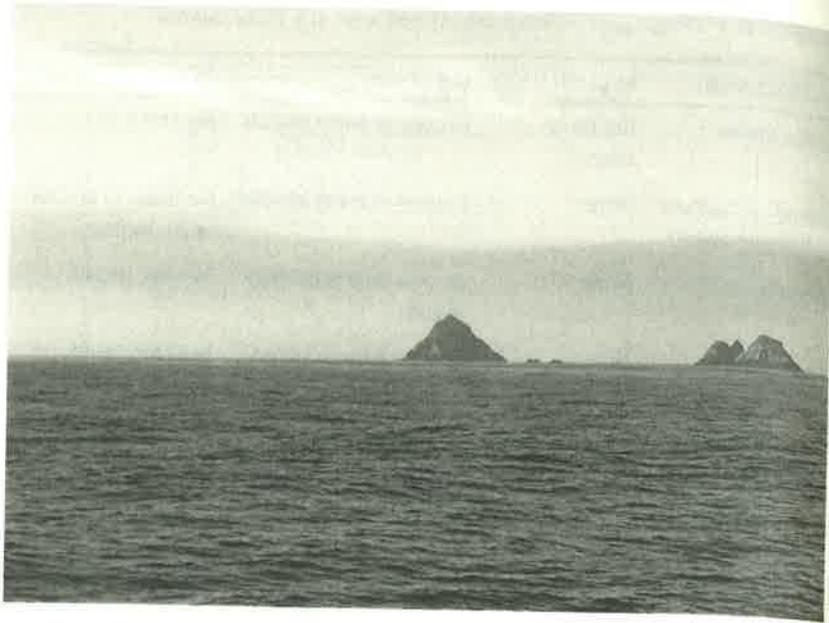


Fig. 16.5 Deiki Noow and Yaandayein up close. Photograph by Steve J. Langdon.

with which to land his party on *Kúxk'*. He decided to anchor out and take the entire party ashore, as it was a calm day. After several hours of egg picking, in which no one was on board the purse seine vessel, Jackson happened to glance up to see if the boat was still anchored. His heart stopped when he did not see it floating where he expected to on the east side of the island. He climbed over to the west side of the island, where he saw the vessel drifting southwestward out into the Pacific Ocean. He quickly went down to the skiff and was able to start the motor, travel to the drifting vessel, and reboard it (Jackson 2005).

The name *Yaandayéin* is revealing in demonstrating what I term perceptual and “perspectival” information in Tlingit place-naming. The name refers to the perception that this island, once seen, does not appear to get larger as one approaches it. Our perceptual expectation is that as we travel toward an object, it will seem larger. The fact that this island does not correspond to expectations could lead the viewer to believe it is a mirage. This name, however, would alert the observer to pay attention and not jump to precipitous conclusions. Indeed, Tlingit ecological knowledge provides the further insight that while the island appears to be very distant and at the same distance for a long period of time, when you arrive, it is suddenly upon you.

The name *Kúxk'* is associated with a particular elder who regularly returned to this small island east of Deiki Noow to gather eggs. It was the only island that he visited. This practice appears to be in keeping with place-naming practices of southern Tlingit in assigning a personal name as a place-name more so than northern Tlingit. However, the name does not indicate a clan property or *at.óow* association with the island, according to interviewees.

The final name references the similarity of appearance of the larger of the two southernmost islands to a sea lion head. This is also a widespread pattern in Tlingit place-naming as well as that of many other human groups (Thornton 2008). It is also the location of a sea lion rookery.

Place-names associated with Deiki Noow provide important information for visiting the islands. The names also reference appearance, customary social uses, and rookery locations.

Other Traditional Accounts

Two more traditional accounts concerning events at Deiki Noow that were provided by interviewees cannot be classified as clan traditions or *at.óow* stories. Their placement in time is uncertain, as they may reference events prior to or after contact, but both are of substantial cultural significance because they mention events that implicate traditional Tlingit concepts of spirituality and relationship across time, space, and species.

Evans Kadake (2004) provided the following account:

A man went out to Hazy Island to harvest seagull eggs. The weather picked up, and the storm lasted for a long, long time. Weeks and months went by. His canoe got away, and he was stranded on that island for a long, long time. He was given up for dead, and everyone had lost hope. But his wife did not give up hope. Every time that mealtime would come along, she would take a big portion of food and put it in the fire. . . . And so in our language they would say, “*Gantu yéigi x'eidé*” (for the spirit of the fire), and they would put the food into the fire. And they would be feeding that person spiritually. I don't know how long this person stayed out on Hazy Island before he got rescued. By the time they got him, he had a really long beard, and they were surprised to see him alive. He came back to tell the story, and he said, “The strangest thing happened to me. While I was out on the island, every time it was time to eat I began to feel

full. I never got hungry.” This is a believe-it-or-not story. I can’t prove it myself, but I believe what happened was true. There are a lot of things spiritually that man don’t know yet.

In addition to its referencing traditional Tlingit spirituality and the conveyance of food across space, time, and existence through burning, Kadake’s account speaks to the values of never giving up and continuing to believe in positive outcomes when evidence suggests otherwise.

Kake elder Clarence Jackson provided another oral tradition of a man being stranded at Deiki Noow who survived and eventually returned safely to Kake.

Once a man traveled to Deiki Noow to collect seagull eggs. While he was there the waves grew stronger and higher and smashed his canoe because he had not pulled it up high enough to protect it. Being stranded, the man thought long and hard about how he might get off the island and back to safety. Eventually, his thoughts were understood by a seagull who communicated with him that he should dive into the water and down under Deiki Noow where he would find an underwater cave where the sea lion chief lived. So having nothing better to do, the man dove into the water, found the underwater cave and climbed up inside it. Indeed he then found the sea lion chief who asked him why the man had come to see him. The man replied that the seagull had told him to come and see him. The sea lion chief then asked, “What is it you want from me?” The man asked if there was any way that the sea lion chief could assist him in returning to the islands where he lived. The sea lion chief thought for a while and then said, “See that old sea lion skin over there? Take it and make a big ball out of it and then blow air into it.” So the man went and got the skin and did as he was told. He returned to the sea lion chief and asked, “Now what should I do?” The sea lion chief replied, “Get onto that ball and push yourself off into the ocean. Think only about where you want to be and absolutely do not think at all about where you have been, about Deiki Noow.” With those instructions in mind, the man got his sea lion skin ball, jumped on it, and pushed off from shore, paddling toward the islands in the distance. But try as he might to think only of where he intended to go, his mind wandered back to where he had been, to Deiki Noow. And just as soon as it slipped into his thoughts, he was back on the island again. The sea lion chief, seeing him back

at Deiki Noow, asked, “What are you doing back here?” And the man replied, “I tried to do as you told me, but I thought about where I had left from and just as quickly I was back here again.” The sea lion chief then said, “You must follow my instructions, or you will never make it back to your home again.” The man tried two more times, but each time he failed as he began to think about where he had been. Finally, on his fourth attempt, he thought only about where he wished to be, and when he awakened, he was back in Kake. (Jackson 2008)

In Jackson’s account, two themes are present. The first theme is that of listening to and learning from other species—seagull and sea lion—because they have important lessons to teach. The second relates to the necessity and power of letting go and remaining positive in envisioning where you wish to go.

Historical Accounts: Documentary and Oral

A substantial body of archaeological research has been conducted in Tebenkoff Bay, the major site of Naastedí winter settlement (Maschner 1992). The excavation of several village sites, notably locations recognized by Raymond Roberts as ancestral Naastedí communities, is thought to demonstrate a substantial population (300–500) occupying the bay from the mid-1500s to the mid-1800s (Maschner 1992; Roberts 2004). The population of the Kuiu subdivision of the Tlingit was estimated by Veniaminov in 1834 to be 150 and by Verman in 1861 to be 262 (Emmons 1991, 431, 433). The Kuyu kwaan Tlingit possibly encountered early European explorers and certainly engaged in trading with later Euroamerican fur traders. Indeed Rowan Bay, located on the west side of Kuiu Island immediately north of Tebenkoff Bay, is named after an early Euroamerican trader from Boston who was on the coast in the late eighteenth century. Two waves of smallpox epidemic wreaked havoc on southern Tlingit villages in the nineteenth century—in the mid-1830s and again around 1862. There may have been an earlier episode of population decimation as well arising from Spanish exploration in the vicinity in 1779 (Boyd 1994; Langdon 1997). In fact, Mr. Roberts believes that the Naastedí oral tradition of the smallpox epidemic that precipitated the departure from Tebenkoff Bay was the result of an encounter at that time with traders in the vicinity of Deiki Noow. The Naastedí split and went in two directions at the time of their departure from Kuiu Island. One segment traveled north and settled among

the Keex' kwaan, while, as discussed earlier, another segment traveled south to join the Klawak kwaan. In both Kake and Klawock, the heritage and practice of traveling to Deiki Noow has been sustained since the time of departure from Kuiu Island, nearly 150 years ago.

Following the purchase of the European rights to discovery in Alaska from the Russians in 1867, the U.S. government initiated institutional mechanisms to govern the new territory. A most significant activity was that of making the new lands and waters "legible" to the state and potentially to citizens who might be interested in making use of the resources in Alaska (Scott 1998). To that end, the activities of the Coastal Survey in making charts of Alaskan waters was a substantial undertaking that dates to the late 1870s. Gradually the shores and waters of southeast Alaska were made "legible" through these acts of governmentality. As yet not subjected to systematic scholarly scrutiny are the materials created by the crews of the Coast Survey vessels in undertaking this mission. However, by chance I happened to find an early reference to Tlingit use of Deiki Noow in a Coast Survey handwritten manuscript from 1887 housed in the National Archives. In that document, a narrative of navigational information for travel in the vicinity of Sumner Straits, Ensign Simon Cook who served aboard the USS *Patterson* on this mission, reported as follows:

Egg Harbor, the western bight on the north side [of Coronation Island] lies at the foot of Pin Pk. . . . [It] is a good anchorage for small craft in 5 to 7 fthms of water. It is a rendezvous for the Indians who await favorable weather to go to the Hazy Ids for Gull and Murre [?] eggs. (Snow 1887)

This terse statement implicates several unarticulated processes, most significantly the source and manner in which Snow acquired this information. It certainly could not be obtained from mere observation of Tlingit in the vicinity and therefore must have been learned from someone. Further, Snow does not tell us why the small bight is named Egg Harbor. Was it also a site of egg collection, or was its status as jumpoff point for seabird egg collection the reason for its naming? Benjamin James, a L'eeneidí clan member raised along the shores and waters of Sumner Strait, reported that his grandfather took him on seagull collecting missions into a large sea cave at the southwestern end of Coronation Island as well as to Deiki Noow (Benjamin James 2004).

As part of the conservation movement, the Hazy Islands were declared part of the National Wildlife Refuge system in 1912. The harvesting of resources from the Hazy Islands was declared illegal through this designation, which must have been communicated to the local Tlingit at some point as Frank Johnson states that "before it was made a bird reservation by the United States, our people visited the island every summer to gather birds' eggs." Interviewees reported continuing use of the islands for seabird egg harvesting after its designation as a wildlife refuge.

Klawock and Kake accounts from the historical area range from approximately 1900 as a specified date to the initial years of the twenty-first century. The oldest recorded historical account of actual Kake Tlingit activity on Deiki Noow, told by Frank Johnson, a member of the Sukeeneidí clan, is entitled "Wrecked on Hazy Island":

It must have been in July of 1900 (see seagull eggs are picked in June) when a large canoe load of Kake residents went there. Usually only men go out after birds' eggs, but it was so fair and calm that instead of leaving the women on the safe, sandy beaches of Coronation Island they were allowed to go.

The landing was easy and uneventful. Everyone had an exciting time picking eggs and just walking about on the barren rocks. The great ground swells began slowly to increase in volume and ferocity. Hardly anyone paid much attention, as it was normal for that when the tides change or as the winds come up.

Suddenly it was noticed that the waves were about too high and a sudden southwest wind came up. The wind and the waves were so violent they could no longer launch the boat safely. They were stuck on a barren island. Instead of abating, the waves were now so huge only the men made it to the great canoe at personal peril to themselves. The men pulled the canoe up as high as they could above the giant waves and into the shelter of a large projection of rock. Bedding, food, and all heavy and moveable goods had to be unloaded in a hurry. The women helped.

The storm greatly and rapidly increased. This was no ordinary storm. Though the bedrock here was solid and the height of the island seemed safe during most days, the waves kept increasing so much that spray came over the highest point and came down to soak everyone. The canoe had to be bailed out after each extra-large wave. Finally an extra-large one came crashing down and split the canoe in about

half and smashed one end into small pieces and swept much of the precious camp equipment and food overboard. They rushed down to recover whatever they could.

My father got a hold of the mast and noticed a cavity in the rock shaped like a dishpan upside down. The women screamed. A huge wave was coming. He ran towards the cavity and braced himself with the mast. The wave completely covered him but he found that some air was trapped in the reverse cavity.

The wave went down and he came out just in time to see two men about to be carried over a precipice by the waves. Father was strong and fast on his feet. He ran and waited in the shallow lip where they were about to go over. One of the men yelled, "Take this one. I can make it up." The women screamed again, and another great wave was coming. He thought he let the man go. He was caught away from the comparative safety of the hollow place. In the excitement he dragged the man by his long hair. The rock was largely limestone and hence jagged, but he got him to a place where others got a hold of him. His hands were terribly cut and bleeding profusely.

Only a few essential things were saved. The eggs were gone, and all of the food except a very small amount was gone. The oars and paddles were saved as were the wet blankets and a few clothes.

The storm gradually abated and the waves lessened in force. Altogether it lasted several days and the people were exhausted. The sun came out. The women made a fire using broken pieces of the canoe. There was no other wood then immediately available. My father was in a rage when he saw the canoe pieces starting to burn. His younger sister had made the fire. "Why did you do such a thing?" he screamed at her. "Do you not realize that we must somehow get ashore by ourselves even if some other party comes for us? Do you not realize some strange people may rescue us and then claim us all as slaves?" It was the Indian law at that time to take rescued people as your slaves. No one spoke, for what he voiced was true.

Miraculously a few simple tools (awls, knives, hatchets, and adz) had been carried [up] and were saved. They always carried fresh twigs, stripped off bark, called "zoo" for mending cracks in red cedar canoes. The men went to work. They carefully pieced together remnants. Only short pieces from both bow and stern were missing and pieces of the toolbox were used. The women used parts of their dresses to caulk the canoe. They killed seals and put them down on the

bottom of the canoe, which helped, to stop leaks. The waves slowly went down, then they made it to Coronation Island's sheltered bays and eventually back to Kake."

This harrowing account is once again a testament to the ferocity of the ocean and the danger of not attending to weather conditions at Deiki Noow. At the same time, it provides a wealth of pertinent ethnographic data and geological information. Most important to the Tlingit valuation of character, it is a story of tenacity, courage, preparation, and how the knowledge and application of traditional techniques of survival made it possible for those threatened to survive.

The accounts provided by Klawock and Kake elder interviewees primarily referenced a new technological era in which the primary means of transportation was no longer by canoes, great or otherwise. By the early 1920s, many Tlingit families had acquired small, combustion-engine powered plank boats, many built by the men with their well-developed woodworking skills in boat houses located on the shores of their communities. These vessels then became the primary vessels for travel from place to place, for fishing and for heading out to Deiki Noow. These vessels were invariably named by interviewees and were a central dimension in the recollection of experiences at Deiki Noow.

During the first half of the twentieth century, the level of community affiliation to an extent superseded that of clan among southern Tlingit. As village consolidation enlarged villages and brought members of new clans into them, a sense of community identity began to emerge. For older generations, clan traditions and *at.óow* were still central, but younger generations raised in schools with age mates tended to develop new associations. In discussing who went on the vessels that traveled to Deiki Noow from Kake and Klawock, it is clear that kinship networks, both of descent and marriage, were the foundations for selecting persons. Invitations were never open-ended to anyone in the village to join a planned trip to the islands, but a broad range of close and mostly distant kin were involved in these activities through much of the twentieth century.

A central topic put to the interviewees was the men's actual experiences in traveling to Deiki Noow and collecting seagull or murre eggs. It is important to note that this collection would occur at two separate times. Seagull eggs were reported as being harvested from June 5 to 12 with the target dates for being in the Hazy Islands differently reported

from one person to the next. Seagull eggs can be obtained on all of the islands, so it is not necessary to go to Deiki Noow, despite the fact that they are most abundant there. The collection of murre eggs, however, occurs around July 4, some three weeks after the seagull egg collection and therefore involves a second trip to the Hazy Islands if both species are to be harvested by a family group in the same year. In addition, murre eggs can only be obtained from the higher ledges on Deiki Noow (Peratrovitch 2004; Roberts 2004). Murre eggs are reported to be blue with the intensity of the coloration varying (George 2009). Only two men, Theodore Roberts and Robert George of Klawock, reported visiting Deiki Noow to collect murre eggs. Roberts did this around 1930 when he was eight years old, and George went in the mid-1970s after returning from military service in Vietnam.

The men traveled to Deiki Noow as boys when they were between eight and fourteen in the 1930s and early 1940s. In preparing for their first trip to Deiki Noow, they reported hearing many stories from their elders about the steep slopes and slippery rocks and were excited to visit and collect eggs. All had heard the story of Raven acquiring freshwater from Deiki Noow, and many stated that they had made efforts to find the freshwater source. Clarence Jackson and Charles Johnson reported that they had found the spring on the small island *Kúxk'*. Mr. Johnson stated:

The one nearest shore of course is the one with the fresh water, *Kúxk'*. That's where Ganuk had the fresh water well. That was part of our deal. My dad took me around. All that I remember is we're up on top there and down there's freshwater. We went down there and there is quite a lot of rock and looks like part of the thing is to the side, like this thing is off to the side like that [uses hand to demonstrate]. And my dad reached in there and started scooping out the water. There was all kinds of moss and stuff in there and grass was growing around there and moss and stuff. Pretty soon he was reaching down as far as he could and he reached, he used his hat, I don't know why but he used his hat as a scoop and he said it would take a while to fill and he showed me around. We walked around looking at different plants and then he said my grandfather got wrecked there in the canoe. They got careless there and they got caught there and the canoe got wrecked but he managed to toss it up again and then he went back to shore. But after some time, I guess an hour—it

might have been longer or might have been less time—but we went back there and I said the water should be back up so we went back there and we could see the water level back up. It didn't overflow. I think it might have overflowed a little because it was wet and my dad got some, what you call wild rhubarb, looked like wild celery, but they're grown on the mainland and some of the islands and stuff and maybe used for cooking, and they are a form of rhubarb. But he made cups out of the leaves of it. The big leaves he made cups out of it and the water was cold and really, really quite a treat. That was our introduction to that one. Two times I got to go to that one, but I don't remember where exactly. All I know is you had to go down into a kind of depression there between the island, kind of a cone like or something. (Johnson 2004)

Another topic that was addressed in the interviews was actual experiences on Deiki Noow. These experiences were well remembered by most of the men. Clarence Jackson recalled that he was trained not to speak when he landed on the islands. If he encountered sea lions or seals, he was not to make eye contact but to move quickly past them, demonstrating that he had no interest in them. Interviewees from both villages reported instructions to not look down on their way up or down or when they reached the top of Deiki Noow. They were specifically told not to look down into the water when they were on the top of Deiki Noow. Leonard Kato (personal communication, 2005) reported that on his way up, he did look out into the water and saw a seal diving down and going under the island. He interpreted this as an indication that there was an underwater cave to which the seal was going.

One fascinating account of preparation for ascending Deiki Noow was provided by James Martinez (2005) of Klawock.

When I got ashore on Deiki Noow, my dad called me over and told me to go find one of those little crabs. So I did and brought it back to him. Then he said to put the little crab up under my shirt and scratch my chest a little bit with the claws until some blood come out. This way he said it would be easier for me to get up to the top.

The men recalled that they wore special oversized sweatshirts with ropes tied around their waists when they climbed up the steep slopes of Deiki Noow. Eggs were placed inside the sweatshirts so that both hands

could be free to pick eggs and to assist in maintaining balance. When they came down from the top, it was often quite slippery, and they would slip and slide. With a full load of eggs, it was a major accomplishment to reach the bottom without breaking any. Several men remembered that they had fallen either coming down or jumping into the waiting skiffs and a number of eggs had broken all over them. This was always a highlight of the recollection and shared with peals of laughter.

An important topic of the interviews was the rules of harvest of the eggs. Young harvesters were informed that seagulls would dive at them but would generally not strike them, so they were to keep their heads down at all times. This would allow them to focus on the circumstances they found in the nests. The essential rule of harvest conveyed by individuals from both Klawock and Kake were as follows:

1. Never take all of the eggs from a nest. Always leave at least one egg.
2. Get a general sense of how many nests there are and how many have eggs.
3. If there are lots of nests with multiple eggs, then take all but one from a nest.
4. If there are fewer nests with eggs, use your judgment—for example, if there are four you may take one, two, or three depending on general abundance.
5. Do not touch eggs unless you are going to take them.

Research conducted on seagull egg collecting by Tlingit of Huna kaawu in their traditional territory indicates that there are a various rules, but the core principle, as among the Klawock and Kake Tlingit, was never take a single egg and always leave at least one egg in the nest (Hunn et al. 2003).

Once the eggs were harvested, they were brought to the skiffs for transport back to the primary vessel. Here they were carefully stored in boxes in the hatch so that they would stay cool. The next step was to check the eggs for their stage of maturation. Each egg was placed in a bucket of seawater. If the egg sank or stayed at the bottom, then it was in an early stage of development and would be in a liquid state with a yellow center. If it floated, however, a chick had begun to develop in the egg. The eggs were then sorted as they would be differently distributed and utilized. On the way back from Deiki Noow, interviewees reported



Fig. 16.6 Seagull egg in grass nest on Kuxk'. Photograph by Steve J. Langdon.

that typically some of the eggs would be consumed. Usually they would be hardboiled, but occasionally they were fried or scrambled.

Distributional practices for the eggs reported by interviewees differed between Kake and Klawock. In Kake, especially up until the 1960s, vessels returned to the city dock where everyone in the community was invited to come down. Eggs were then distributed to all, with elders receiving the eggs that had been identified as having chicks inside of them. In Klawock, the eggs were distributed to the families of those who participated in the trip. However, village elders in general were provided with the eggs with chicks. They were regarded as a special delicacy, and one man recalled that his mother loved the juicy crunchiness of the chicks.

In both communities, eggs were joyfully received and generally put to immediate use. It was reported in both communities that seagull eggs had a richer flavor than chicken eggs. They were especially valued for use in cakes where they produced very fluffy delicacies. They were also used in pancakes. Eggs were reported to be stored by some in seal oil in cool locations such as cellars where they might be preserved for a limited time.

Wesley Brown reported that as a boy he brought back an egg and decided he wanted to hatch it and have a baby seagull. So the egg was placed under the stove in the house and eventually it hatched. The bird imprinted on Wesley, who was caring for it and constantly around it, and he now had a pet. He laughingly reported how the bird followed him around the village for several years thereafter. Brown's seagull was a topic of humorous remembrance by other elder interviewees in Kake as well. A related story was told by Gordon James, who was raised in Kake. He recounted that once his party had brought back an infant seal from Deiki Noow as it appeared to have been abandoned or been left without a mother. Back in Kake, it was kept in their home for a few months and fed out of a bottle. Subsequently, they put the seal back into the ocean. It stayed around the docks for a few weeks, but it eventually disappeared, presumably leaving to go on its own travels.

Encounter

In June 2007, five Kake men, my research assistant, Kelly Gwynn, and I traveled to the Hazy Islands to collect seagull eggs. The trip was the outgrowth of the research and interview process that started in 2004 in Klawock and had been extended to Kake in 2005. Mike Jackson, a political and cultural leader who had agreed to the project and with whom the research was conducted, decided that it was important to make a trip to the islands under the auspices of the Organized Village of Kake (OVK) as part of the documentation process associated with the traditional cultural property nomination. We decided to make videos of the activities as part of the documentation of the visit and the cultural heritage of Deiki Noow as well.⁵ In addition, he had a strong personal interest in traveling to the islands as he had never visited them. Perhaps most significantly, the recent death of the beloved Charles Johnson, who had so enjoyed traveling to Deiki Noow and who, as a cultural historian, was the repository and source of so much of the cultural knowledge about Deiki Noow, was an important consideration as well. One of the tribal council members, Nick Davis, an experienced commercial fisherman who knew the waters around Hazy Islands and who like all other Kake Tlingit had grown up listening to stories of Deiki Noow adventures, was also eager to go. He offered to take a party to the islands in his Nordic Tug. With the commitment of a vessel large enough to transport a group of people to the islands, Jackson contacted

me, and I was able to obtain funding to travel to Kake with my assistant to join the party and record the trip to Hazy Islands.

Preparation. Jackson recruited three young men as well as two elders in addition to himself and Davis, the vessel owner. The young men, as in previous generations, were excited to visit the islands, collect seagull eggs, and perhaps find the spring. Jackson visited key elders to obtain information about timing and landing in the Hazy Islands, learning that it was best to arrive and begin activities right at daybreak if possible, as ocean conditions were likely to be calmest at this time. Wesley Brown again reminded Jackson to watch the horizon for the first appearance of Deiki Noow, which he simulated by holding a fist with his thumb sticking up. Buckets, boxes, coolers, food, fuel (for the skiff that would be used to land the party on the island), and life vessels were collected and transferred. We hoped to depart around 10:00 p.m. in order to arrive at the Hazy Islands by 7:00 a.m.

Departure. The crew was finally all aboard at about 11:45 p.m. Mike sat everyone down in the cabin and began a discussion about where we were going, what we were doing, and the significance of the trip. He introduced himself in customary Tlingit fashion (personal name, clan, father's clan, and grandfather's clan) and then mentioned the elders from whom he had obtained his knowledge. Then he pointedly stated that on the trip "Topsy will be with us," and he held up a sheathed knife that was owned by Charles Johnson. Each man in turn then introduced himself in the Tlingit fashion, noted from whom he had learned about Deiki Noow, and stated why it was important to him to be going there. At the end of the session, Mike said that we needed to all watch carefully to see the islands and held his fist in front of him with the thumb sticking up.

Travel and arrival. Our trip proceeded smoothly down Chatham Strait in clear weather for the first six hours. Just north of Cape Ommaney we entered a thick fog bank. We were completely engulfed by the mist, and so our movement and location were tracked by the vessel's radar. When we passed Cape Ommaney and headed out into the unprotected waters of the north Pacific Ocean, a small but noticeable westerly swell began to be felt on the starboard side. Tension and expectation began to rise as we moved closer to the islands.

Everyone was at high attention looking for the first glimpse of Deiki Noow. All of a sudden, we broke out of the fog bank and two islands loomed on the horizon. The island on the left corresponded to the man-

ner in which the thumb held up sign shown to Mike Jackson by elders as an indicator of how the island would first show itself. The smaller island farther offshore to the west that appeared was unexpected. However, since we had traveled closer to the island in the fog bank, at its first appearance it was already of good size, too. The excitement at seeing the islands was palpable.

Almost immediately, Jackson sat down on the bow of the vessel and began singing loudly and with great energy. With his right arm outstretched and forearm bent upward at a ninety-degree angle, he joyfully announced our arrival with a Killer Whale song of introduction to inform the islands and the spirits that resided there that we were coming. After several minutes of singing, he stopped and told me that once the song had been sung at Kake and that more than forty killer whales had passed by while it was being sung.

Landing and egg collection. After looking at the steep slopes of Deiki Noow and knowing that we had a relatively limited time to harvest eggs due to our midmorning arrival, Mike decided that we would go ashore on Kúxk'. As the skiff approached the island, a landing spot was located in a small bight where a large number of sea lions were swimming and basking. On the way in, a single large male posed imperiously and alone on a rock at the entrance. We landed safely and offloaded the necessary equipment in two trips. The three young men were equipped with backpacks, the contemporary substitute for oversized sweatshirts, and boxes. Tyrone immediately headed out in search of eggs. When he returned, he showed how he had used the grass from the rocks to create neo-nests in the box in which each egg was placed. This effectively prevented the eggs from rolling around and accidentally breaking as he transported them across the rough, rocky, but not particularly steep terrain of Kúxk'.

The three men scattered across the island. Later they reported that many of the nests were already empty, but there had been a number of nests with multiple eggs. One gave an interesting report of how at one nest he observed a seagull mother pecking at a dozing sea lion that was about to roll over in its sleep onto the nest, threatening to crush the egg. He was impressed by the seagull mother's diligence in protecting the egg.

Departure from the island and travel back to Kake. After about two hours of egg collection, Mike announced that it was time to go. He had received a citizen band message from Captain Davis that the westerly wind was picking up and choppy swells were building. As safety was paramount, he wanted everyone back aboard immediately so that we

could get under way. Davis wanted to be able to travel directly north to Cape Ommaney and up Chatham Strait rather than having to first go east to Coronation Island and then north, which was the traditional route. Large white-capped waves driven by the westerlies would make it an uncomfortable if not dangerous passage directly north if we delayed any longer. So everyone quickly got down to the landing and boarded all the eggs and equipment for transport back to the Nordic Tug.

Travel across the open north Pacific Ocean waters back to the protected waters of Chatham Strait was rough but uneventful. As we neared Kake, Davis radioed in our expected time of arrival. Mike told him to announce that the next morning the eggs would be distributed at the city dock.

Arrival at city dock and egg distribution ceremony. The next morning, Mike came down to the boat and subjected each egg to the float test. It turned out that none floated, so we would not be able to give an egg with a chick to an elder as a special treat.

The vessel was moved from the harbor to the dock where a crowd of thirty Kake residents, Native and non-Native, had congregated. Mike came ashore and welcomed them to the distribution. He introduced each member of the party and thanked them for their contribution. He gave an account of the experience, noting the rules of harvest, the difference between egg maturation stages, and why the documentation of their use by film was necessary. He then asked the elders to come forward, and the young men distributed the eggs to them. Mrs. Ruth Demmert, the Tlingit culture bearer and linguist, was first to receive her eggs. She asked the young man who gave them to her to count in Tlingit the number of eggs in the bag she was given. Distribution of the eggs to others continued.

About halfway through the distribution, Mike Jackson's wife, Edna, arrived on the dock with their granddaughter. The child was immediately brought over to the coolers where the eggs were stored and shown one. Then she was walked over to the bucket of water being used to test the eggs. She put her hand in and pulled one out to look at it. All of her behavior was joyfully received by her family and the other residents in attendance.

Several elders who received eggs gave thanks to Mike and the party, stating that it brought back fond memories of earlier days when this was a regular experience. One of them told a story about sea lion behavior in the islands.

After the egg distribution had been completed, the crew was given the opportunity to speak about and share their experiences. Each of the

men expressed strong positive emotions, indicating that it was something that they would always remember and would surely pass on to their children.

News of the 2007 Deiki Noow journey, including the collection of seagull eggs, passed by word of mouth to other members of the Kake community living in other places. I was later informed by Mike Jackson that elder George Davis, who resides in Juneau but was interviewed for the research, was delighted to learn of the trip, the return of the seagull eggs to the community, and the participation of young Kake Tlingit in the activity.

Discussion

The trip to Deiki Noow was a powerful episode of Tlingit cultural heritage expression through action. It was built upon the *at.óow* understandings of the clan traditions and the oral traditions handed down through the generations. The spirits present in the islands were acknowledged and remembered through the arrival song. The most recent ancestor with a strong tie to the islands was brought to the islands, and his spirit was envisioned as present when we were in the islands—*shuká* was invoked. Practices in the islands were directly linked to those with experiences who provided the knowledge and direction on how to be safe, how to collect the eggs, and how to determine the life stage of the eggs. The young people were told about the experience, and the little girl was brought directly into contact with eggs—*shagoon* was enabled. The experience was shared broadly among those who came to receive eggs and learn about Deiki Noow—*kusteeyí* was sustained.

Conclusion

Deiki Noow is a place of enormous cultural significance to the southern Tlingit, particularly those associated in recent generations with the communities of Kake and Klawock. It was present at the time of creation and may be in Tlingit thought to be the oldest land in the world. It is the ancestral source of the world's freshwater and the location of a critical cosmological encounter between Yéil and Ganuk. It is the foundation of *at.óow* based on clan tradition of loss by the Naastedí and of mythic significance by the Kaagwaantaan. It is a site of pilgrimage where young men test and prove themselves, linkages are made with ancestors and heritage, and memorable adventures occur. It is a location where wonderfully tasty seagull and murre eggs can be acquired. But, as the accounts of great danger and many losses depict, it is also a place

TABLE 16.2 Tlingit Cultural Heritage in Practice: *Deiki Noow* 2007.

CONCEPT	TLINGIT CULTURAL DEFINITION	PRACTICE/APPLICATION
<i>AT.ÓOW</i>	Symbolic property “purchased by an ancestor” that is “consecrated” through ceremonial use and formal dedication within the context of . . . potlatch or party.” Mostly objects	<i>Nasteedi</i> poles – first at <i>Tajik-aaan</i> and now in Klawock memorializing ancestor who lost life and special relationship with murre eggs; <i>Kagwaantaan</i> hat that memorializes Raven-GanUk legend
<i>SHAGÓON</i>	Remembering and honoring persons that have gone before who have special meaningful experiences for clan members in regard to the specific event or place—both immediate parent and ancestor Mostly visual images or designs	Direct mention of Charles Johnson, revered ancestor who carried and transmitted knowledge of <i>Deiki Noow</i> , at the outset of the tip; Carrying and display of Johnson’s pocket knife at the outset of the trip
<i>SHUKÁ</i>	Connecting past, present and future generations with specific ties to persons and events of clan significance—faces past and future; includes both <i>at.oow</i> and <i>shagoon</i>	Respectful sharing of seagull eggs from <i>Deiki Noow</i> with elders; infants present at ceremonial distribution and introduction to seagull eggs
<i>KUSTEEYI</i>	Encompassing “life”, “way of life” or “culture”	Raven myth of freshwater acquisition; Inviting all members of the Kake community to come and hear about the trip to <i>Deiki Noow</i> and participate in the distribution of seagull eggs; this event replicated past occasions which were publicly remembered on the occasion of the sharing of the seagull eggs from <i>Deiki Noow</i>

where character has been built and the lessons from those tragedies can continue to educate new generations. While abstractions from the stories of Deiki Noow can be used in a variety of contexts and place can become a mental metaphor as well as a physical location, the foundations of heritage going forward lie in the continuing reconstruction and

regeneration of cultural heritage through direct experiences of ancestral places. These dimensions of Deiki Noow's multiple appearances in Tlingit lives make it an exemplar of Thornton's (2004, 365) contention that knowledge of places is foundational to the installation and development of individual and social character among Tlingit. As Tyrone Davis said upon his return from the Hazy Islands in June 2007: "Any chance you get to go to Deiki Noow, you better take it. There is nothing like it."

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NOTES

1. Another southern Tlingit *kwaan*, ironically appearing on the map of Tlingit *kwaan*(s), clans, and houses prepared by Andrew Hope III (2003), the *Tajik kwaan* are here treated as a part of the *Heinya kwaan*.
2. I am indebted to Judith Berman, who acquainted me with this myth involving *Deiki Noow* and provided me with the oral tradition that Louis Shotridge collected in association with the Kaagwantaan hat he collected in 1917 (Kaplan and Barsness 1994). Neither Swanton's nor Shotridge's version places the protagonists in a specific location.
3. Judith Berman identified the handwritten notes inserted on Shotridge's typescript of the Raven and Ganuk at Deiki Noow myth as having been written by William Paul.
4. Garfield erroneously attributed the oral tradition to the "Winter People," which would be the Takuaneidi clan, one of the neighboring Raven clans with whom the Naasteidi married extensively.
5. *Deiki Noow 2007: Kake Tlingit Seagull Egg Collection in the Hazy Islands*, a video documentary of the trip sponsored by the Organized Village of Kake to the Hazy Islands, is available from the Department of Anthropology at the University of Alaska Anchorage.

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