

Xaad Kilang T'alang Dagwiieehldaang - Strengthening Our Haida Voice

by

Lucy Bell, *Sdaahl K'awaas*
Bachelor of Arts, University of British Columbia, 1999

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of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

In the Department of Indigenous Education and the Department of Linguistics

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Abstract

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The Haida language, *Xaad Kil* is dangerously close to extinction and in need of heroic action. The purpose of this study is to find out what ancient traditions and beliefs we could incorporate into our language revitalization efforts. Drawing on archival literature and community knowledge, I found almost 100 traditional ways to support *Xaad Kil* revitalization. There are four main chapters: Haida foods, Haida medicines, Haida rituals and ceremonies and Haida supernatural beings that could contribute to *Xaad Kil* revitalization. The food chapter features two-dozen traditional foods from salmon to berries that support a healthy lifestyle for Haida language speakers and that could strengthen our connections to the supernatural world. The Haida medicine chapter features two dozen traditional medicines from single-delight to salt water that could strengthen and purify the Haida language learner. The ritual and ceremony chapter features over two-dozen rituals from devil's club rituals to labret piercing ceremonies that could strengthen Haidas and our language learning. The supernatural being chapter features twenty-three supernatural beings including Greatest Crab and Lady Luck that could bring a language learner wealth, knowledge, luck and strength. This study suggests that a *Xaad kil* learner and the *Xaad kil* language need to be pure, protected, connected, lucky, strong, healthy, respected, loved and wise. The path to these qualities is within the

traditions and beliefs featured in this research. This study is significant because it shows that the language revitalization answers are within and all around us.

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Dedication

*Dii aw, Xahl Kuuljuwaad; dii naan 'Laagane; dii naan Sdahl K'awaas; dii gid
jaadaas Gudangee Xahl Kil.*

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Kats'ahlaa – Come In

Welcome to my thesis research journey. The purpose of my study is to contribute to the revitalization of Xaad Kil the Haida language. I will examine how incorporating traditional beliefs and practices of Haida foods, medicines, rituals and supernatural beings could strengthen Xaad Kil.

Xaad Kil is almost extinct. Some would say it is hanging on by a thread. Despite our efforts to create a new generation of Haida language speakers, our language remains critically endangered. As a Xaad Kil student and language facilitator for eight years, I have experienced many language revitalization efforts. Despite our heart-felt and creative efforts towards Xaad Kil revitalization, our mother tongue remains critically endangered. This led me to ask myself what is missing in our Xaad Kil revitalization efforts? I believe the answers lie within the traditional teachings of our ancestors. As we face one of the biggest challenge of our lifetime we need to listen to the whispers of our ancestors to breathe new life into Xaad Kil and to strengthen the *liis*, the symbolic cord that connects us to our language, our ancestors, our homeland and our supernatural world.

Language revitalization occurs within the context of cultural revitalization. However, much of the literature only briefly mentions that traditional connections could strengthen peoples' language learning efforts (First Peoples' Cultural Council, 2014; Grenoble, Lenore and Whaley, 2006; Harrison, 2007; Hinton and Hale, 2001). Often, the common suggestion is to teach language on the land, with the traditions of the ancestors and follow the traditional seasons. That is a great suggestion and I suggest we go even

further with that idea. A deeper connection to the foods, medicines, rituals, ceremonies and supernatural connections specifically for language revitalization are important. Hinton says, “language is the key to and the heart of culture” (Hinton and Hale, 2008, p. 9). I would add that culture is the key to the heart of language and that we need to consciously apply this to our language revitalization efforts.

Some language specialists don’t believe or recognize that a language is a living being (Harrison, 2007, p. 5). Scholars in the trenches may often get so caught up in the race to document dying languages that they fail to recognize our languages are still breathing! It is a Haida belief that everything around us has life, therefore I believe our Haida language is alive and in need of traditional healing. Hinton is a believer. She says, “For a person in danger of dying, the first job of medics is to get the heart beating again. For an endangered language, the first job is to get the heart beating again. For an endangered language, the first job is to get the native speakers speaking it again” (2008, p. 13). In order to get our native speakers speaking again, we need to ask ourselves what would our ancestors do? What would our *sGaaga*, our medicine men do? What *sGaanawee*, supernatural beings, would our ancestors call upon? What medicines and foods would our ancestors feed the sick language? There are answers in the ancient stories, medicines, foods and traditions to be discovered to make us *gudangee tlaadsgaa*, “strong-minded” and *guusuu ‘laa*, good speakers, to bring our language back from the brink of extinction. It is up to us as indigenous peoples to determine what is missing in our language revitalization efforts and trust in our own abilities and beliefs to continue speaking our mother tongues. My thesis will suggest close to 100 ways to strengthen our

traditional Haida connections that could heal our language and help make us Xaad Kil speakers again.

Güsduu uu Lucy Iijang? Who is Lucy?

Sdaahl K'awaas hin uu Xaad kihl ga dii kya'aang. Lucy Bell hin uu yaats xaadee kihl ga dii kya'aang. Dii uu Xaadaagang. Dii uu Guudaagang. Tsiits Gid'ans uu dii jingaagang.

Gad Gaaywaas sduu, Xaadaas Gwaayee sduu dii isgaagang. Rosa Bell hin uu dii aw kya'aagan. Xaad Kil dii aw sk'adadaagan. Mamie Jones dii naan uu iijan. Lucy Frank 'll aw uu iijan. Edison Bell isgyaan Vinton Jones dii tsinalang uu iijan. Ken Rea dii tlaal uu iijang. Amelia dii gid jaadaas uu iijang. UBC, UVIC, SFU aa Hl skuulgaagan. Xaad Kihlgaa Hl Suu.u Society Gan Hl hlanggulaang. Xaad Kil Hl sk'adaang isgyaan Xaad Kil uu Hl sk'adadang. Xaad Kil Hl guusuu gudaang! Dii k'angkwdanggang. Xaad Kil dii kuyaadang

My Haida name is *Sdaahl K'awaas*. My English name is Lucy Bell. I am Haida. I am from the Eagle clan. I am a woman of the *Tsiij Git'anee* clan. I come from Old Massett, Haida Gwaii. My mom was named Rosa Bell. She taught the Haida language. My naanii (grandmother) was Mamie Jones. Her mom was Lucy Frank. Edison Bell and Vinton Jones were my grandfathers. Ken Rea is my husband. Amelia is my daughter. I went to school at UBC for my Bachelor of Arts Degree, UVIC for my Cultural Resource Management Diploma and SFU for my Haida Language Proficiency Certificate and Immersion certificate. I work for the Speak Haida Society. I am learning Haida. I teach beginner Haida classes. I want to speak Haida. I am hopeful. I love the Haida language.

After studying *Xaad Kil* for a number of years, I began to ask myself what's missing in our Haida language revitalization. Why am I barely speaking Haida? I hypothesized that first of all, I am a busy girl with not enough time for my language learning. Secondly, I felt disconnected in my language learning. I missed my mom. I missed my *naanii*. I needed to feel a deeper connection to my ancestors, the supernatural beings around me and our traditional beliefs and Haida Gwaii.

Güdsuu Hl Guusuugang? Who Am I Speaking To?

This thesis is written for and about my Haida community. I aim to share the voices of Haida elders, *Xaad Kil* learners and advocates who speak passionately about the importance of our traditional foods, our medicines, our ceremonies and the supernatural forces around us. Passionate *Xaad Kil* learners like Jenny Cross say, "I've been learning Haida for so long. Why am not as fluent as I can be? What the heck do I need to do?" (Cross, 2015). This thesis is written for all of the other amazing, hardworking *Xaad Kil* language champions. I focus on practices and beliefs that I could use myself as a language learner and that I think my fellow language learners would be interested in. Because I come from Old Massett, most *Xaad Kil* I use in my thesis is in the northern dialect and orthography. Although this is a thesis in the academic world, I made a conscious decision to speak in my authentic Haida researcher voice and speak to my Haida audience first and foremost. I am grateful to UVIC for recognizing the importance of the aboriginal voice.

Külang sk'ad'gee guu tl' kilanggang – It is Important to Learn Your Language

Why are languages important? Why should we care if languages die? Language speakers, linguists and learners have their own answers to this. Basically, every language in the world has its own stories and beliefs of its people and environment. As Joshua Fishman says:

Take it [language] away from the culture, and you take away its greetings, its curses, its praises, its laws, its literature, its songs, its riddles, its proverbs, its cures, its wisdom, its prayers. The culture could not be expressed and handed on in any other way. What would be left? When you are talking about the language, most of what you are talking about is the culture. That is, you are losing all those things that essentially are the way of life, the way of thought, the way of valuing, and the human reality that you are talking about. (Cantoni, 2007, p. 72)

So many Haida elders have said we are not Haida without our Haida language.

“*Kiilang angaa t’alang guudaasdluu, gasanuu agan kyadaahlangaa?*” – if we lose our language, what do we call ourselves?” We are just like everyone else in the world if we do not speak our language. Inspirational language learner Ben Young speaks eloquently of why we need to learn to speak *Xaad Kil*. He says:

A few things come to mind, when asked what the Haida language means to me: just how precious it is, this way of knowing our culture through the way it should be; understanding everything about our culture – the way we hunt, the way our protocol goes as a people, our identity, it shows how unique we are. It’s central and critical to us as a people. I think it would be hard to say that we are Haida if we don’t have our language (Steedman and Collison, 2011, p. 214).

Our elders who have seen the drastic language shift understand what we would lose if we didn’t have our language. Deloris Churchill says, “Without our language we have no culture, our language is our culture” (Steedman and Collison, 2011, p. 37). My late *Xaad Kil* teacher Claude Jones remembered Nathan Young’s words, “We say it’s our God-given language. How come we’re starting to forget about it? What if he talks in Haida when we die, or on our last day, how are we going to answer?” (Steedman and Collison, 2011, p. 59).

Everyone has their own reason for wanting to speak Haida. It is our right; it is our responsibility. It is our past and it is our future. It is important ask ourselves why *Xaad Kil* matters to us. This knowledge will keep us focused as language learners. As *Aljuhl*, Erma Lawrence said, “*Kiilangk k’aysdadei gam ‘laa’anggang* – It is not good to forget your language” (Lachler, 2010, p. 101).

Languages of the World

I lost my talk
The talk you took away.
When I was a little girl
At Shubenacadie school.

You snatched it away:
I speak like you
I think like you
I create like you
The scrambled ballad, about my world.

Two ways I talk
Both ways I say
Yours is more powerful.
So gently I offer my hand and ask,
Let me find my talk
So I can teach you about me.
(Joe, 1978).

Languages are dying all over the world yet there are stories of survival all over the globe. It is important to understand the state of the 6000-7000 languages in the world to set the stage before delving into the state of the Haida language. The language experts estimate that only half of these will still be spoken in the twenty-first century (Harrison, 2007, p. 10).

Krauss believes that most of the remaining languages will be endangered and that they will disappear in the following century (Krauss, 1992). Hinton states that a language

faces endangerment when it is not use in government, education or commerce (Hinton and Hale, 2008, p. 3). As Wade Davis says, “They are not being whispered into the ears of infants and babies. Unless something changes, they will disappear within our lifetimes” (Steedman and Collison, 2011, p. 11).

Despite the dire statistics, there is hope. There are thriving languages in the world that made strong comebacks from the brink of extinction. Languages such as the Maori and Hawaiian languages have made strong comebacks from endangerment. We have so many similarities to them, including living on our own island to the devastation of our population through introduced diseases to the revitalization of the culture and language; it is wise to look to them for guidance. I have visited the Hawaiian *Pūnana Leo*, language nests and their University language programs as well as met many inspirational Hawaiian friends who have shown me how their connections to their Hawaiian traditions has strengthened their language revitalization. The way they connect *Aloha*, joyfully sharing life, *mana*, their spirituality and *ohana*, their family to their language is an excellent example for us to follow. Kirkness credits the Maori success to their pride, love, their belief in the Creator and the spiritual relationship to all things (1998, p. 120). These are all values we have as Haidas. Kirkness is one of many aboriginal scholars who believe language and culture must be considered and revitalized together. As she notes, “Language being culture and culture being language” has helped the Maori language survive (1998, p.102).

Canadian Aboriginal Languages

In Canada, there are approximately five-dozen aboriginal languages within 11 to 13 language families (depending on how you count and categorize languages). Foster

(1982) and Gordon (2005) and the recent Statistics Canada report (2011) are amongst the scholars who believe only three of these languages, Cree, Inuktitut and Ojibwa, will survive. We have to be hopeful, however, when we look at the current statistics on the growth of emerging speakers, as shown by the First Peoples' website:

[\(http://www.fpcc.ca/language/status-report/\)](http://www.fpcc.ca/language/status-report/).

Since the 1970s, various language revitalization reports have been produced yet aboriginal languages continue to decline (Task Force on Aboriginal Language and Culture, 2005; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996; First Peoples Language Status Report 2010b; Assembly of First Nations 2007b). Less than 1% of Canadians report an aboriginal language as their mother tongue in the 2011 Census (Statistics Canada, 2011, 2014). Less than 1% yet no serious legislation or funds protect our languages!

The Assembly of First Nations' Declaration of First Nations states:

We the Original Peoples of this land know the Creator put us here.
The creator gave us laws that govern all our relationships to live in harmony with nature and mankind.

The Laws of the Creator defined our rights and responsibilities.

The Creator gave us our spiritual beliefs, our languages, our culture, and a place on Mother Earth, which provides us with our needs.

We have maintained our Freedom, our Languages, and our Traditions from time immemorial.

We continue to exercise the rights and fulfill the responsibilities and obligations given to us by the Creator for the land upon which we were placed.

The Creator has given us the right to govern ourselves and the right to self-determination.

The rights and responsibilities given to us by the Creator cannot be altered or taken away by any other Nation.

<http://www.afn.ca/en/about-afn/a-declaration-of-first-nations>

Unfortunately, the Aboriginal peoples of Canada are not living out the declaration in their everyday life. It is instead, a dream to strive for.

Kirkness (1998), Ignace (1998, 2008, 2015) and Ball and McIvor (2013) have provided excellent summaries of language revitalization efforts in Canada if you would like to know more about policy and politics of languages in Canada. McIvor states it nicely when she says, “It seemed that every two to five years yet another report is released on the Indigenous languages, and upon reading the recommendations, I could feel a sense of déjà vu” (2013, p. 2).

Today there is still no national legislation or adequate funds to protect and revitalize all indigenous languages. We are in the beginning stages of reconciliation with Canada; therefore, I remain hopeful that Canadian support for all indigenous languages will follow. The Truth and Reconciliation’s Language and Culture Calls to Action includes calling upon the federal government to acknowledge Aboriginal language rights and provide sufficient funds for language revitalization. The report also calls upon post-secondary institutions to create university programs. (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). For this to be successful, we need to think of the interconnectedness between language, culture and our environment and take care of “nature deficit disorder” as Turner suggests (Turner, personal communication, 2016).

British Columbian Indigenous Languages

BC is a hot spot for Indigenous languages. There are 34 Aboriginal languages in BC, which comprise 60% of Aboriginal languages in Canada according to the Report on the Status of BC First Nations Languages (2014). There are three language isolates in BC, with *Xaad Kil* being one of them. In 2014, the First Peoples’ Cultural Council published a Report on the Status of B.C. First Nations Languages, updated from an earlier 2010 version. Its findings mirrored the state of the Haida language. They saw a

decline in fluent speakers, yet an increase in the number of semi-fluent speakers thanks to Master-Apprenticing, post-secondary programs, curriculum development, language documentation, language planning, immersion programs and language nests. According to the Language Report Fact Sheet, only 4% of the Aboriginal population is fluent speakers. 88% of the semi-fluent speakers are under the age of 65.

(<http://www.fpcc.ca/language/status-report/>). We have to be hopeful when we see the growth in BC Aboriginal language learners.

Xaad Kil, The Haida language

Xaad Kil, the Haida language is a language isolate only spoken on Haida Gwaii and southeast Alaska. There were once over 10,000 Haidas, all of who spoke one of many dialects and many of whom could also speak *Tlingit* or *Sm'algyax* (Coast Tsimshian) and Chinook Jargon (or Chinuk Wawa), the trade language. Residential schools hit our language hard. In a matter of two generations, the language was decimated. In the last 50 years, only elders and a few younger people who grew up with their grandparents or who did not go to residential school spoke the Haida language. During this time, the language was spoken in certain realms, including at potlatches and in church, and certainly when elders did not want their children or grandchildren to understand what they were saying.

Interestingly, the Haida singing tradition stayed alive. A few elders kept Haida traditional songs alive through the oppressive years when speaking and the missionaries and Indian Agent shunned singing in the language. Song composers such as Richard *Nahiilaans*, Amanda Edgars, Robert Ridley *Ganyaa*, Emily Parnell, Dorothy Edgars and Alfred Young, *Haayaas* created new songs despite the pressures of the outside world.

Thankfully, their songs live on in recordings and in the dance groups today. During this reawakening period, a number of Haida dance groups began, often with one or two influential grandmothers such as my grandfather's sister, Grace Wilson-Dewitt, at the helm. Since then, there has been a boom in new composers, songs, recordings, masks and regalia.

Today, of the 6000 Haidas, there are approximately two-dozen fluent speakers remaining in Old Massett, Skidegate, Hydaburg and Ketchikan as well as in urban areas such as Vancouver and Seattle. Since I began my graduate studies, three of my teachers, Stephen Brown, Claude Jones and Mary Swanson have passed away. Our language is in a critical state of endangerment. According to Fishman's stages in *Reversing Language Shift*, *Xaad Kil* is in stage eight, the last of language retention where only a few elders speak the language (1991). As Erma Lawrence said, "*Xaad Kihl tl' guusuugang*. Very few people speak in *Xaad Kil* nowadays" (Lawrence, 2010, p. 99). We do however have a growing number of adult language learners in all Haida communities. It is crucial that we create a strong cohort of speakers immediately! We need to address it as individuals, as a community, as a nation and as a country. Language revitalization efforts have been occurring in all Haida communities for over forty years. I will highlight some of the major language efforts in Old Massett, Skidegate and in Alaska.

Grassroots language efforts have been happening in Old Massett with a number of activities. The Chief Matthews band school began a language program with *naanii* Ethel Jones and *naanii* Grace Wilson-Dewitt. I was one of their first students in the 1970s. The program extended to the school district, in partnership with the Band Councils. In the 1990s, a group of passionate learners including Ernie Collison, Elizabeth Moore,

Candace Weir, Vince Collison and April Churchill started up the *Xaad Kil* Society and held Saturday night dinners where they shared a meal and learned Haida from elders. They also hosted a Haida Immersion Camp at *T'alang St'lang* camp with Haida PhD student Fred White. There were 20 participants. Soon after, in 1999, Old Massett Village Council began partnering with Simon Fraser University to offer a Haida Language Proficiency certificate with Dr. Ignace at the helm. It is a two-year program that has graduated two-dozen adult learners, including many like me, who are now teaching the language. The *Xaad Kihlgaa Hl Suu.u* Society began in 2007 and focused on community adult courses, resource and curriculum development and the Language Nest. We continue to partner with Simon Fraser University, and we are in the middle of a seven-year language development program with them. The Society also works with Dr. Jordan Lachler from the University of Alberta. In early 2015, the Society hosted a 4-month Intermediate adult language program with 14 students taught by Dr. Ignace, Dr. Lachler, elders Lawrence Bell, *Tsinni* Claude Jones, who passed away soon after, and June Russ.

In Skidegate, language revitalization also began in the 1970s with grassroots language revitalization. In the 1990s, *Xaayda Kil* was in the schools and they saw the need for curriculum development. With Frederick White and others, they hosted a 10-day Immersion program with 40 participants. This led to the Skidegate Haida Immersion program. The elders continue to work on instructional CDs, a glossary of over 11,000 words, curriculum development, translation and documentation.

Skidegate and Old Massett each have programs to teach the language to babies and toddlers. Skidegate has a Headstart program with Jenny Cross, Herb Jones and

Jackie Casey instructing. In Old Massett, the *Xaad Kil Gwaaygangee*, the Haida family program began after members of the *Xaad Kil Society* visited New Zealand. Today Blanche Bell and Darlene White lead the program through the Haida Health Centre. These youth and toddler programs are working. It is reassuring to hear the Haida language high school teachers say that they can tell which children have attended the toddler learning programs and have parents practicing language at home.

Language revitalization began in the 1970s in Alaska, too. Elders worked diligently with the Alaska Native Language Centre in Fairbanks and quickly developed a writing system language lessons and a dictionary. In 2004, with Dr. Jordan Lachler at the helm, a cohort of adult learners began studying *Xaad Kil* together. One of their biggest successes was the mentorship between Ben Young and his grandfather Claude Morrison. It was around this time that the Alaskan and Haida Gwaii language learners started working together. The three dialects get together once a year for an International Haida Language Gathering where language resources are shared, and we work towards a common orthography and on joint projects together.

We have a great amount of language resources from recordings to dictionaries, glossaries, books and apps (Swanton, 1905a, 1905b, 1908), (Harrison 1898 and 1899), (Enrico, 1996 and 2005), (Lachler 2010), (Lawrence 2010). We have had a fair number of scholars and community members dedicated to documentation and resource development. The Skidegate, Old Massett and Alaskan communities have been working successfully towards a unified orthography that makes the language more accessible to learners. Linguist Dr. Jordan Lachler once told me that there are enough Haida language

resources to bring us to a good level of fluency if we put the time towards it. (I look forward to testing this theory as soon as I graduate!)

All communities struggle with funding. Despite being one of three Canadian language isolates, we still have to compete for funding against all of the other indigenous languages. Locally, we are grateful for the Gwaii Trust Society's and the Council of the Haida Nation's recent commitment to the Haida language.

One thing that we do have a lot of is hope. It is the common thread throughout *That Which Makes Us Haida*, the book that honours the language champions (Steedman and Collison, 2011). Hope is what I feel when I see the number of new learners on Haida Gwaii and in Alaska. Nika Collison sums it up nicely,

We're waking up after decades of silence. We're decolonizing our minds. Central to this process is the Haida language. Our language is who we are, through it we are turning back the tide of cultural unlearning and creating a Haida future rich with history, language and a worldview for our children and their children as *id kuuniisii* did for us. (Steedman and Collison, 2011, p. 20)

Chapter 2 - Methodology

Introduction to the Methodology

It was important to follow a methodology that was true to my beliefs as an Aboriginal Haida researcher. While doing the course-work for my degree, I was immersed in a vast range of research methodologies. I often felt overwhelmed with the theories and terminologies as I tried to figure out where I fit in the academic world. With the help of Chilisa's *Indigenous Research Methodologies* (2012), Wilson's *Research is Ceremony* (2008), and Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies* (1999) I saw that my Haida way of thinking was not only acceptable but essential for me to make sense of my research journey. When I was searching for the light at the end of the grad-school tunnel, I reviewed the language revitalization dissertations of three indigenous scholars. Judith Thompson said "I needed to look at research from an Indigenous paradigm, not just having an Indigenous perspective housed within a western research framework" (2012, p. 13). I agreed totally! This helped me downscale my research proposal and approach. Brock Pitawanakwat (2009) reminded me to focus on the methodology and beliefs of my people. His research also reiterated that we have the language revitalization answers within ourselves. Patricia Rosborough (2012) also helped me think about staying positive in my research and true to myself with my words. Words are powerful and can quickly capture or lose a reader. For instance, whenever I heard or read about the need to decolonize, I lost interest (see Alfred, 1999; Smith, 1999). I do not like to think of myself as in need of decolonization! Rosborough suggested we replace "decolonize" with "indigenization" (2012, p. 39) and my ears perked up. She also

reinforced the importance of having a positive mindset and a positive written style. Their passionate stories of language revitalization reminded me that I was on the right path because it was my own Haida path.

A Blended Theoretical Approach

The methodology for my research combined a Haida Paradigm with some aspects of Grounded Theory (Chilisa, 2012; Palys, 1997). I strived to stay within a Haida way of thinking, researching and representing. I aimed to do a qualitative rather than a quantitative study. I gathered my data from interviews and literature. I used a mind-map for the overall project and then for each chapter. I sorted and coded the findings as they related to food, medicines, rituals and supernatural beings. I researched each of my four areas of interest until I saturated the chapters with information and then focused on my selected points to ensure that I was providing quality information. This was a good theoretical framework because it suited my broad topic that hasn't been thoroughly researched and it suited my organizational style. I reviewed and sorted my data from interviews, archival materials and photographs and prioritized the findings. Then, my 7-year-old niece also helped colour –code and sort my findings into eight categories of characteristics needed to be a good language speaker as shown in the appendix.

An Indigenous Paradigm

Luckily for me, there are a handful of aboriginal scholars contemplating and writing about an Indigenous research paradigm. Wilson, a Cree researcher, describes an indigenous paradigm as a set of underlying beliefs that guide our actions (2008). These beliefs include the way we view our own reality (ontology), how we think about or know

this reality (epistemology), our ethics and morals (axiology) and how we go about our learning (methodology) (Wilson, 2008, p. 13). Even when I wasn't looking through this academic lens, I was still conducting my research within my own Haida paradigm.

The four Rs – respect, relevance, reciprocity and responsibility are a good guideline for indigenous research (Kirkness and Barnhardt, 1991). It was a good starting point for my research too. I needed to have respect for my family, my clan, my Haida community, and myself as well as for my Haida language and ancestors. My research needed to be relevant to my Haida community. Reciprocity is a big part of Haida culture. There is a constant tension of give-and-take between people and between people and the environment. This reciprocity played out in my research as I gained knowledge from the community, and as people expect me to give back and share with the Haida community. Responsibility was another strong element of my research. I am responsible for presenting the words of the interviewees in a good light. I am responsible for my words. Other values of love, pride and humour were also important in my Haida research paradigm. It was important for me to love the topic I researched, as it was this love of *Xaad kil*, thoughts of my late mother, and my love of my culture that kept me going through the difficult times in the research process. Haidas are fiercely proud and it did affect my research. I strived for a thesis that not only I could be proud of but my community could be proud of as well. Last but not least, incorporating humour in my research process was important since it is so important to our culture and because humour is such a part of who I am. I had to allow for the Trickster to show its face in my research process. It was important for me to have fun during this research process despite the seriousness of the topic. These values guided me.

A Haida Paradigm

As a Haida woman living on Haida Gwaii and working as an administrator for Haida language, I only know how to do my research in a Haida way. Using a Haida paradigm also meant I was guided by Haida philosophies or core beliefs. I chose five Haida philosophies to guide my research:

Gin ‘waadluwaan gudahl kwagiidang, Everything is connected

The belief that everything is connected was a guiding principle since I am examining our connection to spirituality and the environment. This belief tugged at my mind as I tried to categorize and organize my findings. Often a story of a supernatural being related to a traditional food, medicine or ritual and I had to decide what chapter to fit the story into. Instead of fighting to fit my ideas into neat boxes, I let the topics shine through wherever they needed and I strived to reinforce this interconnectedness throughout.

Aajii hlan-gwaay uu ya’aats’ ginaan uu Giidangwa, The world is as sharp as a knife

This is another important philosophy that I had to remember. (Swanton 1905a, p. 37; Boelscher, 1988, p. 8). In Haida language revitalization we are walking on the edge of a knife. The life and death of our language is a scary reality. If we are not careful, the Haida language could fall off the edge of the earth forever. This proverb also reminds me to be careful with my intentions and words; that I am walking on an edge of a knife and that my thoughts and words need to be good. This philosophy is also a reminder that I need to approach my research with a clean mind.

Metaphorically, the phrase expresses the ambiguity of social and supernatural relationships, in that statements, symbols, rules and categories can be reinterpreted, and that all being of the supernatural world, which contains within it the social world, and vice versa, can potentially change appearance and intentions, are able to be beneficial or harmful. (Boelscher, 1988, p. 8)

Boelscher's interpretation speaks to re-interpretation, which I did throughout my research. Re-interpretation is a common theme in storytelling, therefore this was an excellent proverb for me as I strived to understand and reinterpret the connection to the natural and supernatural world.

Dalang 'waadluwaan aa HI kil 'laagang, To speak kindly of everyone

This philosophy is "to do good with words" and was a common phrase said at the end of a speech or in thanks (Boelscher, 1991, p. 122). It is a strong Haida belief to strive to do good with your words and it was what I aimed to do throughout my thesis journey. To speak kindly of others is also an important belief and I aimed to do that throughout my work.

Xaadas K'asgadee, Haida time

Xaadas k'asgadee is an appropriate concept for research. For me to have my research accepted in the Haida community, it was important for me to take my time and trust the process. I come from the Yakoun river, and it is ingrained in river people to follow the tides. My *naanii* taught me that Haida-time turned into a derogatory time. It is a respectable timeline because it means we trust our instinct, and respect the tides. As Naanii Nora Bellis said in *Yakoun River of Life*:

He must belong to the Yakoun River, he's so slow. They think it's the people who were so slow. It wasn't the people. They were waiting for the tide to come in. And the tide goes up there really slow, way up the inlet. It wasn't an excuse. They had lots of patience. To live by the tide, you have to wait for the tide to

come in, tide to go out, you're more like 'tide people. If you go with the tide you get there real quick. If you're bucking the tide, you can't get there. (Council of the Haida Nation, 1990, p. 8)

Hearing people ask me why it's taking so long to finish my degree was difficult at times but I trusted the process and remembered that I also had a family, a café and a 4-month Haida immersion program to help organize and participate in as well as a cultural resource management diploma to finish. I should have just told them I come from the Yakoun!

Hawiidaan uu iitl' gwii k'aahlasang, Soon, we will win

This was a constant saying of the late *chinni* Stephen Brown (Steedman & Collison, 2011, p. 14). I strived to be hopeful for my Haida language and have a positive mindset as I conduct my research. I want my research to be a small piece of the puzzle that helps us become Haida language speakers again and I truly believe we will win our language back again.

Approach

In *Decolonizing Methodologies – Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Smith describes 25 different types of research projects. Of these, seven contain methodologies that I incorporated in my research including: storytelling, celebrating survival, revitalization, connecting, reading, envisioning and protecting (Smith, 2004, p. 142). I listened to many stories from community members and captured some of their life stories in my research. Storytelling was one of the strongest components of my research as I documented the stories of so many people. I also took on a storytelling tone as I wrote

my thesis so that I could make my research more accessible to my target audience, the Haida language learners. I also celebrated the survival of the Haida language, contributed to language revitalization, read old texts with a new lens, envisioned the future of the language and contributed to the protection of our Haida language and traditional knowledge. I did this while staying in a Haida paradigm.

I also chose to incorporate some Haida language in my thesis. Throughout the past 40 years, the spelling of the Massett dialect of *Xaad Kil* has been a work in progress, to say the least. We have different language learners and language teachers spelling the language according to when and how they were trained, but not always the same way. As we work towards a common orthography, I humbly ask that readers (linguists and Haida alike) are kind in their criticism of my spelling. It reflects the work in progress but is my honest effort.

Collaborative Approach

I began thinking about, praying about and planning my thesis topic in 2012. I presented my thesis topic at the 3-Dialect Haida Language Conference in Massett in October of that year as well. I received overwhelming support and I proceeded with the community's blessing.

I also shared my initial idea with members of the *Xaad Kihlgaa Hl Suu.u* Society (the Old Massett Speak Haida Society): Florence Lockyer, Vince Collison, Leona Clow as well as learners Candace Weir, Christian White, *Jaskwaan* and *Jaalen*. I shared my thesis topic with our two linguists, Dr. Marianne Ignace of SFU who became a member of my thesis committee, and Dr. Jordan Lachler, Director of the Canadian Indigenous Language and Literacy Development Institute (CILLDI) at the University of Alberta,

who supported me throughout. I also relied on my Haida language elder teachers Claude Jones, June Russ and Lawrence Bell who had a wealth of Haida language, history and cultural knowledge. I often called on these individuals when I needed help with the research design, participant recruitment, data collection, language translation and interpretation.

The methodology was participatory as I engaged members of the Eagle and Raven clans. I thought of my *Tsij Git'anee* Eagle clan and my responsibility to my clan. I am also grateful for the support of my husband's *Yahgu 'Laanaas* Raven clan. I aimed to have the voice of both genders and both moieties in my research. All of these people were my support system. They were the ones I turned to when I needed advice, a home-cooked meal and even a kick in the pants along my thesis journey.

I believe that my research topic needed to be a collaborative learning experience as speakers and learners have much to share with one another. I conducted a small focus group to encourage discussion. In my experience, collaboration has also been the best way to create positive change in the Haida community. A collaborative approach was a good fit also because it called upon the Haida language community to participate more fully and I know they will help implement the findings. As I did more and more interviews and research, I was more excited to share my findings with the community of language learners and get feedback. The *Xaad Kil* immersion cohort and the beginner *Xaad Kil* cohort were incredibly supportive and eager to hear about my latest finding and share some of their own knowledge. I look forward to the next step of going out together to harvest the traditional medicines, practice the rituals and pray to the supernatural beings together to strengthen our *Xaad Kil*.

Documentation and Data Collection

The Interviews

I interviewed over a dozen people based on their specific interest or knowledge of language, stories and plant use. I also examined numerous interviews from previous Haida research projects. From my years working in Haida language and in Haida heritage, I had a good idea of the people who had something to offer to my research. Although I had many more people on my wish list of interviewees, I am grateful that my wise supervisors suggested that I reel it in and downsize my list of interviewees.

My target population included: fluent speakers, elders, learners, storytellers and traditional harvesters. These people were valuable because they are the Haida knowledge-keepers. They have knowledge of traditional stories, medicines and practices that could strengthen the Haida language. The younger participants were selected for their passion and participation in the Haida language and culture. I informed each of them that I would select information and specific quotes from their interviews to use in my printed thesis and they were happy to share with me.

I began my interviews in Old Massett. I am so grateful for the wise advice of Vern Williams Jr. who is a knowledgeable plant harvester and song composer; Christian White, a master carver, dance leader and intermediate language learner; *Jaskwaan* Bedard, my wise little sister and language apprentice; Candace Weir, my grad school study-buddy and passionate learner and teacher; *Jaalen* Edenshaw my brother-in-law, master carver and great researcher; Vince Collison, my partner in all cultural initiatives and my technical guru; Elizabeth Moore, a pioneer in Haida language learning and a strong language advocate and my older brother Leo Gagnon who grew up with our great-

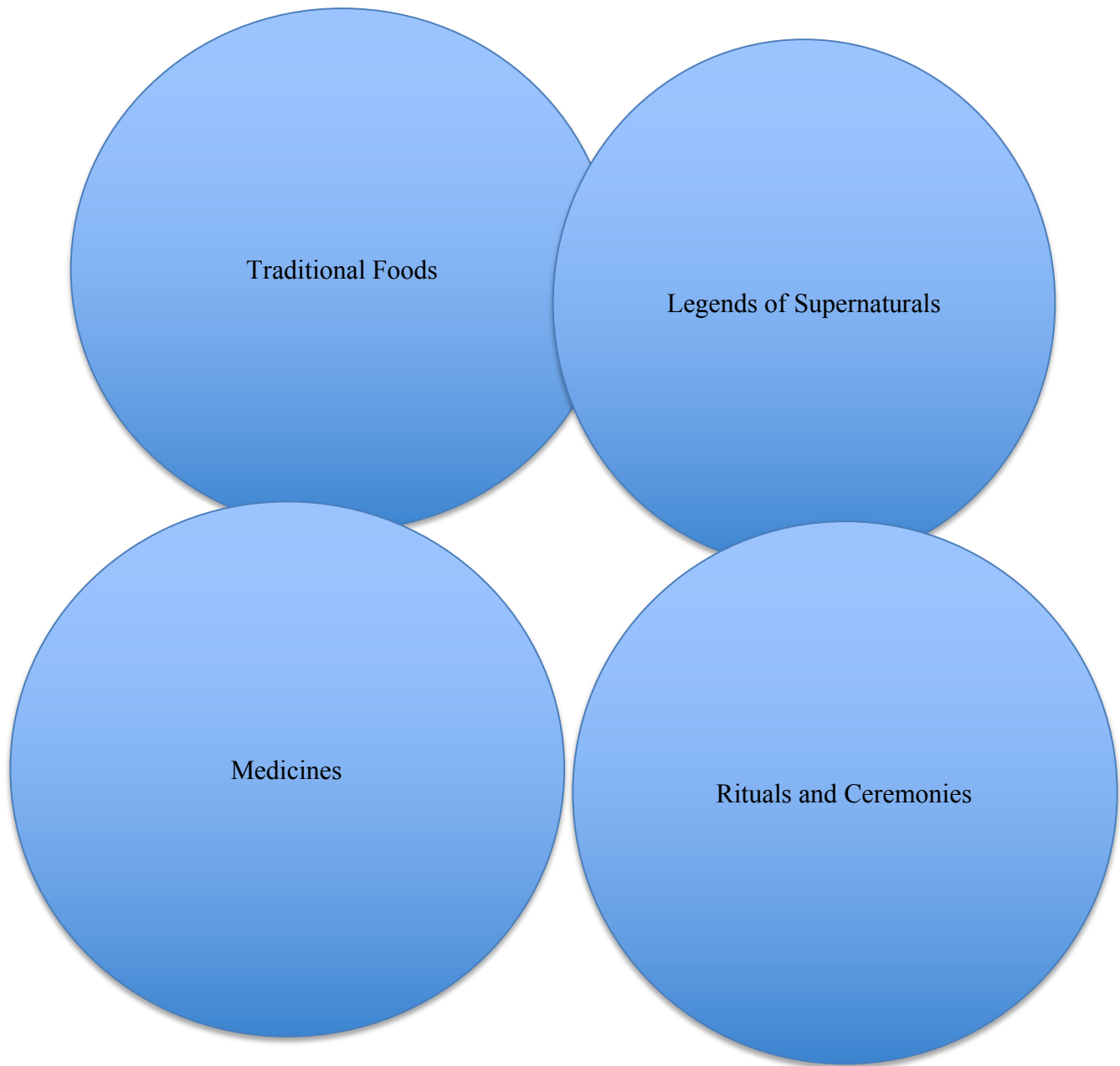
grandmother and is a walking encyclopaedia. I also travelled to Vancouver to interview Woody Morrison, an Alaskan Haida elder and storyteller.

My language mentors included Claude Jones, who died shortly after I interviewed him at age 94; Leona Clow, my aunty and advisor on all things; Lawrence Bell with his amazing genealogy and language knowledge, and June Russ, who brought me to another time in a Haida woman's young life. I am also so grateful for the late Mary Swanson and Stephen Brown whose stories would suddenly come on while I was working on my computer. These elders patiently guided me both on my *Xaad Kil* learning journey and thesis research journey.

Haw'aa also to my Skidegate friends. The Skidegate Haida Immersion (SHIP) coordinator Kevin Borsario and Ay-Ay Hans were so helpful in the process. SHIP was so generous with their resources and I thank them for the use of the glossary, recordings and the supernatural database. Barb Wilson, Diane Brown, Joanne Yovanovich, and Jenny Cross were also great allies in my research process.

The interviews and focus groups took one to three hours. I had a set of semi-structured questions that I followed. However, for most participants, all I had to do was introduce my topic and show them the following chart and they took the interview from there.

How can we revitalize the Haida language?



The semi-structured questions

1. Tell me about your involvement in Haida language and culture.
2. What qualities make a good Haida speaker? What are the traditional ways to get these qualities?
3. Could a traditional diet make us better Haida language speakers? What Haida foods would you recommend we eat to make us better language speakers?
4. Tell me about Haida medicines that we could incorporate into our diets to strengthen our language speaking and bring about an improved memory, bravery and luck for instance.
5. Do you know of any Haida beliefs or rituals that could help us learn our language, such as bringing luck, protection, and wealth or to find lost items?
6. What tools or cultural treasures could we bring to our language learning, such as drums, rattles; spirit catchers help us learn Haida?
7. Are there rituals we could incorporate to help us speak Haida, such as fasting, food burnings, bathing in ocean?
8. Are there community ceremonies like potlatching or pole-raising or namings that could help revitalize the language?
9. What supernatural beings could we call upon to help revitalize the Haida language? How would we go about calling on the supernatural beings for help?
10. Do you know any old stories that have a lesson that we could incorporate into our language learning?
11. What is the connection between the Haida language, the ocean, land and animals?
12. Tell me how you came to know about the things you told me about in this interview.

I made a video and audio recording for most interviews, so I would have a back up in case one recorder did not work. Thankfully, I was smart enough to know my technical limits because I often ended up with only one recording if Vince Collison was not around to check on me. I transcribed the interviews myself. Each interview took one to three hours to transcribe. I often went back to the participants to clarify their statements. I stored the transcripts and the recordings at the Haida language archives.

Literature Review

Because my research topic covered such a wide range of areas, I decided to add a literature review section in each chapter. Some resources were valuable for all four chapters, however. Resources such as Swanton (1905a; 1905b; 1908) were valuable to all the chapters because of his work with the elders in the 1900s. He documented a special time in Haida history; a time when Haidas spoke *Xaad Kil*, when medicine men were called upon to heal and when traditional medicine, stories, songs and rituals were alive and well. Swanton worked diligently for the short time he was on Haida Gwaii, believing he was doing salvage anthropology for a dying culture.

I also had access to a wide range of sound files, interview transcripts, manuscripts and notes from numerous researchers. It was a challenge for me to not get stuck in the research phase! If I had all the time in the world, I'd still be reading and listening to all of these interesting resources. In retrospect, I would have found the funds to hire an assistant to help compile and transcribe some of the archival information I wanted.

Having community researcher and community curator experience, I have had the opportunity to meet and work with a number of researchers. Some of them enthusiastically encouraged me to look through their transcripts, manuscripts or listen to

their tapes. I had the opportunity to ask Dr. Marianne Ignace (Boelscher) about specific findings in her research and I was able to refer back to transcripts and talk to coordinators of various past Haida research projects. I am grateful to Dr. Carolyn Kenny for sharing the transcripts from *A Study in the role of music and the arts in the revitalization of Haida Culture*, 1999. I also found *That Which Makes Us Haida* (2011) a good resource for capturing the ideas and voices of Haida language champions that have passed on. Lastly, Vince Collison referred me to the Haida Gwaii Oral History Project (1991) that he worked on for teachings from Henry Geddes, Ethel Jones and Grace Wilson-Dewitt. I am also grateful for the resources from the *Xaad Kihlgaa Hl Suu.u* Society, the Haida Heritage and Repatriation Society and the Skidegate Haida Immersion program.

Personal Process

Being balanced and focused was important for me in my thesis journey. My work for the *Xaad Kihlgaa Hl Suu.u* Society and as a language learner also kept me busy as I worked on my thesis. As I was conducting my research, I was also planning and then participating in a 4-month adult language immersion program. Interestingly, it was the 15-minute-a-day promise that I made to my supervisor that got me through my first two chapters while being a full-time immersion student. I also scheduled a few weekends at the beach or on campus to give myself dedicated time for research and writing. One of my favourite places to write was on the beach in Hawaii after I participated in the Stabilizing Indigenous Languages Conference. The ocean, the sunshine and the ancient story of Haidas paddling to Hawaii mesmerized me.

Journaling was important as I documented my own learning path. I documented my feelings and experiences as I went through the research process. I often wrote my

thoughts in the column of each chapter. Following the advice of Chilisa, journaling also gave voice to the emotional tone and my connection to the interviewees (2012, p. 168). Lastly, as I became absorbed in the stories of the supernatural beings and ancestors, I began to make offerings to them and to ask them for help. I began feeling their presence in my life and dreams and I documented these personal experiences as well.

It was only natural that I incorporated my new learning into my own language revitalization efforts. It was important for me to “walk the talk.” I consciously ate the foods, harvested the medicines and practice the rituals that I suggested would help revitalize the Haida language. I could feel my *liis*, the tie that connects me to Haida Gwaii and my ancestors strengthening. I look forward to experiencing the wonders that I speak of in my thesis.

Ethical Responsibility

Since I planned on conducting interviews in my Haida community as a scholar, I needed to get approval from the University of Victoria, the Old Massett Village Council and *Xaad Kihlgaa Hl Suu.u*, Speak Haida Society. I received written support from all three organizations.

As part of the UVIC Ethics application process I created an informed consent form, an oral informed consent script and a set of interview questions for the interviewees. My supervisors and UVIC Human Research Ethics Board approved these.

As part of my responsibility, I will share my thesis with the participants, with Old Massett Village Council, the *Xaad Kihlgaa Hl Suu.u* Society and Skidegate Haida Immersion Program in a community presentation and at the International Haida Language Conference in Juneau, Alaska in June, 2016.

Thesis Outline

Aajii uu dii unsadgahlgudanggan - This is what I wanted to find out

I aimed to answer two questions in my research:

1. What ancient traditions and beliefs can the Haida community revitalize and incorporate into our language revitalization practices?
2. How can traditional Haida, food, medicines, rituals and supernatural connections help to revitalize the endangered Haida language?

This thesis will recommend approximately 100 ways our ancestors might have recommended to heal our sick language. These recommendations are organized into four main chapters and broken down into sections relating to the ocean, land and sky. The appendices further sort the information into ten specific categories such as strength and luck that make a good *Xaad Kil* speaker.

Xaadas taaw, Haida foods

This chapter outlines the traditional foods that can help a person stay healthy, focused and alert while learning Haida language. It is well known that foods affect a person's physical and mental well-being; therefore, it is important for language learners to be cognizant of what they ingest and the traditional beliefs that surround traditional foods. I will focus on two dozen of traditional foods that could specifically help Haidas live a healthier, more grounded lifestyle that could foster *Xaad Kil* learning.

Xil, medicine

Haida medicines are powerful and can help a language learner stay strong, healthy, brave and to speak and sing well. We continue to have a strong belief in our own medicines; therefore, it is important to incorporate them in our language revitalization efforts. Medicines include things we ingest and put on our bodies as well as symbolic medicines. This chapter introduces the reader to two dozen specific medicines that could heal our voices, minds and spirits.

Ritual and ceremony

This chapter analyzes the significant rituals and ceremonies that could influence a language learner's abilities. Our ancestors practiced many rituals and ceremonies to improve their luck, wealth and well-being. This chapter will focus on a number of rituals and ceremonies that language learners could practice today to improve *Xaad Kil* speaking and understanding.

SGaanawee, supernatural beings

The last major chapter of the thesis is on the supernatural beings. We have a connection and a strong belief in the supernatural world around us. Our ancestors called upon supernatural beings in times of crisis. It is time for us to call upon the *SGaanawee* to help revitalize our language. Of the hundreds of supernatural beings around Haida Gwaii, I chose twenty-two that could help us on our language journey.

Conclusion

In the conclusion, I will wrap up the ways we can revitalize *Xaad Kil* in a Haida way. The foods, medicines, rituals, ceremonies and supernatural beings have the power

to heal. In the conclusion, the findings are sorted and presented according to the change they can bring about in our language revitalization efforts. I mention the limits and impact of my research as well. In the conclusion, I also speak about the future of Xaad Kil revitalization and I make recommendations to help us become Xaad Kil speakers.

Haw'aa for letting me share my story with you. I hope that my research will inspire you to ground yourself in your language learning. *Iitl' gwii kaalaangsaang*. We will win! *Hawksdaa!* Let's get started!

Chapter 3 - *Xaadas Taaw*, Haida Food

Xaadas Taaw, Haida Foods - Introduction

“If we don’t have our food and language, we wish for it” (Weir, 2014).

In this chapter, I will focus on traditional foods that can help nourish and heal our endangered language by healing the learners. This chapter will show the benefits of following our ancestors’ diet. I will focus on the main foods our ancestors ate: fish, shellfish, berries, seaweed, birds and deer and on alternatives to traditional foods we could enjoy today. I will look at how our diet has changed since contact and how we can get back to a Haida diet in a modern world. This chapter focuses on the food our ancestors; specifically, our mothers and grandmothers ate. The foods mentioned are also still familiar with Haidas today and are still accessible. Some foods, such as roots are not as familiar nowadays; therefore, I focused on more popular carbohydrate sources such as food from the garden. Some traditional foods such as sea urchins and abalone have been so overharvested that they are not a staple in the Haida diet anymore and I did not list them here. From the interviews I conducted and from the literature, it is fair to say that a traditional diet is the best diet for us and that food sovereignty is integral to language survival and sovereignty. Harvesting, preparing and eating our traditional foods is also a powerful way to teach the language. Our foods are so important to us, as

Jaskwaan says:

We are extremely fortunate to be living here on Haida Gwaii and have such abundance of food available to us still. In respecting our relationship to that food and the powerful ability food has to bring people together and act as a focal point

to *Xaad Kil* conversation, we demonstrate *yahguudang*. (Bedard, 2007, p. 24)

The Ancestral Diet

Kuzawa believes we have all inherited a biological memory and that our bodies inherently know and want the same diets of our ancestors, especially the diet of our mother and her mother and grandmother. He calls this the Ancestral diet:

If you're trying to eat a healthy diet, you need to think about more than what you put on your own plate. Thanks to the ways in which evolution has shaped human biology, it also matters what your mother and her mother ate, and what your distant ancestors ate tens of thousands of years ago... Thus, our genetic makeup contains a "memory" of our ancestors' diets and our bodies have been shaped by evolution to expect something similar.

(http://www.northwestern.edu/onebook/the-reluctant-mr-darwin/essays/evolutionary_medicine.html)

The Ancestral diet makes sense in a many northwest coast and matrilineal societies. The Nuxalk study on food consumption for instance, interviewed grandmother-mother-daughter interviews in the 1990s on traditional food consumption, recognizing the importance of the matrilineal line in their diets (Kuhnlein, Erasmus, Spigelski and Burlingame, 2013, p. 181). Haida lifestyle, as we are matrilineal and we inherit everything from our mother. There is also an old belief that we are tied to our mother and our land by a *liis*, an invisible thread. Like an umbilical cord that connects and feeds us in utero, our *liis* continues to deeply connect us to our mother and the food and environment of our mother.

The Haida Diet and Food Guide

A Haida diet consists of food from the abundant land and sea of Haida Gwaii. The traditional diet before Contact did not include refined sugar, dairy, flour, nuts or alcohol.

Our food did not come from a store or out of plastic wrappers. The traditional diet consisted of a lot of seafood, berries, roots, birds and mammals. Many of these foods are still main staples in today's Haida diet, however we need to make more of an effort to incorporate them into our diet every day for improved well being.

The Canadian Food Guide does not work for a Haida diet because it is based on four food groups: vegetables and fruit, grain products, milk and alternatives and meat and alternatives. (<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php>) Even the First Nations, Inuit and Metis food guide is based upon these four food groups (First Nations Health Authority, 2014). I agree with Harrison (2007, p. 43) that in order to understand the indigenous way of thinking, we have to understand how particular Indigenous peoples organized their world. Haida food categories are not the same as the Canadian Food Groups we all learned about in school. It doesn't work to superimpose the Canadian Food Group onto Haida foods. The food guide promotes the consumption of dairy, grains and nuts, which are fairly new to Haidas. The Canadian aboriginal food guide even lists canned and powdered milk on the chart. (<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/pubs/fnim-pnim/index-eng.php>). Dairy was not a traditional food and many aboriginals are lactose intolerant. Haidas got their calcium from other sources like fish bones. I will not include a section on dairy as an important food for language learners because I do not believe it specifically supports a healthy Haida diet and I do not know any lactose intolerant person who can focus on learning while struggling with holding in a *kusad* in class!

A traditional Haida Food Guide would be arranged differently. In school, Haida children are taught about the traditional diet based upon the seasonal harvesting calendar.

The natural way to understand and appreciate traditional foods is to continuously go out and harvest and prepare them. In the Haida way of thinking, our world is based around the sky, the ocean and the forest, therefore I will present this chapter based on these Haida categories and I will mention the seasonal harvesting. I will share stories about harvesting the food and talk about the nutritional benefit of the foods as they relate to language learning.

A Shift in the Haida Diet

Over the last two hundred years, the Haida diet has strayed somewhat from the traditional diet of our ancestors, although some staples, including fish and berries, have endured. Kuhnlein and Turner recognize the shift from traditional foods to store-bought food (1991, p. 7). “Food consumption is also a biological process and our bodies adapt over generations to certain diets. Abrupt changes to dietary regimes can lead to problems” (Turner, 2014, Vol. 2, p. 257). The rapid change in the Haida diet caused many health challenges that continue to inflict us today.

The last two hundred years brought drastic changes to the lifestyle of the Haida. The Maritime Fur trade and Christianity played a role in degrading the Haida diet starting in the 1800s. One of the first trade items introduced to the Haida was steel, thus giving these people the name *ya'aats' xaadee*, people of the steel or iron people. Besides being useful carving and carpentry tools, the new steel was useful in food harvesting and preparation. The *ya'aats' xaadee* also introduced sugar, flour, dairy and alcohol. All of these really impacted the Haida diet and the diets on the coast as Turner notes:

The causal factors are very complex and relate to, among other factors, an array of regulations; time constraints due to wage jobs, school requirements and other obligations, loss of ability to pass on knowledge about foods from older to

younger generations; prevalence and easier availability of marketed foods, concerns about pollution, declining populations and productivity; and loss of easy access to traditional food (Kuhnlein, Erasmus, Spigelski and Burlingame, 2013, p. 182).

Hundreds of years later, we struggle with diabetes, lactose intolerance, cancer, alcoholism, tooth decay and obesity. Then, when children were sent to Indian Residential Schools, their traditional diets were further replaced with oatmeal, powdered milk, bread and pork. Children went from eating seafood to eating mush and pork. It was the first time many children had milk. My own mom remembers the Edmonton Residential School where she was sent at the age of four:

It was like what I imagine jail to be. Every day was the same. We lined up according to numbers. We had to be in straight lines before being allowed into the dining hall. We had to quickly and quietly. Every morning we had sticky porridge. We ate mainly pork for dinner. (Jaine, 1993, p. 11)

Art Collison also remembered the residential school diet as being very meagre and he sadly remembers the hunger of him and his friends:

When we were hungry we would hunt for rabbits...the Salvation Army would bring some seaweed, but actually it was only dried kelp and no one would eat it because it wasn't the kind of black, tasty seaweed that we picked at home. (Jaine, 1993, p. 36)

To be hungry and lonely must have been a terrible experience for all the children and so unlike a traditional Haida experience of eating together surrounded by laughter and an abundance of healthy food.

Even when there was a day school in the 1960s in Old Massett, teachers forced the children to take cod-liver oil even though traditional eulachon grease was known to be more beneficial. *Chinni* Claude joked about the schoolmaster forcing the children to take his cod liver oil meanwhile he was feeding his own children eulachon grease because he knew it was better for them (C. Jones, 2014).

Haidas really took to sugar! So much so that they began putting sugar on top of berries instead of traditional eulachon grease. Haida ladies also really enjoyed baking. Ladies began baking huge amounts of pies and cakes for family gatherings, potlatches and church fundraisers. Women like Florence Davidson became known for their delicious baking. Her son Claude remembered, “all I know is that she used to do a lot of baking – baking pies, baking bread, baking buns. You name it, she had all the pastries. So I kept pretty fat all my life” (Blackman, 1982, p. 181). For me, it was all about my *naanii*'s homemade bread and boiled raisin cake that she baked in bulk every Sunday. Too much of a good thing does hurt our learning ability, however. *Jaskwaan* sums it up right:

When you talk about nourishing our brains, it's proven sugar and flour dumps you down, it makes you comatose. If you eat a piece of pie and then try learning Haida, it doesn't sink in. Diet should be a part of our language learning. (Bedard, 2014)

Another introduced food that Haidas still have trouble with is milk. Cows were an introduced species. Some people did not have milk until they went to Residential school. Canned and powdered milk became a normal addition to the Haida diet even when many were lactose-intolerant. Even new mothers were encouraged to bottle-feed their babies and many stopped breast-feeding at the urging of the doctors and nurses.

Today we have a combined diet of traditional foods and contemporary foods yet people understand processed foods are harmful and most wish they could stick to a more ancestral diet. Pat Weir gave a speech about eating our traditional foods:

Why are we so weak now...we had to go out for our grub, made us stronger, our natural resources. Our clams, our devilfish, our mussels, chitons, all that stuff, deer meat...It's too bad – you see all the stuff they get from the store, it's all poisoned stuff, all the beef, even the apples...It's the chemicals in there that make them bright and good [laughs]. They taste good though. But they're not the true form of natural food. (Weir, 1999)

Sticking to the idea that if our grandmother would not recognize the food then we shouldn't eat it is a good one for *Xaad Kil* learners who want to get back to a more traditional diet.

Literature Review of the Haida Diet

There is not much published information focused specifically on a traditional Haida diet. However, there are bits of information in many publications that mention the Haida reliance on food from the sea and forest, Northwest coast foraging or Haida plant harvesting. Researchers such as Swanton, (1905a, 1905b and 1908), Turner (1995, 2004, 2014), Kuhnlein and Turner (1991) Blackman (1982) and Herbert (1999) (Kuhnlein, Erasmus, Spigelski and Burlingame, 2013) referred to northwest coast traditional foods and specific Haida foods. They mention traditional foods but not with a Haida language revitalization lens. I therefore had to examine the hundreds of traditional foods mentioned and then narrow down my research to specific foods with excellent nutritional qualities or supernatural connections that could help in language revitalization.

There is plenty written on foraging and gardening in the Northwest Coast. Turner (1975), Benoliel (2011) and Kinegal and Simpson, Eds. (1986) provided information on plant nutritional knowledge, environment knowledge and historical knowledge of gardening and foraging on Haida Gwaii.

Contemporary writing on native diets tends to focus on fixing aboriginal health issues such as diabetes, obesity, (Herbert, 1999; First Nations Health Authority, 2014, Health Canada, 1995). Herbert's research is one example as she looks at Haida beliefs about diabetes, reliance on traditional foods and culturally appropriate approaches to disease prevention. Instead of having outside researcher tell us what is wrong with our

diet, there is better value in acknowledging the nutritional, cultural and spiritual values of our traditional foods.

I looked to Health Canada's Native Foods and Nutrition book (1995) and the First Nations Health Authority's publications on traditional foods by registered dietician Suzanne Johnson. The *First Nations Traditional Food Fact Sheets* (no date) was a valuable resource focused on traditional foods we eat today. It features nutritional values, harvesting and preparing tips that were useful for my research. *The Healthy Food Guidelines* (2014) speaks about food sovereignty and the importance of eating traditional foods. The handbook seems to be directed towards urban aboriginals, with tips on buying fish from the store (2014, p. 72) and mentions of nutritional values of fast foods so I used it sparingly. The First Nations Health Authority's *First Nations Traditional Food Fact Sheets* and *Native Foods and Nutrition – An Illustrated Reference Manual* were more directed at aboriginal in rural areas who harvest their own foods, and I found these resources more helpful for my research.

For additional nutritional information and how they can help a learner, I looked at *The Food doctor – healing foods for mind and body* by Marber and Edgson (2004), *Foods that harm, foods that heal* by Reader's Digest (2013) as well as the *First Nations Traditional Food Fact Sheets* and the *Native Foods and Nutrition – An Illustrated Reference Manual*. Kuhnlein and Turner's *Traditional Plant Foods of Canadian Indigenous Peoples* (1991) also gives nutritional information and a broad perspective on traditional plant foods in Canada. Although the Manual is over twenty-five years old, the information was valuable. The Reader's Digest was helpful because it gave a big picture of over 170 healthy foods and how they can heal specific conditions such as memory.

They referred to the Institute of Medicine’s Food and Nutrition Board for their information. None of these were written specifically for language learning in mind, therefore it was my job to look at the nutritional values and determine which of the foods could offer health benefits to a student.

I also referred to various Haida research projects, including Carolyn Kenny’s *A Study in the Role of Music and the Art in the Revitalization of Haida Culture* transcripts (1999), the Council of the Haida Nation’s *Yakoun – The River of Life, the Haida Gwaii Oral History Project* (1989) and the Council of Haida Nation’s *Haida Marine Traditional Knowledge Study* (2008). All of these resources had amazing knowledge and I had to glean the relevant food information for this chapter.

Food sovereignty is a relatively new concept was mentioned in the more modern food studies (Turner, 2014; Earle, 2011; Henao, Peacock, Uhelan, Jones, Shallard and Rolfe, 2010; Kuhnlein, Erasmus, Creed-Kanashiro, Englberger, Okeke, Turner, Allan and Bhattacharjee, 2006; First Nations Health Authority, 2014).

What Can a Haida Diet Do for Language Learners?

There are four main benefits of traditional foods that can influence our language revitalization efforts. First of all, eating the foods our ancestors ate connects us to our people. It is important to feel firmly rooted in our family and connected to our Haida ancestors. This deep sense of belonging makes us strong. Secondly, an ancestral diet also ties us to our environment. It ties us to this land that we come from. It makes us more responsible for our land, sea and food sources. Also, eating our food connects us to traditional knowledge and supernatural beings around us. Lastly, traditional Haida foods made our ancestors strong and smart. We need to nourish our bodies and spirits with our

own traditional foods to be strong *Xaad Kil* speakers.

From a more nutritional standpoint, the diet plays a major role in one's ability to learn. To learn, you need energy, memory and concentration, a healthy immunity and healthy emotions. This can be achieved through eating the foods we grew up eating with our grandparents and by following the recommended diets in numerous health resources (Health Canada, 1995; Marber and Edgson, 1999; First Nations Health Authority 2014; Turner, 1995, 2004, 2014). For energy and good mental health, a learner needs B vitamins, vitamin C, magnesium, zinc, and iron. Salmon, seaweed, eulachons, berries, mushrooms, turnips and carrots are excellent foods for energy (First Nations Health Authority, n.d.). For memory and concentration, a learner needs B vitamins and iron. These can come from fish, eggs, halibut, poultry, potatoes and shellfish. A healthy immune system and nervous system keeps the learner healthy (First Nations Health Authority, n.d., p. 3). Shellfish, vegetables, berries, fish and mushrooms provide the needed vitamins A, C, magnesium, calcium, iron, selenium and zinc (First Nations Health Authority, n.d., p. 27). It's also important for the learner to limit or avoid sugar, alcohol, caffeine, stress, cigarettes and recreational drugs and focus on healing foods for the mind and body (Marber and Edgson, 1999).

Why I Selected These Foods

There are hundreds of foods that can be harvested on Haida Gwaii yet for this study, I decided on a good sample of two dozen foods from the sea, forest and sky that are nutritionally rich, are still fairly accessible and enjoyed by people today, have special cultural significance and that could boost *Xaad Kil* learning.

Haidas value all foods, and four of them have special traditional significance worth mentioning here. The high-class foods are eulachon grease, Pacific crab apples, high bush cranberries and soapberries. They are favoured by the Supernaturals and have been so highly regarded by our ancestors that we need to bring them back to the Haida diet. Because these precious foods were hard to get, they were gifted to the high-ranking people and offered to supernatural beings. We need to continue to value these high-ranking foods and incorporate them in the Haida revitalization diet to show the language champions how much we value them, and to show the supernatural beings that we respect and need their help.

There are just over two-dozen foods listed in this chapter and they are organized in three categories: food from the sea, food from the forest and food from the sky.

***Chaansii taaw*, Food From the Sea**

As islanders in the Pacific Ocean, we rely heavily on the foods from the sea. Fish, including salmon, halibut, and black cod continue to fill the freezers and pantries of Haidas. Other foods from the sea that I will discuss include shellfish and seaweed. Food from the sea provides great sources of protein, iron and B vitamins, which are needed for energy and learning.

Sataw, eulachon grease

Eulachon grease continues to be a valuable trade item and a high-ranking food. Most Haidas have a jar of it in the fridge. Supernatural beings favour grease and we often put grease in food offering ceremonies to the supernatural beings. The grease is a more nutritionally intense version of the fish, providing omega-3 fatty acids, protein, B

vitamins, calcium, iron, riboflavin and niacin necessary for overall health (First Nations Health Authority, n.d., p. 3 and 30). *Sataw* is excellent for warding off colds and it is great for learning. Our ancestors put eulachon grease on everything from dried fish to berry cakes. A dollop of grease in halibut soup is a popular treat. Today, the practice of putting grease on top of berries is not as popular as it was for our elders but it sure would help to boost our immunity. Language learners need to dip their spoon in the grease jar more often.

Chiin, salmon

We are the people of the salmon. My mother used to say it is just like if you were born with fish in your mouth. (Adams, 1999, n.p.)

Ernie Collison must have been born with a fish in his mouth as he said, “I’ve been eating that fish ever since I can remember. I was still so small, they used to have to chew the tail (dried fish) up for me first before I could eat it” (Council of the Haida Nation, 1990, p. 9). Salmon is the most important fish to the Haida. The Haida have such a great respect for salmon. The belief that we should use every part of the animal we harvested was definitely applied to salmon. Fish eggs, cheeks and eyeballs are rich delicacies. Respecting salmon is still very important. Fishermen follow the tradition of placing the bones of their first catch back into the river and giving thanks to the salmon. It is this practice that ensures the return of the salmon each year. They also wash down their boats with devil’s club and using round sundew flowers to help bring in more fish.

Salmon is such an important resource that it is no surprise that it is rich in nutritional benefits. The First Nations Health Authority’s *First Nations Traditional*

Foods Fact Sheets states that salmon is an excellent source of protein, niacin, vitamin D, B vitamins, vitamin A, vitamin C and riboflavin (p. 4).

Salmon's omega-3 fish oil is good for hormonal health, skin, the immune system and healthy teeth and bones (Marber and Edgson, 2004, p. 25) Salmon consumption might explain the beautiful skin of Haida elders. The vitamin D in salmon is important because as northerners, we do not get enough sunshine. The fish bones are also excellent source of calcium, needed to keep our teeth healthy for language speaking. Fish protein is important to language learning because as an essential nutrient, it help cognition. As a staple in the Haida diet, it is clear to see that it is an important food source for general health and students definitely need these qualities to learn.

Fish eggs are another important protein source that continues to be a part of the Haida diet. Fish eggs from salmon and herring are most popular and they can be dried, smoked, frozen. They continue to be a delicacy enjoyed today.

We do not often think of the importance of healthy bones and teeth when speaking our language but they are very important. Without strong teeth, it is difficult to speak at all. We need healthy articulators including a healthy tongue, teeth and lips to make dental sounds like "th" where you press your tongue behind your front teeth.

I remember hearing an old recording with *naanii* Grace. She was wondering why she couldn't understand the Haida on the tape until James said "naanii, that person doesn't have on their teeth" [laughs].
(Collison, 2014)

So, it is important for fluent speakers and learners to make sure they get enough calcium for healthy teeth. Canning salmon with the fish bones in is a great way to ensure this.

Salmon harvesting is mostly a spring and summer activity. In the olden days, people would travel all over Haida Gwaii to set up camps at the rivers. Today, a modern little village camp at the Yakoun River is frequently used by Massett Haidas and the Copper River is a bustling fishing village used by Skidegate Haidas. Other rivers including the Ain and Awan are still popular as well. Besides river fishing, Haidas also get fish from the sea. Not all families go to the rivers; therefore, the band councils and the Council of Haida Nation hire seine boats and gillnet boats to provide fish for community members. Salmon season is such a happy time on Haida Gwaii. Smokehouses are smoking, canners are canning and people are happily preparing their year's worth of salmon. On a personal note, I cannot think of salmon without thinking about family. My childhood spring days were spent at the Yakoun river catching fish with my *naanii*. We would happily go home to preserve our sockeye and I became a great jar-cleaner. Fast-forward ten years when I went off to University with my cases of fish prepared by my mom and *naanii*, and savoured a jar of salmon whenever I got homesick. Little did I know they were nourishing both my soul and my brain while I was away at school.

Declining fish stocks has been a concern for the past two generations. Deforestation, sports fishing, overharvesting, pollution and global warming have had a negative impact on the salmon stocks according to our Haida leaders. "Our fish stocks have been devastated for the past couple decades and it is up to us to fix this." (K. Rea, personal communication, February 15, 2014). Today's people recognize how precious salmon is, and cherish the fish they prepare for the year. We need to continue to protect the salmon stocks so we can continue to nourish our language and ourselves.

Xagu isgyaan skil, halibut and black cod

Looking in my dad's fridge and it looked empty. No condiments. Only potatoes, carrots, onions, no ketchup or soya sauce. Frozen berries and fish. I'd eat his chowder and it was the best ever. (Weir, 2014)

Deep-sea fish like halibut and black cod continue to be a Haida staple. Our ancestors relied heavily on these fish, especially in the winter months when halibut could still be caught or even eaten dried. The amount of halibut and cod hooks in museum collections is proof that the Haida relied heavily on these fish. 100-pound halibut are still often brought in and distributed amongst friends and family. Black cod is a little more difficult to get, and it certainly is appreciated when a fisherman shares this delicacy. These fish are so rich with nutrients that we are lucky to have them as staples today. All fish are rich in protein, A, B and D vitamins and omega-3 fatty acids (First Nations Health Authority, n.d., p. 3). Fish support heart health, inflammation, memory loss and eyesight loss (Reader's Digest, 2013, p. 98) therefore they are important to include in a student's diet.

K'aaw, herring roe on kelp

Herring roe on kelp or hemlock branches is called *k'aaw*. It is a staple food that provides an excellent source of protein and iron, and is a good source of fat, Niacin, Thiamine and Riboflavin (First Nations Health Authority, n.d., p. 8). This is an important food for Haida students because it feeds the brain. Interestingly, the protein, iron and thiamine contents skyrocket in dried *k'aaw* (First Nations Health Authority, n.d., p. 8). As Diane Brown says, "your body almost rejoices in that first feed. It feels right" (Turner, 200, p. 51).

Our *k'aaw* stocks are quite low. Overharvesting by commercial fishing has caused extremely low herring stocks (K. Rea, personal communication, March 1, 2015) In 2015, the *Heiltsuk*, *Nuu-chah-nulth* and Haida took a stand to stop the commercial fishing that year in order to rebuild the stocks. We need to protect our herring to protect the herring roe that will support the learning of our language.

***Skay*, shellfish**

Haida Gwaii shellfish include *k'ust'aan*, Dungeness crab, *k'yuu* and *k'amahl*, butter and razor clams, *gabee*, scallops, *sgyaal*, cockles, *Gal*, mussels, *daga*, shrimp and many other species. One of the thrills of big storms is that they often wash up an abundance of shellfish that can be literally picked up off the beach. In Massett and Skidegate, people can dig clams almost right outside their doors in the winter months. Within an hour, a good digger can have a big bucketful! It's such a part of our culture that the elementary students go to the beach to dig clams and learn how to dig clams using the Haida language every winter. Shellfish is an excellent source of protein, vitamin A and C, Iron, Thiamine, Riboflavin and Niacin for healthy hearts, brains and for energy (First Nations Health Authority, n.d., p. 12 and 13). Shellfish is so abundant and important parts of the Haida diet that language learners should continue to eat their tasty treats.

***SGiw*, seaweed**

SGiw, black seaweed is another important staple in the Haida diet. It is harvested on the shores, dried and eaten alone, with butter or eulachon grease, on top of fish soup or fish eggs. Dried seaweed is an excellent source of protein, Iron, Vitamin A, Riboflavin,

Niacin, Vitamin C and calcium (First Nations Health Authority, n.d., p. 22; Health Canada, 1994, p. 38). “1/2 cup of fresh seaweed contains over half of your daily nutrient needs for vitamin A and C and is a good source of iron and protein” (First Nations Health Authority, n.d., p. 22). And I can speak from experience that it is an excellent laxative. *S*G*i*w** is an important food for students because it is good for overall health and it is a nutritional, accessible snack. It was a great treat for the immersion students to receive a fresh feed of seaweed from Dooley, and we sat in class happily eating it like popcorn! Every household should have a bowl of “Indian popcorn” out for a daily vitamin and mineral dose.

Saaw, eulachon

Long ago, the eulachon could be found on Haida Gwaii. Overharvesting led them to become extinct on the islands. Eulachons were traded along the Grease Trail up and down the coast. Now, eulachons and eulachon grease are traded, mainly from the neighbouring *Nisga'a* who harvest eulachons from the Nass River. This candlefish is prized for its precious oil, protein, B vitamins and calcium. It also has small amounts of iron, riboflavin and niacin (First Nations Health Authority, n.d., p. 30). “Smoked or drying may increase the amount of some nutrients due to moisture loss during the drying process” (First Nations Health Authority, n.d., p. 3). Like all of the fish on the Northwest coast, this is an important resource for the Haida and other tribes.

Just as the Haida eulachon disappeared, so are the rest of the eulachons on the coast if we are not careful. We all need to protect this important Northwest coast fish.

...Professional fisheries managers have managed almost every species to the brink of extinction. No doubt they are under intense political pressure, but we should probably also consider that the task they are set is un-doable: nature is not

readily manageable, we understand it too little, our appetites are too great, and our selfish interests too intractable. We're burning the candlefish at both ends, you might say (Q. Mackie, <http://qmackie.com/2010/03/31/vanishing-eulachon/>)

***Adiidsii Taaw*, Food From the Forest**

The forest is alive with numerous plants and animals that could nourish our bodies and minds. “In the scheme of dietary diversity, plant foods are generally viewed as good sources of carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals” (Kuhnlein and Turner, 1991, p. 6). Berries from the forest and potatoes from the gardens are valuable and culturally appropriate for today’s traditional diet. Listed are a number of forest plants and animals that we should be eating to become healthy Haida language speakers, starting with the high-ranking foods.

Hlaay, highbush cranberries

Hlaay is a high-ranking Haida food. They were cherished foods given to high-ranking people at Potlatches, given as precious gifts and traded to the mainland tribes. They were gathered in the summer when they were slightly unripe and stored in boxes with grease to ripen. They were later served with an extra dollop of eulachon grease and enjoyed. Like other cranberries, they have fiber, vitamin C that support healthy urinary tracts, healthy hearts and fight cancer (Reader’s Digest, 2013, p. 88). They are an excellent source of vitamin C and have anti-bacterial properties (First Nations Health Authority, n.d., page 27). They have more vitamin A and C than other berries (Health Canada, 1995, p. 37). Highbush cranberries were also mixed with hemlock cambium and were said to be favoured by supernatural beings. Master-Carpenter, Big-Tail, Butterfly and Raven are some of the supernatural beings said to favour highbush cranberries

(Swanton 1905a, p. 123, 1908, p. 537, 539 and 558). Unfortunately, *hlaay* is threatened by deer and deforestation and is therefore a rare treat. We need to protect and restore this plant in order to continue harvesting and eating these cranberries and serving them in food offerings to high-ranking people and supernatural beings. Restoring highbush cranberry patches for Haida language and cultural revitalization is important.

Xaadas k'ayaa, crab apples

Crab apples are another high-class Haida food. They grow in bog areas and produce small apples. They are said to have been human at one time (Turner, 2004, p. 74). George M. Dawson saw them growing on Haida Gwaii in 1878:

Many thickets of Crab apple fringing the shores on the Masset 'lakes' much fruit on them but not yet ripe. Told that next month ripens. Then collected, boiled, and allowed to remain covered with water till mid winter when gone over, stalks &c. removed & the whole mixed with oolican grease quantum suf. Forming delicious pabulum according to Indian notions. (Dawson, 1880, p. 507)

Not many people grow them today, although there are still some trees throughout the islands. The crab-apple staple has changed a bit. My *naanii* bought European crab apples by the cases from the "fruit man" and canned cases of them for the family to enjoy throughout the year. Beavers threaten wild crab apples today (Turner, 2004, p. 216). We need to continue to grow, cultivate and harvest this important food for its nutritional benefits, since it is full of vitamins and is great for digestion. We also should feed this food to our language champions to show them our respect and to serve them in food offerings to the supernatural beings who also cherish this food.

Xagwtl'iid, soapberries

Soapberries, *xagwtl'iid* continue to be a well-loved and high-ranked trade item we get from the mainland. The berries and juice are whipped into a bitter, delicious “Indian ice cream” treat. Like other berries, it is full of vitamin A and C. and is an excellent detoxifier and immunity booster (First Nations Health Authority, n.d., p. 27). Haidas considered it a high-class food, probably because it was difficult to access because it had to be acquired through trade from off-island, because it is such a delicious treat, and because the supernatural beings favoured *xagwtl'iid*. The continued appreciation of soapberries and the vitamin content make it worth mentioning as a staple for learners.

Gaan, berries

Berries continue to be an important part of the Haida diet. Families once had their own berry patches, usually near their summer fishing grounds. Turner estimates that families gathered 13-26 gallons of 30 species of berries per family (2004, p. 42). Families continue to harvest berries together, and berry picking lends itself well to language learning. Huckleberries, wild strawberries, salmonberries, blueberries, strawberries, alder berries and bog cranberries are a main source of vitamin A and C as well as folate, calcium and iron (First Nations Health Authority, n.d., p. 27). They also have digestive, anti-cancer, antiviral and antibacterial properties (Marber and Edgson, 2004, p. 16). Berries are harvested from spring to fall, and people feel their freezers and pantries with them. They are very abundant and a staple in the Haida diet and are excellent sweet snacks for language learners.

Kagan dajaangaa, mushrooms

Wild mushrooms are also abundant in the Haida Gwaii rainforest. I will include them here because of the health benefits, their abundance on Haida Gwaii and their growing popularity amongst younger generations. Chanterelle, boletus, oyster, shaggy manes, hedgehogs and other mushrooms grow wild in the forest. They provide calcium, iron, vitamin B3 and vitamin B5, magnesium and zinc and are known to boost the immune system, fight cancer and support a healthy heart (Marber and Edgson, 2004, p. 18). They can be dried, canned, frozen and eaten fresh in the fall. Their nutritional benefits are great for the language learner's brain; therefore, I recommended them for the *Xaad Kil* diet.

Xil sgunulaa, peppermint

Peppermint is an introduced plant (Turner, 2004, p. 248) that now grows wild along places like the Yakoun River and in gardens on Haida Gwaii. "It was undoubtedly introduced many years ago at Skidegate Village and it has subsequently become well-established in and along the margins of the small creek that flows through the townsite." (Calder and Taylor, 1968, p. 480).

Haidas today enjoy it, and because of its medicinal qualities, I have included it here. Mint is known to have calcium, potassium and phosphorus (Kuhnlein and Turner, 1991, p. 397). Mint is so great for anxiety, fatigue, colds, tooth decay and stress (Gottlieb, 2011, p. 162) that it could be an easy tea to serve in the classroom. It can be dried and stored for tea throughout the year or eaten fresh in a salad or a refreshing beverage. Mint could also be grown in the classroom.

K'aad, deer

Deer were introduced to Haida Gwaii in the late 1800s and they are quite abundant because they have no natural predators on the islands. When people went to the Yakoun River for salmon and in the fall and winter, they would also trap bear, marten, otter and later deer (Council of Haida Nation, 1990, p. 10). It is the only mammal mentioned in this chapter because it is the most popular animal hunted nowadays on Haida Gwaii. Deer hunting has become a boy's rite-of-passage, as they go out with their dads or uncles. It would be a good time to incorporate more Haida language and cultural learning for young men. They should be practicing old hunting practices and learning how to use the Haida language when out on the land. Hunters used to take traditional medicines, bathe in the ocean, chew tobacco, and paint their faces black and put feathers on their heads to prepare him for the hunt. Each man had his own hunting ritual, which he taught to his nephews and sons (Swanton, 1905b, p. 57).

Venison provides protein, riboflavin, niacin and iron (First Nations Health Authority, n.d., p. 16). With no hormones or preservatives like store-bought meat, deer meat is a healthy source of accessible protein that can be canned, frozen or dried into jerky. Deer liver is an excellent source of Iron and is a nice treat still enjoyed by Haidas. *K'aad* is an excellent source of energy for the language learner.

Tawk'aan, gardens

Haidas have had green thumbs for many generations. Even though we were known for fishing and berry picking, our ancestors grew massive Haida potato gardens and then diversified into a variety of fruits, berries and vegetables. I include gardening as a replacement for traditional roots that are not harvested today. Garden food is healthy,

and the act of gardening is healing. I visited a language nest in Hawaii and was impressed that they taught toddlers how to grow and harvest their own food. They strongly believe in keeping children busy and connected to the land and it's where we need to be in our language learning too.

My *naanii*, Mamie Jones told me about going across the inlet to *Wiits'aa* to garden with the whole family when she was a little girl in the early 1900s. When she got bored of helping, she would sneak off to *Yan* but would get in trouble from her mom because of all the skulls laying around from days of smallpox. Florence Davidson recalled gardening with her family:

April they call *t'aawkanut*, 'gardening time... My grandparents (Amy and Phillip), my parents, my sisters, and I would go on a little canoe to *Yatz* to plant gardens. Lots of people from Masset went there to garden. (Blackman, 1982, p. 84)

In Skidegate there were many gardens as well:

Essie Greene of Skidegate recalls gardens planted at Second Beach where people grew potatoes, carrots, and beets about sixty years ago...the gardeners used kelp to fertilize the potatoes, which made them grow very well. The men and women of Skidegate walked along a trail over to Second Beach to tend their gardens, before any houses were built there. Raspberries, currants, gooseberries, plums and apples were also grown. (Kiregal and Simpson, Eds, 1986, p. 9)

Since around the 1960s, community gardens became obsolete as grocery stores and barged-in foods became more popular and accessible. With the high amount of preservatives in our food and the high cost of freight, it is time for us to get back to growing our own food. Gardening would boost our wellbeing and keep us connected to the land. Potatoes, turnips, onions, carrots, raspberries and rhubarb were the main staples of our ancestors' gardens; therefore, I will mention them in hopes that we revive the gardening tradition.

Turnips were a big part of our ancestors' diets. In the Haida Gwaii Oral History project, Henry Geddes remembered the huge turnip gardens, "They used to have gardens...the turnips were big, rows and rows. All kinds of it" (Geddes, 1999). With Magnesium, calcium, phosphorus, potassium, folic acid and vitamin C, they are full of nutrition and they help to keep teeth clean, help digestion and purify the body of toxins. (Marber and Edgson, 2004, p. 20). As a winter vegetable, they are excellent for the home and as an addition to big pots of potlatch stew.

Onions, *aaniyaans* are a staple in the Haida diet, therefore they should be grown in the garden. They have calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, folic acid that act as an antibiotic, help with asthma and detoxify the body (Marber and Edgson, 2004, p. 18). With our love of fish soups, it makes sense to grow them in the garden. With their abilities to boost the immune system and ward off colds and flu, onions are great for a class-full of students.

Carrots, *Ts'ats'* have been grown on Haida Gwaii for many decades. They grow well in the rainforest environment. They should be a staple in the Haida diet because of the vitamin A, calcium, magnesium, potassium, beta-carotene that are great for eyesight and for energy (Readers Digest, 2013, p. 69). Of course we want the elders to continue to have good eyesight and energy when teaching. The younger generation also needs good eyesight for speaking *Xaad Kil* because seeing a person's face when they speak is important to understanding how to make new sounds.

Raspberries are so popular to the Haida that they were named *sk'awaan giidii*, baby salmon berries. Many families had garden plots full of these berries. There are still some gardens with raspberries, and there should be more because of the vitamins, they

and minerals provide. They are full of calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, vitamin B3 and vitamin C (Marber and Edgson, 2004, p. 16). They help with brain function and improve eye health (Reader's Digest, 2013, p. 55), therefore this delicious treat should be a part of every language learner's diet and they would be a sweet treat to replace the candies and baked goods we often eat in class.

Rhubarb *tl'aak'uuj* has been grown in our grandmothers' gardens for years. This is a healthy vegetable full, vitamin C, potassium and fibre (Reader's Digest, 2013, p. 180). These are excellent qualities for Haidas to strive for. *Xaads tl'aak'uuja*, wild rhubarb still grows in various places on Haida Gwaii. "The Haidas cooked and ate the leaves; since the late 1800s, they have cooked the red-coloured stems, mixed with sugar, and made jam, which was sometimes mixed with strawberry jam" (Turner, 1995, p. 108).

Xaadaas sguusiid, Haida potato

The Haida potato was one of the top trade items provided by the Haida of Southeast Alaska and Haida Gwaii. The "Haida potato" and "Tlingit potato" are varieties of *Solanum tuberosum* (garden potatoes) that did not arrive on the Northwest Coast from Europe, but are a genetic variety that made it to the Northwest Coast through indigenous trade from South America, Central America, California, Makah territory and northward prior to Europeans first arriving on the NWC (Zhang, Brown, Culey, Baker, Kunibe, Denny, Smith, Ward, Beavert, Coburn, Pavak, Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 2010).

Haida gardens were full of these potatoes for over a hundred years. My ancestor, *Sdaahl K'aawas*, gave away 900 blankets to everyone who helped build their home, and to the Raven women who assisted with the birth and tattooing of their children (Murdock,

1934, p. 9). She held up her berry basket and potato hoe to show how she accumulated her blankets to pay for the potlatch. Neighbouring tribes and the Hudson Bay Company at Fort Simpson and in Victoria happily awaited the canoe loads of potatoes the Haidas brought. The Haidas brought 500 to 800 bushels of potatoes to Fort Simpson each year (Turner 2014, vol. 1, p. 2000), which would have been approximately 20,000 pounds of potatoes transported by dugout canoes!

The potatoes died out everywhere but in Alaska and Victor Adams brought back some seeds from his Alaskan relatives (who had stories of the original seeds coming from Hawaii) and the potatoes were once again grown on Haida Gwaii (Turner 2004, p. 249).

I see many Haidas being influenced by popular diets that discourage eating carbohydrates. However, we need healthy carbohydrates for a healthy brain and for quick energy. Potatoes are known to be full of potassium, vitamin B, folic acid, vitamin C, which support a healthy liver, muscles and gives great energy to learners as well as fighting cancer and lowering blood pressure (Reader's Digest, 2013, p. 174). Potatoes were a big part of our ancestors' diet, and they should continue to be a healthy part of the Haida diet today. Today, a few gardeners and the George M. Dawson school garden grow Haida potatoes. We need to bring back the community potato gardens that once existed on Haida Gwaii for the wellbeing of our learners.

Yaan Taaw, Food from the Sky

There are only a few foods from the sky category from birds to fresh water that Haidas enjoy today. Most of our food comes from the ocean, however, because of the nutritional benefits of birds and eggs and our need for water, this is an important category. Waterfowl and birds, eggs and rainwater fall under this category.

Xit'iid, fowl

There are over a hundred seabird species on Haida Gwaii according to Gwaii Haanas (<http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/bc/gwaiihaanas/plan/Plan5/Plan5A.aspx>). The mainly salt-water estuaries provide rich nutrients for geese, ducks and Cassin auklets and ancient murrelets and the birds were an important part of the Haida diet. Poultry is an excellent source of protein, calcium, iron, potassium, zinc and phosphorus, all excellent for heart health and bone strength (Reader's Digest, 2013, p. 174). The B vitamins and iron help keep our brain and heart strong and our minds and bodies energized (First Nations Health Authority, n.d., p. 21), therefore they are excellent for a Haida diet. Only a few people hunt for ducks and geese these days even though they are better sources of iron, riboflavin and vitamin A (Health Canada, 1994, p. 36). Now, eating wild birds is more of a distant memory. Many elders have fond memories of them. Florence Davidson recalled harvesting *sGidaanaa*:

In April when we were at North Island my husband used to go out at night-time for *s'adana* [Cassin auklets]. The birds come up on land night time and the people make a fire so the *s'adana* comes toward the flame. They kill lots of it, all they want. (Blackman, 1985, p. 114)

Naanii Mary Swanson also fondly remembered harvesting birds:

...And when they put their hands into the nests where the birds are laying eggs, if there's a bird in there they'd catch it, and the ladies would twist its neck. Well, they'd kill the poor thing and they used to tie it together. This lady, her name was *Gigadaahl* ... That was Daisy Parnell's mum's mother. She took mum out one day and mum was scared to put her hand into the hole. She finally put her hand in there and *Gigadaahl* was showing her how to twist the head. I guess she didn't twist them enough. She put them in a pile what she got, and her friend *Gigadaahl* looked at her. She said, '*Jaa gadee k'waa sgadane angaa king.*' They could barely walk! (laughing) She didn't kill them! Everybody used to laugh about it—staggering around. ... *SGadane 'laa xangaa k'aats'ulaang* is dizzy ... (Council of Haida Nation, 2011, Volume 3, p. 98)

SGidaanaa are a rare sighting today, thanks to the influx of rats and racoons. Today, wild fowl is not as popular as buying store-bought chicken. A more modern approach to eating waterfowl could be to eat locally grown poultry or raise our own chickens for food as our ancestors once did as shown in the story my *naanii* Mona Jackson loved to tell:

The Xaadas were all preparing to go to their summer or fall camps. Might have been summer as they had berries that the men used to make their special drink. As they got things ready to go, the men were being lazy and so the naans were getting upset packing the canoe. After a few days, maybe a wee, all things were ready for the move. The weather turned to the right direction and tides were right. So everyone got on board and the chickens were put in their bins for the trip. They began their journey to the fish camp. Men were excited to get to the camp. The special drink would be close to being ready. After about four days on the canoe, they pulled into the camp. The men made sure their special drink was carefully transported to the safe place where the sun hit and stayed. Then they proceeded to do what they wanted and after all was ready and everyone went to bed. In the early morning the naan woke up early and went to the special drink and spilled it out. The chickens were set free and found the berries that were used to make the home brew. Nan was sitting by the campfire crocheting when she noticed that the chickens were all sprawled out just a few feet away. She got busy plucking their feathers and after finishing about three, she saw out of the corner of her eye a couple of chickens were waking up and some of the berries from the homebrew was puked up by one of the chickens. She realized they had passed out, not passed away! Oh dear! She began to make the plucked chickens crocheted sweaters to wear because the morning air had begun to turn cool. Oh dear! Oh dear! Naan!

(Della Cheney, personal communication, March 15, 2015)

Kaw, Eggs

Eggs have always been an important part of the Haida diet. Eggs are an excellent source of protein and vitamin D that can help keep our hearts and eyes healthy as well as keeping our brains healthy and our memories strong (Reader's Digest, 2013, p. 93). Our ancestors ate seagull, duck, oystercatcher and ancient murrelet eggs. Wild eggs are better sources of iron, riboflavin and vitamin A than chicken eggs (Health Canada, 1994, p. 36).

The ancient murrelet, *sGidaanaa* eggs were a favourite. Ernie Wilson remembered harvesting the eggs:

... Towards the end of April we used to go out, look for the [*sGadaana*] eggs in tunnels...they got underground, yeah. We used to stick our hand in, into the holes. If you feel the end... near the end—if your arm’s too short, we used to dig down. We used to catch even the birds there ... small as those birds were; they had the eggs the size of seagull eggs. (Council of the Haida Nation, 2006 Vol. 3, p. 97)

Today, wild bird eggs are considered a delicacy. Most young people have not even tasted them. The bird stocks need to be cared for before they can become a popular food item again. Elders would have to teach the youth how to harvest and prepare the eggs. In the meantime, we can get nutritional benefits of eggs is to purchase local farm eggs or raise our own chickens for eggs. Eggs provide excellent nutrition for students who have long days of studying and should be a part of the learner’s diet.

Gandlaa, Fresh Water

Haidas traditionally have an interesting relationship with water. We call fresh water *Gandl* and saltwater *tang* and they are both an important part of our lives. Our ancestors drank rainwater, fresh spring water and well water from places like *Xagu Xangii*, behind the Old Massett church, or *Tuul Xaay Gandlaay* down the Prairie. Even in my childhood, I remember drinking rain and spring water. Haidas had a great respect for fresh, drinkable water. Florence Davidson was taught about the association between water and luck when she went through her puberty ritual. “During that time I couldn’t drink water because it would bring me bad luck for the rest of my life” (Blackman, 1985, p. 91). Joyce Bennett also learned from her father that drinking too much water could wash away a person’s luck. In today’s society, we are encouraged to drink eight cups of water per

day. The old belief of not washing away your luck makes you pay attention to how your body feels and take care of your body in a better way. Water supports every bodily function from digestion to building healthy body tissues and protecting a developing fetus (Reader's Digest, 2013, p. 207). Water is important for learning as it keeps the body cleansed, hydrates the body and quenches the thirst and gets the mouth ready to make the appropriate Haida sounds when speaking. Speech therapists would agree that hydration is important to speech. "Increased systemic and superficial vocal fold hydration as a component of vocal hygiene may improve overall health and efficiency of the vocal apparatus" (Sivasankar & Leydon, 2010, p. 1).

Luck is also important for language revitalization, and we certainly do not want our language luck to wash away. I recommend going back to drinking fresh water over tap or bottled water, and I especially recommend paying attention to our own body's need for hydration to ensure we do not wash away all our luck.

Food and Language Sovereignty

Food sovereignty is a growing trend on the Northwest Coast. The Indigenous Food Systems Network describes Indigenous food sovereignty as "a specific policy approach to addressing the underlying issues impacting Indigenous peoples and our ability to respond to our own needs for healthy, culturally adapted Indigenous foods.

[\(http://www.indigenousfoodsystems.org/\)](http://www.indigenousfoodsystems.org/)

They list four principles of Indigenous food sovereignty: First of all, food is a gift from the Creator and it is our responsibility to uphold a respectful relationship with the land, plants and animals that provide us with our food. Secondly, food sovereignty is participatory and action-based. Traditional harvesting by individuals, families, and

nations is important. The third principle is that we must determine our own needs for traditional foods and we have the ability to make decisions about the amount and quality of food we harvest and eat. Lastly, food sovereignty aims to reconcile traditional food and cultural values and policies with government and industry values and policies.

(<http://www.indigenousfoodsystems.org/food-sovereignty>)

There are indicators of food security and food sovereignty that include:

The use and transmission of methods, knowledge, language, ceremonies, dances, prayers, oral histories, stories and songs related to traditional foods and subsistence practices, and the continued use of traditional foods in daily diets. (Kuhnlein, Erasmus, Spigelski and Burlingame, 2013, p. ix)

These indicators, especially the connection to language are good indicators for Haida food sovereignty and food security. Haida food sovereignty and Haida language sovereignty are so interconnected. We need our traditional foods to be healthy in body, mind, spirit and language. In order to be strong minded and good *Xaad Kil* speakers, we need to nourish ourselves with the same foods our ancestors ate. We need our Haida Gwaii environment to be healthy and strong in order for our traditional foods to flourish. There is a strong correlation between the decline in the Haida language the deterioration of our environment that we can see on a daily basis. As I write my thesis, I see boatloads of trees leaving the island and plane-loads of sports fishermen arriving and I can't help but wonder about the correlation between our ailing environment and our ailing language. It is up to all of us to ensure food and language sovereignty are declared and acted upon.

Conclusion

The best food for a Haida is Haida food. It's that simple. There are many more traditional foods than listed in this chapter, and I encourage the reader to explore and

make mindful choices when feeding themselves and their families. By eating our traditional foods, we keep our *liis*, the connection between our bodies and our land, supernatural world and our ancestors healthy. The language learner will have all of the vitamins and minerals to be healthy, strong, alert and able to learn by focusing on the same foods our ancestors ate. For energy, a person needs B vitamins, vitamin C and magnesium. These can be found in vegetables, fruit, berries and potatoes as well as eggs and fish. (Marber and Edgson, 2004, p. 60). For stress management, we need vitamin B5, vitamin C and magnesium. These can be found in berries, potatoes and oily fish. (Marber and Edgson, 2004, p. 75). To combat depression, we need to eat shellfish, fish and eggs (Marber and Edgson, 2004, p. 79). As a learner, having a good memory and concentration is necessary, and eating poultry, fish and potatoes could help with that. (Marber and Edgson, 2004, p. 68).

It is up to us to make a conscious decision to eat from the land and sea rather than the grocery store and restaurants. It is also up to us to plant gardens full of fresh berries and vegetables like our grandmothers ate. We also need to actively protect and nourish our environment. We need to continue with our salmon enhancement programs, close fisheries that need to be restored, ensure logging practices are not impacting our food sources and protect plants from introduced species. By practicing food sovereignty, we are also protecting our inherent right and responsibility to our Haida language.

Chapter 4 - *Xil*, Haida Medicine

Introduction to *Xil*, Haida medicines

Xil, traditional Haida medicines, can help revitalize the Haida language by providing much-needed healing to the body, mind and soul. According to Deagle, the Haida concept of healing and medicine integrates the Haida culture, environment and beliefs for holistic healing, healing the whole person (Deagle, 1983).

A Haida language learner serious about learning *Xaad Kil* and connecting to the Haida culture should also learn about and make use of the medicines that are so willing to help us. In this chapter, I will explore some of the main traditional medicines that can be gathered on Haida Gwaii and a couple traditional medicines that we have gathered through trade that could be used in language revitalization. I will also explore healing with symbolic objects.

“It is impossible to separate the concepts of healing from the concepts of spirituality and the power invested in natural things within the Haida culture” (Turner, 2004, p. 61). Following our trickster-transformer traditions, some of the medicines such as devil’s club ritual will jump around and show up in other chapters as well.

This chapter is organized into medicines from three Haida hemispheres: the ocean, forest and sky. Most of the medicines I will mention come from the forest.

What are Haida medicines?

Traditional Haida medicines and healing are holistic; they heal more than just the body. Enrico defines *xil* as:

Any objects gathered and manipulated to bring good fortune by some mysterious process, whether that good fortune be health, riches, love of the opposite sex, luck in hunting and fishing, popularity, artistic and manufacturing, skills, children and so forth” (1996, p. 57).

There are other references to medicines that should be considered for Haida language (Lachler, 2010, p. 346; Enrico, 2005, p. 2002). *Sk'at'ga xilaay* is medicine to be quick at learning. *Iitl'aagiid xilaay* is medicine for getting rich. *Stlanlaa xilaay* is medicine to make one good with one's hands. *SGalang xilaay* is medicine to become a composer. These specific medicines are not always named in the literature, however this chapter will suggest some medicines Haidas know of to enhance our speaking, singing, remembering and strengthening abilities, all of which would improve our *Xaad Kil* retention.

Medicines are associated with supernatural beings. First of all, every plant has a spirit and needs to be treated with respect and thanked for its help. Swanton mentions the Medicine-Spirit as a spirit, like others that have a special relationship to human interests and industries such as house-building and seeking wealth, however there is nothing directly written on Medicine-Spirit (1905b, p. 32). The *Xil SGaana* is probably a spirit that watches over us and knows when we need help. The spirit probably knows what medicines could help us heal our ailing language. It is up to us to call upon this important spirit to help us.

Skil Jaadee, Lady Luck/Wealth Spirit gave us Haida medicines. Solomon Wilson remembered stories of her, stating that one had to be exceptionally clean and pure to see her. A young man caught her by turning backwards and grabbing her. She taught the man about Haida plant medicines (Turner, 2004, p. 62). She too could teach us about the

Haida medicines that could help us heal our language, fluent speakers and learners as well as medicines to become wealthy and skilled in *Xaad Kil*.

Our ancestors also learned about medicines and survival from animals. I have heard of bears using devil's club and False hellebore to heal their fighting wounds. "The bear eats frogs in order to have good luck in hunting" (Swanton, 1905b, p. 45). The story of Goose Woman who provided her husband with edible roots during a famine is a good example of learning from animals (Turner, 2014, vol. 2. p. 163). Some plants are also named for the animals they are associated with, such as *xuu j xilee*, grizzly bear medicine or *yaahl thuwaa*, Raven's canoe (Turner, 2004, p. 243-244). The connection to nature was so strong before the days of technology. To heal our ailing language, we need to look to nature for traditional remedies.

What Can *Xil* Do For Language Learners?

With the language being so close to extinction, it is important for us to look at healing the language and the hurts that have caused the loss of the language. We must ask ourselves how our ancestors would have healed the language. *Xil* is one of the answers. The medicines are in our back yards, in our forests and in our memories waiting for us.

Xil is a powerful tool. Our Haida ancestors gathered and manipulated hundreds of medicines to help bring them whatever they desired or to heal what ailed them. Our ancestors used traditional medicines to help them become strong and brave, to help memorize a story, or to compose a song. These are all qualities that a language learner needs to acquire in order to be able to speak *Xaad Kil*. Haida ancestors were not challenged with losing their mother tongue as we are today. However, if they were, I

know they would have asked Medicine Spirit, Lady Luck and the medicines themselves to help them. Nancy Turner wondered if Haidas would have used traditional medicines to learn English when they were eager to learn it during Contact (personal communication, April 21, 2016). Our ancestors were so resourceful and eager to learn, I believe they may have, although I have not seen any documentation or heard any stories of this).

Literature Review of Haida *Xil*

There have been a few researchers who documented the traditional use of medicines and healing. Swanton (1905b, 1908b), Deagle (1983, 1988), Enrico (1996), Dawson (1880) and Turner (2004, 2014) are the main sources of written literature that I have referred to. The Alaskan Dictionary also gave glimpses of information on medicines (Lachler, 2010) as did the Skidegate Haida Immersion Program's *Xaayda Kil* Glossary "B" (2014).

Swanton visited Haida Gwaii in 1900-1901 and wrote *Contributions to the Ethnology of the Haida* (1905b) and *Haida Texts and Myths - Skidegate Dialect* (1905a) and *Haida Texts - Masset Dialect* (1908). He did not document much on medicinal use, however. He noted there's "a medicine which prevented one from forgetting anything, and a medicine which enabled one to learn things more quickly, however he does not mention what these medicines are (1905b, p. 45). He did however, document many stories of people such as *Xanaa* who took *xilaawg* to become a chief, (1908a, p. 689 & 742) and a man who lost all his possessions gambling and used *ts'iihlanjaaw*, devil's club to regain his riches (Swanton, 1908a, p. 689).

Barbeau (1973) wrote about medicine men on the coast and documented Haida carvings depicting the helping spirits. He gave a broad look at medicine men from the Northwest Coast to Siberia. His Haida focus was more on argillite carvings, not traditional medicines, however. Although they are interesting to look at, his book does not shed much light on the significance of the medicines and the Haida supernatural helpers he calls the Canoe-people, the Ocean-People and the Forest- People and the Above-People (p. 82). He does mention the medicine man, *sGaaga*, but he does not give too much detail other than showing an example of the carvings depicting *sGaaga*.

Boelscher's *The Curtain Within* (1988) was also a valuable resource, especially for information on the medicine man and stories from Adam Bell and Chief Weah.

Deagle was not only a general practitioner in Old Massett for ten years but he wrote about Haida healing and medicinal plant use. Interestingly, he notes that the decline in language paralleled the decline in traditional medicinal plant knowledge.

Little remains of some aspects of these rich cultures; the languages and oral traditions are especially in peril. In the absence of a written Native language and with the direct competition of compulsory English-language education for Native children in residential schools, the linguistic heritage of these people has been severely damaged. With the loss of the language there has been a concurrent loss of many traditional practices in medicine (Deagle, 1988, p. 1577).

He did however, note that elders were continuing to use many medicines and that younger generations were taking an interest in traditional healing in the 1980s (Deagle, 1988). His research is interesting however, as he documents useful tips about how Haidas used medicines for luck, the power of number four and forty and the reciprocal relationship between the maker and recipient of medicines.

For a general look at Native American healing, I looked at *Healing Secrets of the Native Americans – Herbs, Remedies, and Practices that Restore the Body, Mind, and Spirit* by Porter Shimer (2004). This is an easy read with basic information on many

plants.

Turner is a leading ethnobotanist in BC and has been learning about Haida plants for over thirty years. In my research, I will refer to *Plants of Haida Gwaii* (2004) and *Ancient Pathways, Ancestral Knowledge* (2014). The more detailed manuscript of *Plants of Haida Gwaii* contains privileged information for Haida eyes only, and served as a good guide for my own sharing of Haida knowledge. She worked with the Council of Haida Nation to determine what medicinal plant information would be appropriate to publish in order to protect the plants and Haida medicinal knowledge from appropriation. As a Haida researcher, I found the manuscript a valuable and informative tool.

This brief literature review of medicinal plants shows the strength of the medicines on Haida Gwaii and how they can help us revitalize the Haida language.

Why I Selected These Medicines

There are hundreds of traditional medicines, however, I will only mention the main ones that may have language revitalization qualities. In this chapter, I will mainly discuss medicines that can be taken internally, carried on the body or used in ceremonies by language learners. Many medicines like charms could also fit within Ritual and Ceremony chapter and many medicines also fit in the food chapter. In the past, our ancestors did not have to use medicines to revitalize *Xaad Kil*. They did, however, rely on certain medicines to help them compose a song, remember a story, or to become a great orator. Some medicines were not necessarily used for singing or speaking but we should consider them for language revitalization. Some medicines mentioned are excellent for boosting immunity, healing headaches, providing a spiritual connection, protection, cleansing and luck – all healthy qualities a language learner needs.

The role of the *SGaaga*

The medicine men and women were important healers before Christianity hit Haida

Gwaii. Boelscher describes the medicine man and the potentiality of power:

The native term for shaman is *sGaaga*, which includes the same root, *sGaa* – as the term for power. The distinction is between the being conferring power (*sGaana*) and the human being permanently possessed by it (*sGaaga*). The shaman became the “mouthpiece” of the *sGaana*. (1988, p. 172)

They spent years training and seeking their supernatural power. They fasted, drank salt-water, chewed tobacco, took medicines and endured harsh rituals to make themselves clean to accept these powers. They were greatly respected. Often, the *sGaaga* was possessed by supernatural beings from foreign lands and the *sGaaga* would speak in a foreign tongue while possessed. If the Above People came to the medicine man, he would speak Tlingit. If the Moon spirit entered him, he spoke Tsimshian. If *Wi'giit* came to him, he spoke Heiltsuk (Swanton, 1905b, p. 38). He often had a special box containing his healing tools - *sasaa*, rattle, *naxiin*, chilkat blanket and head-scratchers (Swanton 1905b, p. 40).

Medicine women seemed to play a quieter role in healing. There was less theatrics and more focus on herbal remedies with the female healers. They played a more active role in female healing, childbirth and day-to-day healing, which is probably why the anthropologists and missionaries did not discuss female ailments and healing much, other than to call it “women’s medicine” or “women’s witchcraft.” There was also a societal separation between men and women. It would probably have been unacceptable for male ethnographers like Swanton to interact and learn from a Haida woman.

When the Haidas were dying by the thousands due to the Smallpox epidemic, the *SGaaga* practice died as well.

The staggering losses suffered by the population destroyed the confidence, prestige, and power of the traditional healers or shaman. At Masset village in the northern Queen Charlottes, the Anglican missionary Collison survived an epidemic of smallpox by vaccinating himself and some of the Haida. (Deagle, 1988, p. 1578)

The epidemic survivors were desperate and saw that the *sGaaga* powers were at a loss against the diseases of the time. The missionaries scooped in at a vulnerable time and pushed away our healers and medicines.

Breaking down the old Indian medicine man with his rattle and fierce garb and soul-trap, with his charms and savage yells, the least we can do is to give the poor natives our best substitute, especially when that substitute is one of the most effective agencies in spreading the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. The preacher, doctor and teacher must go together or else the preacher must cover the whole ground. (Crosby, 1914, p. 302)

From then on, traditional healing and spirituality drastically changed and almost went underground. Medicine men were no longer called upon but people were quietly brewing their pots of devil's club and teaching younger generations how to harvest medicines before they went to church.

“Most families, right up to the present day, can identify individuals among themselves – often grandmothers - who were particularly respected for their knowledge and practice of herbal medicine” (Turner, 2014, vol. 1, p. 441). There continue to be healers today, some of whom shared their knowledge with me for my thesis.

The Medicines That Will Help Revitalize *Xaad Kil*

Symbolic medicines

Symbolic medicines include objects worn, hidden away or used in ceremony to bring about wealth and luck. According to Swanton, these were more important than herbal remedies (1905b, p. 46).

Xil Illjaaw, charms

People used to have charms to help bring them riches. They were often made of copper. Historically, charms and other personal items were stolen from others and hidden away in a secret box to bring on luck and prosperity (Swanton, 1905b, p. 46). Today, some people still cautiously dispose of their *tsansal*, their personal affects such as used tissue, cut hair and food scraps so that nobody can take them to use against them. (Lawrence Bell, personal communication, 2015).

Xil gwaalee, medicine pouch

The ritual of carrying a *xil gwaalee*, a medicine pouch is familiar to the Haida. A pouch made of cloth or hide is worn around the neck or placed under one's bed for protection while sleeping or in a place that needs protection and luck. A person can decide what medicines and charms to put in it to bring luck and protection. Some medicines and charms that could benefit the language learner are crumbly rocks, agates, devil's club, sundew and flicker feathers as mentioned in the *Xil* chapter. Crumbly rocks protect against negative energy. Agates bring good energy. Devil's club brings protection and a connection to the supernatural world. Sundew could help capture the language. Flicker feathers bring good luck. Tobacco also connects us to the supernatural world. Another consideration would be to take something from a person you admire and add it to your medicine pouch so that you could become more like them, although some might consider the collection of a person's *tsansal* inappropriate. The medicine used in a medicine pouch is an individual decision. As Leo Gagnon says,

You make a medicine pouch and hang it around your neck, underneath your clothing. Crumble the rock all up, that's for when you walk around. And at night time, you make another medicine bag and put it underneath your bed, nobody

knows and don't tell anybody. It keeps the evil spirits from looking in the windows. I know some of the learners feel bad medicine and sometimes worry. They wonder how to protect themselves. I kept *naanii* Lucy's medicine bag after she died. I kept it, I never have any worries. (Gagnon, 2014)

Every language learner should make and keep a medicine pouch for the sole purpose of learning *Xaad Kil*. The creation of a medicine pouch and the collection of specific medicines for language learning is a great cultural and language activity for students.

Kuganaa Kwaa, crumbly rock

Haidas still use *kagaanaa kwaa* crumbly rock as a medicinal protector to ward off bad spirits and witchcraft. The sparkly black and white stone can be found on the beach. The belief in bad medicine is still strong, and the belief that we need to protect our Haida language and those that work and learn the language is also strong. Therefore, the practice of placing crumbling rocks in a medicine pouch or placed around the workplace could help with the language. The shininess of the rock scares away *Kuganaa*.

I grew up seeing the crumbly rock around my *naanii's* home and later, we were taught by Gertie White and Dorothy Bell to use it during our repatriation ceremonies to keep negative spirits away while we were in museums preparing our ancestors.

Kwaa, Agates, rocks and other beach treasures

I include rocks and beach treasures as a medicine because of their connection to the land and sea and because of their healing powers. Every home on Haida Gwaii seems to have a beach treasure collection. My own pockets and home are full of them. Walking the beaches and collecting agates, pretty rocks and shells is a calming, spiritual

ritual that deepens one's connection to the land and sea. Some would say agates improve concentration, perception, memory and analytical skills.

(<http://www.healingwithcrystals.net.au/agate.html>) Red jasper stones, a favourite of my late mother help to give a person the courage to speak and to be grounded, focused and energetic according to the healing with crystals website. I would encourage students to take beach walks, contemplate and deepen their spiritual connection by filling their pockets with treasures from the sea. The beach treasures can be kept in a medicine pouch or placed around the classroom or home and can even be carried and used like worry-beads while studying or speaking *Xaad Kil*. The agates and other beach treasures the learner collects will help her to stay focused and grounded on her *Xaad Kil* journey.

Xil from the sea

Being islanders, it is no surprise that Haidas believe in the medicinal powers of the sea. The ocean is a magnificent entity and it garners great respect from the Haida. The salt water, the salt air and all the creatures in the ocean contribute to our well-being and to our what makes us Haida. It is only natural that much language healing could come from the ocean. A lot of the ocean items are also food; therefore, they may appear in the food chapter if they are more likely to be consumed as food.

Tangaa, Sea water

Drinking salt water for purification is called *tangaa*. It is a powerful purgative medicine. Swanton noted that a sick person would make a complicated concoction that included "salt water from the crest of four waves caught in the hollow the hand on the beach (1905b, p. 44). A quart is said to clean out one's insides (Deagle, 1988, p. 169).

Today, salt water is known to detoxify, increase energy and promote weight-loss. With over 80 trace minerals, salt water regulates metabolism, boosts the immune system, balances blood sugar, strengthens bones and promotes a good sleep.

[\(http://www.thealternativedaily.com/7-reasons-drink-warm-salt-water-every-morning/\)](http://www.thealternativedaily.com/7-reasons-drink-warm-salt-water-every-morning/)

Today, New-Age healers promote drinking salt water made from Himalayan sea salt and distilled water. Today, Haidas would probably boil small amounts of salt water fresh from the ocean or drink directly from the ocean when at the shore or when conducting a ceremony as many Haidas still do. Barbeau noted that a medicine man or person seeking power, property or success would abstain from food, sex and beverages. He would drink warmed salt water and drink fresh water after his insides were cleaned out (Barbeau, 1973, p. 65).

For more information on *tangaa* ritual, see the Ritual and Ceremony chapter.

Sataw, Eulachon grease

Haidas still believe in the healing powers of eulachon grease. Besides being a nutritional food condiment, it is considered a strong medicine, especially for colds, flu, energy, and pneumonia. A traditional way to ease chest congestion is to put a poultice of grease on one's chest (Deagle, 1988, p. 165). I often warm it up and put it in my own ears when they ache. It is more commonly used today as a nutritious condiment in fish soup or taken by the spoonful straight up. Stephen Brown would keep separate jars of medicinal grease and food grease in the fridge. Because grease is important for food offerings, it is mentioned in both the food and the medicine chapters. Every language learner should have a jar of grease in the fridge to ward off illness, stay healthy and connect to the supernatural world on his or her language journey.

***Xil* from the Forest**

Our forest is rich with medicinal plants. “More than 60 different plant species were and are used by Haida in some specific way in the maintenance of health or in the treatment of particular conditions or ailments” (Turner, 2004, p. 61). Most of these come from the forest. Our ancestors had such an intimate relationship with the forest and all the plants and animals within it. It just makes sense that we seek the language-healers within the woods. I will discuss the values of devil’s club, sundew, single delight, false hellebore and others that can improve Haida language speaking.

Devil’s club *Ts’iihlanjaaw*

Devil’s club is such a well-known and respected medicine on Haida Gwaii. Everyone that I interviewed mentioned how we should use *ts’iihlanjaaw* in language revitalization. As my cousin Leo Gagnon said,

The biggest one was devil’s club. They’d harvest in the late Fall, prepping, clean and drying them. In the springtime they’d utilize it, cleanse themselves for the start of the season. Drink tea, and eat it, grind it up and eat it by the teaspoon to cleanse their liver, their insides. Fishing season would start and they’d wash their fishing gear to remove all the evil spirits from all the gear. The devil’s club was used to keep the bloodstream clean and pure. In the old days there were not many that smoked, they’re system was so clean. (Gagnon, 2014)

Ts’iihlanjaaw continues to be used for protection, luck, purification, arthritis, cold and flu, sore throat, diabetes and mental alertness. It was used for so many things, that elder Claude Jones referred to it as “Indian Tylenol. It’s just as good as Tylenol!” (Jones, 2014).

It is important to know how to harvest and prepare devil's club. It is becoming more and more difficult to find devil's club on Haida Gwaii due to overharvesting and logging. Some people now travel to the mainland to find devil's club.

When you're gathering medicines, you don't just gather in one big bunch. You gather things in fours. The devil's club, you take four arm-lengths for every time you're mixing tea. Separate into bundles. Never mix it up, just use what's in the bundle... Always do it in fours: four roots, or split into fours. Never over-scrape them, just take the dirt. A lot of the powerful medicine is in the dark skin. That was a big thing with all the uncles. *Tsinni* was really stern about that, always in four. (Gagnon, 2014)

Devil's club can also be made into a milder solution for ingestion. The stripped skin or powdered inner-bark are simmered or boiled in four gallons of rainwater. The enamel pot was left on the stove, and people could drink a scoop-full whenever they wish or it could be refrigerated and drunk on a more regular basis for purification. It could even be chewed to soothe a sore throat, and as we know, having a strong throat is important to language speaking, especially when making glottal sounds for the first time or when working off a cold or fighting off a cold, which are common in classrooms.

When I asked Leo if we should take devil's club for language learning, he said, "It would work, it would cleanse the mind" (Gagnon, 2014). *Ts'iihlanjaaw* is a powerful medicine that can help us revive our language and we need to ensure that it always grows on Haida Gwaii and that the next generation of learners know how to harvest and prepare it. For more information on devil's club rituals, see the chapter on Rituals and Ceremonies.

Gwaayk'aa, False hellebore

Gwaayk'aa and *ts'iihlanjaaw* continue to be the most respected and powerful traditional medicines up and down the coast. *Gwaayk'aa* or Skookum Root is the strongest medicine mentioned by the people I interviewed and in the literature (Turner, 2004; Deagle, 1983). *Gwaayk'aa*, or Skookum Root is known to be associated with bears (Turner, 2004, p. 77) that probably used it to heal their fighting wounds. It is extremely powerful, and can impact the nervous and circulatory systems (Turner, 2004, p. 53). It is *only* to be used with caution and with the guidance of a knowledgeable practitioner.

Medicinally, it has many uses. I grew up with it in my *naanii's* house, and I have seen it snuffed for sinus congestion, headaches and made into arthritis medicine.

Gwaayk'aa is a great powerful protection against dangerous supernatural beings. A person would mark his forehead with the scorched roots for protection against bad spirits (Turner, 2004, p. 118). Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer (1987) tell a Tlingit oral history of people peeking through a *gwaayk'aa* leaf when they saw the first boat of white people approaching, thus trying to protect themselves. With our common belief in the protective powers of this medicine, we could apply this to the protection of the Haida language.

Turner also notes that it is used to cleanse a place from bad energy and to cleanse important implements such as fishing gear (Turner, 2014, vol. 2, p. 335). With the help of a knowledgeable practitioner, we could be burning *Gwaayk'aa* roots to cleanse our classrooms and to bless our language tools.

Gwaayk'aa is collected in the fall when the strength of the medicine goes to the roots and stems. It is harvested near small rivers, creeks or swamps, and there is a good growth of it along the Juskatla logging roads.

When you start to take a medicine, four days or four weeks at a time. Always that number, don't know why. I find that works really good, especially the *gwaayk'aa* for my bones, four days on, put it on for as often as you can remember it for four days. And then four days off, that way your body doesn't become immune to it. It works reaaaally good. There was a lot of truth to the methods they used.
(Gagnon, 2014)

With arthritis so prevalent amongst the Haida, and with our desire for protection of the language and the language community, we must consider *gwaayk'aa* and learn more about it from experienced practitioners. Most people have lost their connection to *gwaayk'aa*, however, and some have even become afraid of it. Maybe we could focus on reviving its use as a protector for now.

Xaadaas k'ayaa, crab apple

The Haida crab apple tree is also medicinal. Because of the crab apple's importance in connecting to the Supernaturals, and in women's ceremonies, I mention it in the Food, Medicine and Ritual chapters. Haida Crab apples are high-class food favoured by the Supernaturals and the tree is an important woman's medicine. Cedar bark that was used to cleanse a pubescent girl or mourning woman to make her strong would be stuffed in the crevice of a crab apple tree after the ceremony (Curtis, 1916, p. 126; Turner, 2004, p. 105). Haida women wanting to learn *Xaad Kil* should consider crab apple trees as they would build their endurance for life and for language learning. As a way to please the supernatural beings when we ask them for favours, we need to

offer them crab apples. We should revive the use of crab apple medicine and plant both Haida and European crab apple trees around our language facilities and in special places specifically for the *jaadaas*, the women.

Xagwtl'iid, Soapberries

I include soapberries in both the food and medicine chapters because they are a high-ranking, strong medicine favoured by the Supernaturals and because they show great *yahguudang*, respect to honoured guests at a Potlatch. They show up in Master Carpenter, Big Tail and Raven stories (Swanton, 1905a, p. 123, 1908, p. 537, 539 and 558). We need to feed them to the supernatural beings when we call on them for help in our language revitalization. As mentioned previously, they are a precious trade item from the mainland for their symbolic and nutritional values.

Ts'uu, red cedar

Cedar is an important resource, used for weaving, carving, house building and for medicine. Cedar is considered every woman's elder sister, probably because women made clothes and baskets from the bark and used it in the coming-of-age ceremony. It makes sense that we honour this powerful women's medicine.

Like all medicines, harvesting cedar requires a prayer or a song of thanks and this ceremony is still respected, especially by the weavers and carvers.

Cedar boughs are also used for cleansing a space. Boughs are used to sprinkle fresh water around during a house-warming ceremony. This could be done in classrooms and in the homes of the learners. Cedar boughs could also be hung in the language classrooms for its feel-good properties.

Weaving is also such a great healing practice, it would be a natural language learning exercise for Haida women. *Ts'uu*, our eldest sister could help us heal ourselves and our language. For the men, carving is an excellent cultural practice that could be done in the Haida language for a traditional language lesson.

K'aang, hemlock

Hemlock was another strong woman's medicine featured in ancient Haida stories. Raven changed himself into a hemlock needle to impregnate the chief's daughter when she drank her water, and thus giving him access to the box of light in the chief's house (Swanton, 1905a, p. 116; Turner, 2004, p. 96). Hemlock was also used when a girl hit puberty.

Four small hemlock-trees were broken off and hung above the place where she sat, with property, abalone-shells, etc., hanging upon them. If the people had more property to spare, they hung it around her. Then, when she grew older, she would be rich (Swanton, 1905b, p. 48).

We did this ceremony for my own daughter, Amelia. Her hemlock wreath was decorated with all sorts of abalone, money and jewels and hung above her bed. Maybe this ritual could be done with the same treasures plus contemporary language-learning treasures such as the Haida language dictionaries, phrasebooks and CDs that could help the young woman become rich in the language.

Ts'ahl, pine

Pine is another important medicinal tree. The needles, young buds, inner bark are all healers. Turner noted it was used as a cast for broken bones (2004, p. 98). For Haida language healing, it could be used for other purposes. The needles and young buds are good for a headache poultice or for inhaling to cure a headache or to rejuvenate a person.

This would be a safer alternative to sniffing Skookum Root for headaches. The inner bark could be chewed for a sore throat and respiratory problems. Bathing and steaming in dried needles or branches are also good for anxiety (Shimer, 2004, p. 95), which can affect learners who struggle to make public speeches and who feel the pressure when making mistakes when speaking.

Please refer to the Ritual and Ceremony chapter for more information on using pine in rituals.

Kiid, spruce

The spruce tree, pitch and cones are all Haida medicines that we should not overlook when seeking help in learning to speak Haida. *Jaalen* also learned about spruce cone medicines from elders at the Language Nest:

Stephen told me about a medicine, and *naanii* Adelia too, a medicine for learning: spruce cones... They say it's where echoes come from. I don't think Stephen remembered totally, too. You just think about it after and put it on the kid's throat to help them be a good speaker and stuff. We have to think on that one. Adelia brought it up at the language nest, too, she knew a little bit, too. (Edenshaw, 2014)

Spruce pitch continues to be a well-respected and utilized medicine. Besides being used to heal open wounds like cuts, ulcers and boils, it could be used to soothe a sore throat. Therefore, I mention it as a good medicine for language learning since we do get sore throats from speaking and making new sounds. In the olden days, a spruce pitch poultice was put externally on a sore throat. Lichen was used back then, and by my *naanii*'s time in the 1970s, a paper bag was a popular poultice bandage.

Spruce pitch is gathered from the outer bark of spruce trees any time of year. The pitch drips profusely from a cut in the tree, acting as a tree Band-Aid just as it is used as a

Haida Band-Aid today. This continues to be an important medicine and it could help heal a learner's sore throat as he learns to use his throat to make new glottal sounds and it could help a singer soothe a sore throat as well.

Ta'inaang k'uug, round-leaved sundew

Ta'inaang k'uug, round-leaved sundew, is a lucky charm. This tiny version of a Venus-fly-trap could bring good luck to a fisherman or hunter, but it must be kept a secret, as Willie Matthews warned Turner (2004, p. 152). This small flower can be gathered in mossy areas by lakes in the summer and certainly could be used by a language-learner to help “capture the language.” “*Tsinni* Pete showed it to me when we were back getting water. They would tie it onto their nets to catch fish” (Clow, 2014). We need to tie *ta'inaang k'uug* on our language resources to help us capture Xaad Kil.

Xilaawg, single delight

There is good documentation on xilaawg, Single Delight (Turner, 2004; Swanton 1905b; Deagle, 1983). The pretty little white flowers are collected from mossy areas in July. They are dried and stored. Some people remove the flowery top after drying. A small handful of xilaawg is boiled or simmered and drunk. Single delight is excellent for a sore throat, cold or flu, energy as well as for bringing help from the supernatural world.

I have been harvesting xilaawg for many years and I always had a pot brewing when I was working on my thesis or when I was feeling sick or down. This is definitely a medicine we should be using for more than sore throats!

Single delight is also used as a purifier to help one connect to the supernatural world as show in the Ritual and Ceremony chapter.

Xil kagan, Hudson's Bay tea

Xil Kagan, Labrador Tea, continues to be a popular medicine on Haida Gwaii. It grows abundantly around swampy areas like Pure Lake. It is a great tea for sore throats, colds, flu, headache and anxiety, which is probably why many of our grandmothers kept a pot of this tea on the stove. The leaves are picked, dried and then stored in paper bags or glass jars in the spring and summer while the leaves are still upright. The leaves are steeped with rainwater. Many people remember growing up with a pot of it on the stove at all times. I recommend it for language learners because it is so abundant and familiar to Haidas today and because it can build one's immunity and it can take away anxiety from a learner.

K'unhl, Wild roses and rose hips

Wild roses and rose hips are very healing. Rose hips are an excellent source of vitamin C and they support a healthy immune system, therefore warding off illnesses such as colds and flu. They can be harvested and dried in the fall and winter. Wild rose tea can boost immunity and soothe a sore throat. Inhaling the flowers can relieve stress, anxiety and headaches (Shimer, 2004, p.115). They are growing in popularity and fairly accessible, therefore they are a good addition to the language learner's medicine cabinet. Deagle noted that Haidas called it "hippie tea" in the 1980s, (1983, p. 151) however, today it is not referred to in that manner anymore, suggesting that wild rose as a medicine is the norm. With so many healing properties, it makes sense that language learners would harvest rose hips and even transplant wild rose bushes around the language classrooms.

Dlaay'angwaal, licorice root

Licorice root continues to be a good Haida medicine. I mention it here because it soothes a sore throat, wards off depression, chronic fatigue, whooping cough, colds and canker sores and because it is still quite popular (Turner, 2004, p. 191). It was often the first medicine a hunter would gather because it would calm his throat, making him stealthier as he walked through the forest (Shimer, 2004, p. 80). For years now, children have been learning how to harvest and chew on licorice roots while at the Rediscovery camp. The rhizome can be chewed raw and the juices swallowed while the pulp is spit out. The roots could be boiled in rainwater or added to other concoctions for a tasty tea. It can also be eaten while drinking water to give it a good taste. Licorice roots are best in late fall when the healing properties go to the roots. *Dlaay'angwaal* is a strong medicine and can keep us healthy and strong.

Gudangaal, stinging nettles

Stinging nettles are a popular northwest coast medicine. Haidas mostly use it for arthritis and as a poultice for wounds. I suggest it to language learners because it is an arthritis remedy, memory booster, blood strengthener and lung strengthener. It can help a learner stay healthy with its high levels of vitamin C and iron (Shimer, 2004, p. 88). It grows in abundance throughout Haida Gwaii, including the perimeter of the Old Massett ball field and behind *Gadaywaas*, White Slope Hill. Some people like my *naanii* have even transplanted it to their homes. It can be dried and used in tea, steamed and eaten like spinach or used as a whip to hit an arthritic person's sore limbs. It would strengthen the language student's lungs and breathing, which is important in speaking. In today's world, language learners often spend hours at a time sitting in class. From past

experience, I know how uncomfortable it is, and I can imagine it must have been difficult for the arthritic elders and students. Maybe whipping each other after class would burn off some steam and loosen up the limbs!

Gulaa, tobacco

Haida tobacco, *Xaadas gulaa* was once abundant on Haida Gwaii. People used to mix it with burnt shells and chew it (Turner, 2004, p. 165). Before the introduction of smoke-tobacco, it was used in ways that were similar to the way Indigenous peoples in other parts of North America smoke a pipe and make important decisions together, however it was not smoked.

Previous to any considerable movement of the people such as the migration to the fisheries, the town chief called in the principal men, passed the tobacco mixture for chewing, and opened the discussion of his plan, with particular reference to the possibility of encounter with enemies. (Curtis, 1916, p. 119)

With the introduction of the fur traders' tobacco, Haida tobacco became obsolete, with a few samples remaining in the United Kingdom (Turner, 2004, p. 167). I mention tobacco here not for smoking or chewing, but as a medicinal offering to the supernatural beings.

To demonstrate good intention and a “clean mind,” the person who is come into contact with (super) natural beings offers gifts to the *sGaana* to please them. He gives them tobacco and flicker feathers – the *sGaana* are said to be especially fond of these. (Boelscher, 1988, p. 176)

In recent times, we were taught to make tobacco offerings to the fire to give to our ancestors during our repatriation ceremonies. Store bought tobacco has replaced Haida tobacco. In order to keep the supernatural beings and our ancestors happy as we ask them for guidance, *gulaa* is an important *Xaad Kil* medicine.

***Xil* from the Sky**

Traditional medicines can also be found in the sky or atmosphere. In a way, this category may be more abstract as we can not go up to the sky to harvest medicines and we have to think of the healing that could come from the intangibles in the sky, such as the sun, the moon and the air.

Xay isgyaan kung, Sun and Moon

Prayer was offered to the sun when one felt humble or sorrowful: “Agida, agida, agida!” During this expression of submission and supplication, the supplicant stood with bowed head and raised hands, turning the palms alternately toward and away from the sun. (Curtis, 1916, p. 136)

The sun and the moon are with us always. They help provide us with food, affect our moods and our circadian rhythms. Sunshine brings vitamin D and life. The moon brings sleep and affects the tides. They therefore could be considered natural remedies. Doctors often recommend northerners to take vitamin D because they say we do not get enough of the vitamin from the sun. It is up to us to get outside for fresh air and sunshine every day. It is also up to us to follow the rhythms of the moon and sleep when the moon is out and get enough rest to be good learners. By following the rhythms of the sun and moon, we can improve our well being and become better language learners. The moon teaches us the importance of respect as in the story of the woman who was scooped up by the moon. She made fun of the moon and ended up becoming the Lady-in-the-Moon, and a crest of the *Yahgu 'laanas* clan. As *Xaad Kil* learners, we need to continue to respect the moon as our ancestors did.

Sang k'aangal, air

Clean salt-air is something we often take for granted on Haida Gwaii. The clean air helps us to live healthy lives, therefore I consider it a Haida medicine. I have not found any traditional stories specifically about air. It just IS. Fresh air is an important medicine for language learners, especially if they are stuck indoors all day. Fresh air is a natural stress reliever, it increases relaxation, it energizes and it boosts energy.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/08/08/tk-ways-fresh-air-impacts_0_n_5648164.html

According to the Lung Institute, ocean air helps improve lung function, reduces coughing and decreases sinus pressure (<https://lunginstitute.com/blog/breathing-in-ocean-air/>). It is important to keep the fresh air circulating when learning and when working in a group of people with various ailments and energy. Fresh air helps circulate ideas and helps let go of negative energy. I strongly believe in the importance of breathing the fresh air of our homelands when learning the language. I speak from experience that a walk or jog on the beach is strong medicine. I hope that one day, speaking *Xaad Kil* could become as natural and refreshing as breathing in the clean Haida Gwaii air.

Daal xaw, rainwater

Rainwater is very healing and powerful. There is a great respect for rainwater. It is one of the main ingredients in most consumable Haida medicines and it shows up as a powerful entity in stories of supernatural beings, therefore I consider it a medicine. I grew up with a rain barrel at my *naanii's* and she insisted in using it for tea and especially Haida medicine.

Rainwater shows up in the ancient story of Two Boys at *Tiaan* as told by Adam Bell (Boelscher, 1988, p. 184). Two boys were hunting bufflehead birds and breaking

their wings as they caught them. They got lost at sea and went underwater to the Killer whale chief's house near *Tiaan* point. The boys were fitted with dorsal fins and whale skins. One boy wore a whetstone, preventing the complete transformation into a killer whale. He returned to his village and rainwater magically washes off his killer whale skin.

In another killer whale story that *naanii* Dorothy Bell loved to tell, killer whales enjoy fresh water so much they would swim up Masset Inlet to Buckley Bay to drink from the waterfall there (personal communication, 2005; Steedman and Collison, 2011, p. 87).

If fresh water plays such an important role in killer whale lives, it must be a powerful medicine for us too. Medicinal practitioners continue to prefer rainwater over tap water when brewing medicine because it is purer (Gagnon, 2014). Living water such as rainwater and spring water detoxifies, improves circulation, decreases joint inflammation, aids digestion and revitalizes a person.

<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2011/02/21/how-drinking-spring-or-filtered-water-can-improve-your-health.aspx>

Water is connected to the Haida concept of luck. Drinking too much water could wash away your luck. Joyce Bennett learned this from her dad Victor Adams (personal communication, 2009). June Russ talked about not drinking water when hunting.

“They’d say it was already in your mouth if you asked for it. When I went hunting with Hanna she said we couldn’t take water, it was already in our mouth. She never did pack water when we went hunting, trapping or picking berries” because it could wash away hunting or berry-picking luck (Russ, 2014). We need to go back to harvesting and

drinking rainwater in just the right amount to improve our luck in life and in language revitalization.

T'aa'un, feathers

Haidas have a connection to feathers. Probably every Haida home has a collection of feathers. Eagle and flicker are amongst the most revered. Many medicine people use the eagle feathers to administer medicines and to wash away bad energy. Flicker feathers are believed to bring luck. Supernatural beings appreciate receiving flicker feathers in offerings. They can be seen on woven hats, masks and headdresses. In the olden days, a medicine man that received his powers from the Ocean-People would wear flicker feathers in his headdress (Swanton, 1905b, p. 40). Feathers are accessible and have a strong cultural significance, therefore they should be used as a language medicine to clear negative energy, to administer medicines or to bring luck.

Conclusion

Haida medicines can and will help us heal our ailing language. *Xil* has the capacity to heal physical ailments as well as bring a person to a pure state of being enabling a connection to the supernatural world. *Xil* helps to strengthen our *liis*, the cord between our Haida world and us. If we believe in the healing powers of our medicines, if we ask the medicines to help us and if we take the medicines on a regular basis, the medicines could help us become speakers. Language learners are all on individual journeys and have their own ailments from colds to anxiety or being unlucky. The medicines mentioned in this chapter have the ability to heal ailments common to language learners. Some, like salt water and devil's club have the ability to cleanse the

body and bring a person to an altered state. Other medicines like crumbly rock, devil's club and Indian Hellebore offer protection. Round-leaved sundew, single delight and flicker feathers bring about luck. The crab apple tree, stinging nettles and cedar make us strong. The healing tips in this chapter could be custom-tailored to each person's wellness journey to help them become not only fluent speakers but strong Haidas as well.

Chapter 5 - Ritual and Ceremony

Introduction to Haida Rituals and Ceremonies

The Haida culture is rich with traditional rituals and ceremonies. For centuries, we have celebrated rites of passage and conducted rituals to keep us connected to the spirit world. Many rituals were conducted to obtain a Haida concept of luck, wealth and prosperity. Rituals and ceremonies are very important to the continuation of our Haida language, culture and identity. Many *Xaad Kil* language revitalization answers are rooted in our traditional rituals and ceremonies.

What are Haida Rituals and Ceremonies?

Haida rituals and ceremonies are conducted to mark a social change, to bring about good fortune and to give thanks to the Creator and supernatural beings. For the purposes of this research, a ritual is a sacred, customary, time-honoured way of celebrating and recognizing our unique Haida culture. Puberty rituals, devil's club rituals and carrying special medicines and objects are believed to bring power, luck and protection. A ceremony is a formal, public special occasion. Society-wide events include potlatches, pole-raisings and funerals. Ceremonies and rituals are often held to boost a person's or a clan's prestige since social ranking is still an important Haida concept. This chapter will feature two-dozen examples of rituals and ceremonies that we could conduct for the betterment of our language.

What can Traditional Rituals and Ceremonies Do For Language Learners?

Haida rituals and ceremonies can help keep the language learner rooted in the Haida culture and can give the learner a deep sense of connection to our Haida ancestors, the supernatural world and to the language. Rituals are often done to bring about very precious and scarce things. *Xaad Kil* is very scarce today! Therefore, by conducting the rituals and by rigorous training, we may be able to bring it back. By participating in these rituals and ceremonies, learning the language could come easier to the learner. The language learner could understand that there are supernatural forces that could guide him. Participating in private rituals could strengthen a learner's faith and determination to learn *Xaad Kil*. A Potlatch in honour of learners could mark special milestones and celebrate the successes of students and fluent speakers. The language learner could feel a deeper sense of belonging in the community and a deeper sense of purpose. Public ceremonies would bring attention to the state of the Haida language and it would make the community aware that it is everyone's responsibility to revitalize the language. It is a common belief among learners and language advocates that reinstating rituals and ceremonies will help revitalize the Haida language. In the words of Vince Collison:

That's what we're trying to get back here with the language, the old-fashioned protocol. It's tied to the medicines, to the connection to the land and water. We're kind of missing it, it's not gone, it's just not the level it was before Contact. It's unfortunate, the uncle-nephew relationship went by the wayside; we're missing that. We have to figure out how to get it all back. (Collison, 2014)

This chapter will document two dozen rituals and ceremonies that could be revitalized for the sake of our language.

Literature Review on Haida Rituals and Ceremonies

There has been a fair bit of ethnographic literature on Haida rituals and ceremonies. Boelscher (1989), Blackman (1982), Swanton (1905a, 1905b and 1908), Murdock (1934 and 1936), as well as Stearns (1981) and Turner (2014) have lived on Haida Gwaii and have written about traditional Haida practices.

There was a discrepancy in representation by men's and women's rituals by the first researchers. Although Swanton documented a lot about rituals and ceremonies, he did not capture much about the women's rituals and ceremonies. Stories about Haida women really came to life in academia in the 1980s. Blackman's (1982) biography of Florence Davidson tells of her ability to walk both in the traditional Haida world and Christian world. Blackman writes about potlatching, puberty, marriage, birth and death practices before 1979 from *naanii* Florence's view. Turner and Boelscher were other important female researchers amongst the Haida who had the wisdom to capture the stories of Haida women in their research. From them, we are able to better understand women's roles, rituals and ceremonies.

There has been a fair amount written about the Haida Potlatch. Swanton talked about the potlatch and clan system. Murdock wrote one of my favourite documents about He wrote about *Sdaahl K'awaas* (who I am named after) who held a house-building potlatch with her husband at Yan (1934). He captured some of the intricacies of the potlatch and humor of my ancestors. Boelscher (1989), who lived with elder Emma Matthews, did a qualitative study of the Massett Haida, and her book *The Curtain Within* described the interrelationships amongst the clans, the rituals and the rich wealth of oral histories and stories. I examined these valuable resources for a deeper understanding of

traditional rituals and ceremonies that could translate into the future for our language survival.

Based on the literature review, I have determined that a deeper investigation into the traditional ways of strengthening our Haida voice is needed. I can see there is a wealth of clues in the literature, and that through my analysis; I can recommend rituals and ceremonies *Xaad Kil* learners can benefit from.

Why I Selected These Rituals and Ceremonies

I selected rituals and ceremonies that our ancestors practiced and that we continue to conduct today. Some, like prayer, song and food burning are common. Others like feeding the spirits of the sea, the seawater ceremony and bull-kelp ceremony are not as common as they used to be and I had to rely more on archival documentation of these rituals. All of these ceremonies and rituals are done to access new knowledge, build strength, cleanse the body and the mind and make a connection to the supernatural world. The two-dozen rituals and ceremonies mentioned all have great abilities to bring about good change for *Xaad Kil* and the language learners.

The Rituals and Ceremonies That Will Help Revitalize *Xaad Kil*

This chapter is organized into rituals and ceremonies from the sea, forest and sky. I have also included a section on individual rituals like prayers that are private and not specifically connected to the ocean, forest or sky but that could be done at home, in the classroom or out on the land or sea. I have also added a section on community ceremonies.

Individual Rituals and Ceremonies

Sanhlgang guusaaw, Prayer

Prayer is an important aspect of Haida life. There is still a strong belief in giving thanks to the Creator. The practice of praying in the Haida language continued even while our ancestors were being turned into Christians. The belief in a Creator and the practice of giving thanks through prayer is similar in Haida society and in Christianity so this transition happened with some ease. In analysis of the old Lord's Prayer translation, it is apparent the ancestors translated the prayer according to their beliefs, not necessarily in the Christian way of thinking. The concept of respect and spiritual beliefs come through in the translation as shown in this sample of *Tsinni* Stephen Brown's translation of the Lord's Prayer (Ignace and Bell, 2008, p 28):

Itl' Gung, saa tlagee gaa isis.
Our Father, who art in Heaven
(Our Father who is in the land above)

Dang kyee an yahgudangaagaa.
Hallowed be thy name
(Your name is respected)

Today, prayers still happen in the Haida language in the church and in community events. Elders and a few younger people are able to offer a prayer of thanks in Haida. Giving thanks to the Creator for the speakers and for the learners and for the community is important to revitalize the Haida language. Praying to the Creator to have pity upon our language revitalization and totally surrendering our needs is also an important prayer belief.

[The elders] believed we had to pray for the language, to accept it and learn it. We have to pray [that] the people teaching are gentle and kind. Even pray for our

community to be supportive, not so judgmental and critical. Pray they'll come with solutions. (Moore, 2014)

There are a few prayers that language learners have created and memorized for language learning. The high school students learned a prayer and gave out paper copies of the following prayer at a potlatch to honor their language teacher Stephen Brown (personal communication, December 13, 2011):

Saa nang iitl' laagaadaas.
Ga tlaay duu dang ahl t'alang gii nang.gaa
Dagwii gu dang ahl t'alang giingang.gaa.
Xaad kil guusuway iitl' an 'yaangaldae.
Iitl' ga dang tlaatsasang
SGalaanaa aa t'alang kil 'laagang.
We are asking you for help.
We are asking for the strength to do what we need to do.
Make the language easy to speak.
We thank you, creator for your help.

Jaskwaan (personal communication, 2015) says this prayer before she begins her mentoring with elder Primrose Adams:

Sanghlgang guusuu
Saa 'laana, 'itl' ga tlaad.
Creator help us.
Xaad kil t'alang hlgangulas it'l ga tlaad.
Help us in our walk in the Haida Language.
Xaad kil tl'a 'waadluwaan sk'adee ga gudangs ga hl tlaad.
Help everyone / all of us learn the Haida Language.
Hawaa saa'laana.
Thank You Creator.
Sang 'ahl kil 'laagang.
Thank you for listening.

It is clear that the power of prayer is still amongst us and the power of prayer to the Creator and the supernatural that have given so much to the Haida is an excellent tool for reviving our language. Prayer can give us hope, courage and strength to be outstanding language speakers.

Meditation ritual

Meditation has been a part of Haida culture for centuries. Meditating to become calm and to be more open to learn the language is an important ritual. It is also quite individual and can be done at the beach or in the woods or anywhere a person can find even a few minutes of quiet. Woody Morrison shared his knowledge of meditation:

And then there's a way to learn to be become invisible. You lay in the ground, usually in the muskeg where there's moss and you stop thinking. You stop thinking when it's clear, you can hear the earth breathe; you know you're invisible. We used to play that as kids. It was all taught to us to go down inside. To find that strength inside so you could sense the presence of the ancestors. (Morrison, 2014)

Jenny Cross also believes in the power of meditating in the forest:

In the forest, we have to meditate and pray. Where we go to pick medicines and berry pick, I offer tobacco to mother earth, especially when I'm getting cedar. I can hear the trees swaying and sometimes I know it is the ancestors. It's giving your eyes, ears and heart over to the ancestors. It doesn't happen enough, that connection. (Cross, 2015)

Meditation was a way to bring a person into an altered state or trance. A person would take medicines and drink salt water to help cleanse the body. Singing or a drumbeat could help the person focus and go deep within oneself. In language learning, it is important to feel centred and ready to accept new knowledge, therefore I recommend the meditation or any other similar meditation to all language learners.

Rituals and Ceremonies From the Sea

Many rituals connect us to the ocean. The ocean gives us strength and nourishment. It also has such great power and abilities to take lives. Haidas have therefore always had a great respect for the ocean. It is only natural that we would call

on the powers of the sea to wash over us and breathe life back into the Haida language. I will share eight important rituals from the sea.

Boy's puberty ritual

There is a boy's puberty ritual in the Haida culture that is deeply connected to the ocean. Today, some boys are put through a gentler version of this ceremony. Missionary Thomas Crosby was proud to write that one of the last Haida boys to go through this sacred ceremony was converted to Christianity while he was in Victoria. *Gedanst*, Amos Russ was one of the last boys to go through an intense puberty ritual before the church overpowered and shamed the people out of conducting the ceremony. Reverend B. C. Freeman described to Crosby *Gedanst's* ceremony (Crosby, 1914, p. 264). *Gedanst* lived with his *Tsinni* in Skidegate. His *Tsinni* would toss him in the stormy sea to toughen him up. *Gedanst* was whipped to revive his limbs. *Gedanst's* mom would warm him up by the fire when the ritual was done. Some of today's elders remember the sacred ceremony that marked the coming-of-age of young men. 94-year-old Claude tells of his uncle's ceremony in the 1800s:

It makes you strong. If you couldn't take it, you'd be better off dead. It's survival of the fittest. My old uncle Ben Bennett thinks he could walk on water, they whipped him with spruce boughs and threw him in the water.
(Jones, 2014)

Elder Woody Morrison also remembers the ritual that his elders conducted for him in Hydaburg, Alaska.

I was taken when I was twelve and we go out. The two old men stripped down, and wade in the ocean up to their waist and they call for you to come by the fire in Haida. But you have to stay out all night waist deep, as the tide goes in and out you follow it and then they call to you to come out and get warm, you can do it. You have to go down inside so your spirit can go and sit by the fire. You do this all night until just until the raven cries, if you watch for the daylight you don't see

it coming but suddenly you can see a little bit of sun. And then they would call you.

Aahlh gwaaylgaa guunaa, aahl gwaaylgaa guunaa. Walk over here. Then you have to bring your spirit back inside you. Then you walk out. Then they use blueberries, to whip your legs until they drew blood. You see, blueberries are different from other plants. It doesn't just rot, it ossifies. It's almost like stone before it rots. That's why they use it, to put that stone into you. So that you're like that stone. When it draws blood you're ready. So these things were done so you learn how to go down inside. (Morrison, 2014)

This ritual strengthens a boy at puberty and turns him into a strong Haida man. It made him an ocean-going warrior and fisherman. Today, a handful of boys have undergone this ceremony but a milder version than our great-great-grandfathers. This ceremony could be revitalized on a larger scale to mark the change in status of boys, to strengthen them and to instill the importance of their responsibility to the Haida environment, family and to their language and culture. His maternal uncles would also teach the importance and connection to his clan and immediate family. The ceremony also strengthens his *liis*, the invisible tie he has to his home and family. A young man learns about his place in the world. He learns about his roles and responsibilities to himself, his family and his environment. The ceremony could be conducted the old-fashioned way with the uncles and grandfathers taking charge or through the youth programs with knowledgeable men at the helm. Today's boys would be acknowledged and seen as men. They would feel the responsibility they have to their family, to the community and environment. We could also incorporate a teaching about the importance of speaking *Xaad Kil*. This ceremony is greatly needed, as there are just a handful of male language learners in the Haida community. We need to revive this time-honoured ritual to build our men back up to being the proud *Xaad Kil* speaking warriors like their ancestors were.

Ocean bathing ritual

Being people of the ocean, it makes sense that we would draw strength from the powerful ocean. Many people know that they can cleanse their spirit and mind by going into the cold Pacific Ocean. Some people will enter the ocean and offer a prayer. Some people will dunk under the water four times. And some people enter and exit the ocean in a specific way. Most language learners and song composers that I know do practice ocean cleansing, however they may not be doing it specifically for language revitalization purposes but for the general healing and stress-relieving properties it brings.

The old story of Ashes-Eater tells of a boy who bathed in the ocean for strength. The supernatural being Stone-Ribs destroyed his village. The boy slept in the ashes by the fire and strengthened himself by ritually bathing in the ocean. Eagles dropped a fish by him and he climbed into its skin and swallowed Stone-Ribs. His strength grew and he continued to put on the skin, swimming all over Haida Gwaii, killing the menacing Supernatural beings as he went (Swanton, 1908, p. 213).

Jaskwaan is not only a Haida language champion but an international swimming champion as well. She is a believer in the power of the ocean and the need to cleanse. She says, “Bathing in the ocean must have strengthened our ancestors’ minds. That’s what we need to get the language back is a strong mind, a strong connection” (Bedard, 2014).

Leo Gagnon is also frequently on the water or at the shore harvesting food and plants. He believes so much in the power of the ocean that he says it is the only ritual needed. He told me:

I don’t know too much about ceremonies, the only one that was really prominent was dipping in the ocean at daybreak. Go in every day in the winter to get ready

for fishing in the spring. It built up the endurance. You could stay out aaaaall day fishing in the cold. That's the only one I know, the only one needed. (Gagnon, 2014)

Elizabeth Moore, one of the first to take Haida language learning seriously in the 1980s and one who takes her role as aunty to heart held an ocean cleansing ritual for her nephew in recent times.

I was just thinking about that, I remember when my nephew was just six-years old and just being a terrible child. I literally had to go to school every day and just hold him. Tracey and I decided he had to go into the ocean. So she explained why he was going in the ocean, the reason behind it. During it, his mom and Tracey were crying. After that, I held him and he was okay. The *naaniis* used to talk about when things were going wrong in your life, you're supposed to go to the middle of the ocean and drink ocean water four times and it'll get rid of all that negativity. (Moore, 2014)

Ocean cleansing is a requirement of participants at the Haida Gwaii Rediscovery program. The daily dip in the ocean combined with a jog on the beach and daily meditation has proven to ground the youth and many come back to the community as renewed, mature people. Candace Weir is a believer too:

I was working so hard on the Peace Treaty, work, meet, work, meet, and work, meet. I went for a walk and then I'm taking my clothes off and jumped in the ocean "*haw'aa Saalana*, let there be peace, amen." It helps! If I didn't distract myself, my mind wanted to jump in the ocean. How often did Haidas jump in the ocean? Once a day? I just loved it at *T'alang Stl'ang*. It made you mentally strong. My whole body got charged. This is what it was like before us. At seven in the morning too! That's why I made sure I volunteered to shut down the rediscovery camp to get grounded. Jumped in the ocean and went for a run and made a connection. That's why *sGan Gwaay* was so nice too. We went for dips there too. (Weir, 2014)

With all of the emotional challenges of learning *Xaad Kil*, it is important to take the time to shed the negativity and build our strength. There is no better place than the ocean to do this!

Offerings to the spirits of the sea

The ancient practice of feeding the Ocean Spirits is still amongst us. Making offerings to the spirits in the sea and asking them to help guide and support the Haida language revival could help bring a powerful force to the language. Long ago, Haidas would offer food, tobacco, fresh water and flicker feathers to the Supernaturals in the ocean as well as to the spirits of loved ones lost at sea. “Dad used to talk to Uncle Allan, mom’s youngest brother and throw water off the boat. Interesting...you’re bringing back old stuff I forgot about” (Clow, 2014).

In 2013, when I was in graduate school and trying to learn the Haida language I sometimes felt negativity around and within me. I made a seafood offering to the killer whale spirits who I believed could give me strength. For a long time after that, I could feel a personal change happening in me and I dreamed a lot about killer whales. At the same time, I was taking a Haida language class with Dr. Jordan Lachler. After an evening class, we heard there were killer whales going up the inlet. Even though it was dark out, we walked to the seawall to try to see them. We could not see them, but we heard them blowing their spouts at us, right beside the seawall. To me, this was a sign that they are there for us and we are on the right track with bringing back the language. Food offerings to the ocean spirits and loved ones lost at sea is a powerful ritual that could be conducted by a group of students and teachers or by individuals seeking spiritual guidance.

Tangaa isgyaan kiisaal, seawater drinking and fasting ceremony

Tangaa is the ritual of drinking salt water for purification and detoxification. Many ocean-going peoples from the Haida to the Hawaiians believe in the healing

powers of ingesting saltwater. It acts as a purgative, cleaning out one's bowels. A quart is said to clean out one's insides (Deagle, 1983, p. 169). A sick person and his family would drink salt water and fast for four days before being administered to by a medicine man (Swanton, 1905b, p. 42). Drinking salt water is a way to cleanse one's body and ward off witchcraft. A *SGaaga*, medicine man often drank salt water for purification to enable his healing and strengthen his connection to the supernatural world. He had his own special container specifically for *tangaa*, and he was buried with it upon death (Swanton, 1905b, p. 53). Along with a saltwater cleanse, a person undergoing *tangaa* and *kiisaal* would abstain from food, drink and sex. This seems only natural as being chained to the toilet after drinking saltwater would make a person not think about food, drink or sex! This ritual would give the person power and luck in hunting, fishing, fighting and obtaining property (Swanton, 1905b, p. 40). For language learning, it is important to be clean and prepared to accept new knowledge. Therefore, the saltwater drinking and fasting rituals are important. As with many other rituals, remembering to conduct the ritual around the lucky number four is important. Taking four sips at a time, fasting for four days are good practices.

Since whole families used to conduct *tangaa* and *kiisaal* for the well being of a family member, families could still do this ceremony for the language champions in their family. This would help the learner be pure to accept the language but it would also help the family be of the same mindset and to be ready to accept the language back in their family.

War belt ritual

My grad school colleague Vicki Wells once said, “Make no mistake! We are at war to save our languages! (personal communication, 2012). It was her comment that encouraged me to investigate war stories and rituals that we could apply to our fight to get our endangered languages back. In ancient times, Haidas conducted strict rituals before going off to war. Besides the man fasting, abstaining from sex and taking medicines, his wife would make matching belts for her and her husband before he set out.

The warrior now wore a girdle consisting of a piece of cedar-bark rope, at the back of which was tied a small wooden image of a man, and his wife wore a similar belt without the image...The image was a symbol of the slaves he was going to bring her. (Curtis, 1916, p. 134)

They would wear each other's belts until he went to the canoe to depart. Then, they would switch to wearing their own belt. The whole time he was at war, his wife would wear the belt while she stayed calm and mindful of her husband so that he would be calm in the canoe as he crossed the ocean and battled his enemies. She would fast for four days and ate little while he was away. She would also sleep in the same position as him. While at war, he would sit in the same spot in the canoe so as not to disrupt his destiny.

This ritual could work for the language warriors and their spouses. The exchange of belts would keep the spouses connected and mindful of the hard work that the language warrior is doing. I could see loved ones making cedar, raven's tail or chilkat belts for the language warriors in their families. They could be exchanged in a public ceremony so the community could see the language warriors and be mindful of the sacrifices their whole families are making in the name of reviving *Xaad Kil*. Language

learners sacrifice their precious energy and time to learn their language. They leave their families and jobs to focus on learning their language. They have their own inner-battles with themselves as well as outer battles and criticism from the outside world. Language revitalization is not easy. The exchange of language warrior belts would connect families, honor the language champions and encourage the community to protect the language warriors who are battling to save our language.

The act of sitting in the same spot so as not to distract our destiny could also apply to language learners. Students often get comfortable sitting in the same spot in class. Maybe it is just in our genes to be stuck like chitons in our special spot!

Bull-kelp ritual

A ritual with deep-sea kelp, or *ts'an hlk'amalee* was once done during warring times and it can be used ceremonially to help the language. There was once a war between people of *T'anuu* and *Nansdins*. The men anchored in a kelp bed and the medicine man whipped at the kelp heads as if whipping the heads off their enemies (Swanton, 1905a, p. 410). This is a ritual that could be done to ritually whip the heads off the enemies of the Haida language. We could ritually defeat the self-doubt as well as the external enemies such as the English language itself and the negative energy of naysayers.

Gandl k'iinaas isgyaan saal naay, hot springs and steambath rituals

Haidas have also used hot water and steam in cleansing and purification rituals although there is not much remembered about these ceremonies. Often, steaming would include dried medicines such as False Hellebore, Pine or Devil's Club. Jenny Cross's

mom told her to go to the beach early in the morning at low tide to gather rocks for the sweat (Cross, 2015). The hot springs in Gwaii Haanas were used by our ancestors and by today's people for its healing properties. The 2013 earthquake shut off one of the main pools and miraculously it is coming back to life. We can still use hot water and steam in our purification rituals, to ward off negative energy as our ancestors did:

[A] *naanii* did some sort of cleansing, they dug a pit and she sat on a board and they put the rocks and medicines in. Stephen told me about it too. Someone was witching his brother and they sent the brothers out in the bush to find the medicines, it was a medicine that grew on a bush with spines. Maybe part of a rose bush family? He found it and put four medicines all together. The woman who was doing it to him was in pain all night. There are still people who know a little bit about. I always thought we could learn more. (Edenshaw, 2014)

Woody Morrison knows of a steam ceremony to build one's luck:

And then they talked about the ceremony when you're losing luck. They'd build a sweat lodge like the Prairie people do, build a fire and put rocks around. The man would bring a vessel made of alder because alder contains essence of woman. In spring if you listen, you can hear the heartbeat. You must handle with care so it won't slip from your hands. Take roots from *ts'iihlanjaaw*, from devil club that grows where the salt-water hits it and you find a long root and follow it until you find all the way to end and you cut at the beginning of stem. Take the outer bark off and wind in form of figure eight and take the bowl made of alder and fill with spring water, always water from underground, never flowing water. And they'd soak it in there; it depends on how much in a hurry you are. Then you get *iinang*, moss from muskeg and go to big cedar tree and split and peel it part way down the tree and then cut in teepee, cone shape. The person would move the rocks away so no smoke and sometimes take a small stool to sit on and get inside with the *ts'iihlanjaaw*, moss and root and just his head out. Then take the moss and squeeze water from devil club root onto that while singing his song. This is the way that you take off the bad luck and get your luck back. He'd sing as often as he needed too but never less than four. Then he would take that rest of the water and pour on the hot rocks to go back into the ground. I don't remember if they burned the root after but he did something with it because they used it to find a song too. It took about a year to find your song. I used to watch this old man, Peter Nathan was his name. (Morrison, 2014)

A modern take on this ritual could be bathing, sitting in a sauna or steam-room or taking part in a sweat that involves salt and spring water, devil's club, pine and moss. The need for this ritual could justify building saunas and steam rooms in the Haida communities. These rituals could bring luck and purification to prepare the body and mind for absorbing new knowledge.

Protection ritual

We need to provide protection to our Haida language, our speakers and to language learners. There is so much negativity in the world that we need to provide special protection to our endangered language. People who purposely bring bad energy, luck and evil are called *kuganaa*. In the olden days, people strongly believed in witchcraft and connected *kuganaa* with mice, land-otters, the ability to fly and more recently, cats (Boelscher, 1988, p. 194). When language learners are feeling discouraged, there is often mention of negative powers working against them and the language.

Much medicines and rituals and ceremonies, such as carrying *kuganaa kwaa*, *kuganaa* rock or bathing and drinking salt water are to protect one against this bad energy. A language learner who is feeling negativity could use the medicines, rituals and ceremonies to protect himself and our endangered language. He could eat devil's club and put medicines and charms around the house for protection.

During my work in repatriation, elders Gertie White and Dorothy Bell strongly urged us to use the crumbly rock, *kuganaa kwaa* to protect ourselves. We were delving into an unfamiliar ritual of repatriating and reburying our ancestors' remains and the elders believed we needed to protect ourselves from negative spirits. They believed that there could be negative energy amongst our own ancestors and amongst the thousands of

other spirits that were locked in the museums. From the repatriation efforts, we learned more about the positive and negative energies that surround us and we learned to use the crumbly rock in our medicine pouches, around our homes and even just in our pocket when we feel we need the extra protection.

I learned more about how to identify and get rid of a *kuganaa* from my cousin, who learned this from our grandfather, Moses Ingram. There is an intense ritual to see who is doing bad medicine. Once identified, throwing *kuganaa* rocks at them could put an end to their bad medicine.

A less intense way to protect oneself would be to carry the crumbly rock and placing it around our homes and in the classrooms.

Rituals and Ceremonies from the Forest

Haidas have a strong connection to the forest. It is a place for gathering medicines, food and for quiet contemplation and prayer and it is where many supernatural beings reside. Elizabeth Moore is one of those who believes we can gather strength and healing in the forest:

The obstacles of defeat are all around. Technology, the community, there's always someone out there trying to squish it. A ceremony in the forest to start. I always dreamed to have a circle with elders to talk about the language, when it was taken, how did it affect them, how it changed their lives. When I did my paper about my family, *naanii* Cecelia had a lump in her throat and her mom told her to make tea and she didn't understand because she was at residential school. And so you could hear the sorrow in the interview, the lump in her throat. All that stuff wasn't swept away; it still lingers with fluent speakers, people who understand. The ceremony I did one, at a treatment Centre. We went into the forest and had to be with a tree, we had to leave our stuff, put it in the moss, not hidden but for the wind to take it away. (Moore, 2014)

Below are six rituals from the forest that can help with language revitalization efforts. These rituals call upon a person to find peace in the forest and within him.

Ts'ihlanjaaw, devil's club ritual

The *Ts'ihlanjaaw* ritual continues to be a well-known and well-respected ritual for protection, luck and purification. Turner (2004), Deagle (1988), Boelscher (1988) and Swanton (1908) talk about the importance of *ts'ihlanjaaw* devil's club as a purifier and for luck and it was a main topic of discussions in my thesis interviews. *Ts'ihlanjaaw* could help strengthen and prepare a person for a new song or for gambling, for instance. In the story of the Copper Salmon, a man who lost everything to gambling ate the skin of devil's club and single delight. These made him quite sick, cleansing his insides out. He awoke to a copper salmon and a powerful song (Swanton, 1908a, p. 689). This ritual was so strong for him; we need to consider it for song revitalization today.

For protection, devil's club is kept often with the spiny outer-bark still on it, hanging in bundles of four or ten at the entrance of a building or house. All people interviewed agreed that it should be placed at the entrance of all Haida language classrooms and at the entrance of learners' houses to ward off bad energy and anyone wishing to do harm.

Men who wanted to do well in fishing or gambling would conduct the ritual as Claude Jones mentioned from his younger days:

Eat forty of them, and put it around yourself but you eat it too. They did it to catch lots of fish and everything. Lucky number. You sit there and if someone runs into you or is wandering around in the bushes, it goes to them instead. You want to be out alone somewhere. Adam [Bell] said when he did it he was way up the inlet. He did it for fishing. He said there are lots of people coming around trying to scare him so he quit. If you're not brave enough, don't try it. It would take all night. After you eat it, put it in the ground. It was quite a common thing to see when I was growing up. It was a medicine. They'd do it for everything. (Jones, 2014)

As mentioned in the hot spring and steam bath section, devil's club could be added to the sauna or steam bath to improve one's luck in learning.

Elder Stephen Brown used to make devil's club necklaces for his dedicated language learners. "That's why Stephen put it on necklaces, too. It's for strength and all the good stuff; to keep the evil spirits away from you" (Clow, 2014). Carved Medicine Talker necklaces like Nancy Turner's special necklace might be another way to offer protection to our language warriors.

This is such an important ritual to remember and to keep alive for our continued luck, purification and protection of language champions and *Xaad Kil*.

Taguna isgyaan xandawaa, women's puberty ritual and mourning rituals

Since we are a matrilineal society and women make up the majority of *Xaad Kil* learners, celebrating and honoring women is important to preserving the language. Unlike the boy's puberty ceremony that is connected to the ocean, the girl's ceremony to mark her first menses is connected to the forest. *Taguna* was an important time that was marked with great ceremony. This ceremony became quite dormant after residential schools and missionaries. It became a shameful, quiet, uncelebrated time. One of the last recorded stories was from Florence Davidson:

I was thirteen. My mother didn't tell me that *tagwanaa* (menstruation) was...They hung the sheets close to the bed and I lay down for ten days. During that time, I couldn't drink water because it would bring me bad luck for the rest of my life. I couldn't look at the sea because they say if you do; when you're older your face twitches. Eating shellfish also brings bad luck. As much as you try to get food, you can't...They didn't let me talk much because I would get in the habit of talking all the time. You have to have respect for yourself, my mother told me...At the end of ten days or two weeks they let me get up and sit around the house. I was kind of shy because I went like that; I was the talk of the town because I *tagwena*. My mother gathered bowls until my *tagwena*. Afterwards she gave them out to those she loves, I guess. She gave Sophie material and

something else because she came to see me. My mother didn't call the women together because of the missionary; she just gave the bowls out in a secret way. (Blackman, 1985, p. 91)

Seclusion was an important aspect of a woman's coming-of-age ritual. Her mother and *skaanalang*, paternal aunties guided her through the ritual.

At the end of the twenty days the girl bathed in a stream or lake, washing the skin with liquid from the household urinal. All clothing and mats were thrown away, and the stone pillow was placed in a dry cave. A distribution of food in her honor completed the rites. (Curtis, 1916, p. 126)

A girl at puberty or a woman in mourning would be rubbed with cedar bark, *giid*. The cedar bark was then folded and wedged in the cleft of a crab apple tree. This ritual would make the woman strong (Curtis, 1916, p. 126). This could be a ceremony for the Haida women learning *Xaad Kil* to help make them strong as well. We could plant both Haida and European crab apple trees around our language classrooms and in special places around Haida Gwaii for us to conduct women's ceremonies.

Another aspect of the *tagwana* ceremony was the creation of a hemlock wreath. Hemlock boughs were hung around a young woman's bed and the dried, falling needles would symbolize her riches (Curtis, 1916, p.126). The ritual could be done with a language revitalization twist with the same treasures plus additional modern language-learning symbols like language CDs, dictionaries or phrasebooks that could help the young woman become rich in the language.

A young girl would have to sleep on a sack filled with gravel and rest her head on a flat stone for a pillow when she slept so that she would grow up strong and have a long life (Swanton, 1905b, p. 48).

A pubescent girl was considered so powerful that the men kept their fishing implements and gambling sticks away from her. Medicine men especially kept themselves and their healing instruments away from the powerful young woman.

By the time Florence's younger sister came of age, they did not celebrate in the Haida way. "We became like a white people then. They quit it because it's not a nice thing to do to spread the news around" (Blackman, 1982, p. 92).

We held a small *tagwana* ceremony for my own daughter, Amelia. Her aunties and a couple of her friends came to our home. Although I wished to have a bigger ceremony for her, I honoured her wishes to just have a quiet ceremony. We still honoured her and welcomed her to womanhood. Her aunty Sandy Gagnon made her a hemlock wreath. Her maternal and paternal aunties decorated it with all sorts of abalone, money and jewels. Amelia passed through the big wreath four times. Amelia hung the wreath above her bed and the dried needles that fell on her represented the riches that will come her way in her life. Her aunties also all left her lasting words of encouragement and love. I believe the ceremony strengthened her *liis*, the invisible umbilical cord that connects her to her family and to the Haida Gwaii. It also made her a stronger young woman who knows her place in the world and ensured that she knows the *aw'lang* and *skaan'lang*, her maternal aunties and paternal aunties who will be by her side for her lifetime.

To bring a group of mothers, grandmothers, maternal aunties, paternal aunties and young women together for this ceremony would help popularize it and help make it an exciting time in a young woman's life. This is a time to show them how much they are loved and appreciated and to mark this important rite of passage. It is also a time to teach the young women about their roles and responsibilities as Haida women, and we could

include a lesson on the importance of learning *Xaad Kil* teaching *Xaad Kil* to their babies when the time comes. By including the importance of learning *Xaad Kil* in these young ladies, we would be on the right path to keeping the language alive and making the next generation of women even stronger and healthier.

It is also important to care for the women who are *xandawaa*, in mourning. The ritual is similar, though not as vigorous as the puberty ritual. Rubbing the mourning woman with cedar bark, cutting her hair and showing her great love is important as she is mourning. Acknowledging her pain and helping her to move through the grieving is important. Women who lose their mentors would also benefit from this ritual. It could help them get back to learning *Xaad Kil* and being hopeful despite losing their loved one.

Lastly, I would encourage male learners to be mindful of the powers of the women in their home and continue the tradition of putting their fishing, work and *Xaad Kil* resources away from them during their time-of-month.

Early-riser ritual

Haidas had a different sense of time before clocks were introduced and children were shipped off to the regimented residential schools. Haida ancestors relied on the seasons, the movement of the tides and the foods to be harvested. Some of this belief has carried forward. Many elders favor working early in the morning and often teased the language learners for showing up to class yawning at nine in the morning, meanwhile the elders have been awake since five in the morning. Leo's cheekiness shined through as he taught me this ritual, probably because he saw me arriving in language class sleepy-eyed every day:

Early rising medicine, *Tsinni* Moe would use on me all the time. You get up at the crack of dawn and go up the bushes. Grab the spider-webs out of the stumps and rub it all over your hands and face, from four stumps. You'll be waking up with the ravens every morning. (Gagnon, 2014)

I include this ritual because it could help the young learners practice similar habits as their elders who prefer to work in the morning and to help the younger generation appreciate the old habit of rising early.

Ts'ahl, pine ritual

Pine trees can also be used in a ritual to revitalize the Haida language. Pine gives off a fresh scent and is known to help ward off headaches. For students in class all day, having a sauna or steam bath with pine needles could help bring clarity and a sense of well-being. Elizabeth Moore believes *ts'ahl* could offer more healing that could directly help with language healing:

There was a story about the pine-tree; it's one of the most powerful medicines around, the pine itself. It belonged to our clan as a crest. I remember *Tsinni* saying how the power of that tree is so strong so maybe it's picking some of the needles and carrying them with us, or taking some of the needles and doing a ceremony. Go to the woods and do a ceremony, have the pines in your palm and praying for strength to learn, strength to open the mind and the courage to continue (Moore, 2014).

Kiid, spruce ritual

The spruce tree has great powers. Spruce cones can be used to unlock speech and to bring luck in love. It is also a ritual that has a special place in my heart after I heard the story from my *daa*, Leo:

The only cone I know about was the one *naanii* Mamie used on YOU. Spruce cones. We were out gathering spruce cones, I wondered why she wanted to go out so early but that's the time you gather medicines. There was me, you, *naanii*

and *Tsinni* Vinton. It wasn't very far, just down North beach. She grabbed spruce cones, four of them and run them across your mouth like that [horizontally] because you wouldn't talk. After that you were really yappy. It actually works, it makes you reeeeeeally smart. Spruce cones, the ones the squirrels drop.

After that, they'd gather a dozen more spruce cones and they'd lay them out in a half a circle, and they'd grab those cones and stand there and talk to each ones of those cones. Each time, they'd pass one of those four cones across the mouth to become a powerful speaker and everyone would listen to you. (Gagnon, 2014)

This powerful spruce cones ritual also resonated with another language learner. He heard about it from elders and after hearing more about it from Leo's story and he conducted a ritual with his own son, who was born with a speech impediment. After he conducted the ceremony, his son became a real chatterbox too!

Swanton also mentions spruce cones and spruce pitch being used as a love medicine (1905b, p. 45). A man would fast and collect his medicine. He rubbed the medicine on his palms and put it on his intended's clothing to make her fall in love with him. Maybe rubbing the *kiiid* medicine on our language resources would help them love us back!

In another story, a man went on a quest to find medicine to get his uncle's wife to return his affection. He came across the singers. The sisters seemed to already know what he was after and laughed at him before they gave him spruce gum to throw at the woman he loved and they sang him a song (1916, p. 151). Could throwing spruce gum at our language resources help to strengthen the love between us and our language?

Swanton also said a man would rise early after days of fasting and go to the nearest salmon river. He would get naked and find two spruce cones partially covered by earth. He would grab them both and mention his beloved's name and his name and ask for what he desired, whether it be marriage or for her to just fall in love with him. He

would repeat them four times, louder each time. He would then go into the water and put the cones in the water. As they each floated around him, he would repeat his wishes. This he would repeat four times. He would then take the cones into the woods, and make a pillow with the cones on top. He would cover this with salal bushes and repeat his wishes four times. He would then go home, eat and wait for his wishes to come true. I believe this story could apply to anything we could wish for, such as becoming a fluent Haida speaker. I am not sure what the language learners would think about running around naked, but it is worth a shot if it would help us become fluent!

Xilaawg, single delight ritual

The dainty little single delight flower is quite powerful. Our ancestors would eat the flowers for strength, to learn a song or to become a chief. People would follow the practice of eating in fours or tens, and would often eat forty of the rolled-up spicy flowers to make them more connected to supernatural powers (Deagle, 1983, p. 146).

A man named *Xanaa* wanted to become a chief of the *Skidaakaaw* Raven clan. He climbed a Mount Algum in Massett Inlet to eat *xilaawg* and grease. He entered an altered state and saw supernatural beings that taught him new songs (Swanton, 1908, p. 689 and 742).

This medicine has made a revival amongst Haidas today who need healing from colds, flus and depression as mentioned in the *Xil* chapter. We need to call on the powers of *xilaawg* to bring us to a deeper spiritual connection. We need to honour the ritual of eating the flowers to bring us closer to Supernaturals who could help us acquire new songs, stories and to bring us luck in our language learning, although I would recommend starting by eating four or ten of these powerful flowers.

Burning ritual

The burning ritual is done to feed and connect with our deceased loved ones and the supernatural beings. According to Curtis, Haidas who died of natural death went to a happy place but as a caution, "...the surviving friends, said the medicine-men, must frequently throw small portions of food into the fire and pour water around the fire, lest the departed suffer in the midst of plenty" (Curtis, 1916, p. 128).

The ritual became has quietly continued through the generations, although it probably almost died out during Residential School times. Some people grew up putting food in the fire to feed the ancestors but did not understand the importance of the ritual. "If we didn't eat all the food, we'd have to dump it into the heater in the living room 'feed the ancestors,' he used to say. I didn't understand it but we just did it. I guess it was there all the time" (Clow, 2014).

This ritual made a strong comeback with the repatriation of human remains. It became the norm to feed the spirits of the ancestors that have been in storage in museums for the last 100 years. For almost twenty years, I travelled the world with the Haida Repatriation Society looking for and repatriating over 500 ancestral remains. Upon finding the ancestral remains and preparing them for their journey home we would feed their spirits:

The food offered in fires for the ancestors draws upon the same familiarity – the shared textures and flavours of Haida Gwaii. As much as possible, the foods offered into a fire are the same kinds of foods that the ancestors would have eaten during their lifetimes: huckleberries, salmon berries, halibut, salmon, eulachon grease...The production and consumption of foodstuffs for repatriation create opportunities for individuals to locate themselves within a history – quite often a family history – of shared experiences centred on fishing, canning, clam digging,

feasting, hunting, berry picking, being gifted with eulachon grease, harvesting k'aaw, gathering scallops, or bring food to elder relatives. (Krpmotich, 2014, p. 142)

People then continued to do this ceremony for recent loved ones that pass on. This is a way to feed their spirits, to give thanks and to show our love to them. It is a ceremony that could be done for our language teachers who have passed on that we would like to thank and ask for guidance. It is also a ceremony that could be done to thank and call upon other supernatural beings that could help us keep our language strong. Traditional foods, fresh water and special treats loved ones used to enjoy are great offerings to make to our ancestors. The food is placed on a paper plate or wooden platter and placed on the fire. It is also helpful to speak to the ancestors or spirits we are trying to connect with. Lastly, it is important to also ask The-Woman-Under-The-Fire for help taking the offerings to the spirit world, as I mention in the Supernatural chapter (Swanton, 1905b, p. 86).

Rituals and Ceremonies from the Sky

We can conduct rituals with objects from the sky and with the elements of the atmosphere, such as wind. There are only a few sky rituals mentioned, probably because the ocean and land are accessible to Haidas who travel by canoe and by foot.

Tajaaw ritual, wind ritual

Haida Gwaii is alive with the winds. The winds have been such a strong influence on the Haida lifestyle. Food harvesting, traveling and other activities are governed by the wind. The northeast wind, *xaaw* and southeast wind, *xiw* are so powerful, especially when they fight, as in the story of the Oystercatcher (Swanton, 1908,

p. 396). It is no surprise that people would recommend calling on the powerful winds to help blow life back into the Haida language. Woody Morrison talked about hearing about the powerful winds and how they connect to strengthening a person:

When I was twenty, I don't remember who it was, Patterson Edenshaw or John Bennett. One said when you can see the power of the wind, then you can see what's true and correct...to find that strength inside so you could sense the presence of the ancestors. That's what that old man meant when he said you could see the power that is the wind; then you know what's true and correct. Then I understood. (Morrison, 2014)

Elizabeth Moore also described the importance of connecting to the wind. She recalls *naanii* Dorothy Bell talking about the wonders of wind. According to *naanii* Dorothy, the wind has the power to bring sickness and to heal. *Naanii* Dorothy would probably agree that the wind could help us heal the language.

Naanii Dorothy believed so much in the global effect, when there was a war going on, she'd say all that sickness will come our way with the wind. The wind just keeps going; I thought that was pretty interesting. It can also take away that stuff too. (Moore, 2014)

It is up to us to expose ourselves to the wind and ask it for help to take away the negative feelings surrounding language revitalization and even to take away the English language.

Feather ritual

The use of feathers is common on the Northwest Coast. The Haidas have a special connection to eagle feathers and flicker feathers. Both are believed to bring good luck. Flicker feathers are particularly lucky and people often wear them in their woven hats. Chiefs also adorn their headdresses with flicker feathers. Eagle feathers are also used to sweep away bad energy. Woody Morrison remembers a ritual with a tiny feather to help one be prepared for whatever journey they were planning to take:

Pick a tiny little spot about ten feet away. You get a little feather and you throw the feather and it'd hit exactly on that spot and you'd know you're ready. You have to learn to go down inside where it's quiet and still. They used to teach us to sit and relax, you can feel your breath and heartbeat and slow it down...Then *dii aayhlgii*, I'm prepared. (Morrison, 2014)

Students could use an eagle feather to brush away negative energy and prepare to receive the language. A learner could also carry flicker feather for good luck in learning and practice the feather meditation ritual to know when they are ready to accept new knowledge. Eagle feathers could also be placed in classrooms and used to wash off negative energy to help students become ready to accept new language knowledge.

Kan.gi hlgigyaa, soul catcher ritual

The use of soul catchers is ancient. Soul catchers were carved bone, used by medicine men to bring back a person's wandering soul. One could lose his soul through witchcraft, trauma or by not returning after a dream or trance. A person without a soul could become very sick and die, so soul catching was an important ceremony. The medicine man would go into a trance to find the lost soul. He would then catch it in the soul catcher and blow it back into the ailing person. Of course the missionaries shunned this ritual and it became dormant.

Sometimes the shaman goes to recover a lost soul (ga'landa-i). After having fasted for four days, he sets out to find it. A watchman stands not far away from him. Then he walks about in the woods, looking for the soul. Finally, he finds it, and he carries it between his folded hands. The patient is covered with a mat; and while people are beating time and singing, the shaman shouts, "Hwu, hwu, hwu, hwu!" He moves his hands four times towards the chest of the patient, and then he puts the soul in. Then he takes a drink of water. About midnight the patient is allowed his first meal again. First he eats the tail of a salmon; later on, the chest of a salmon. Then he passes around in the same direction as he moved around the room. The shaman does not wear a mask. (Swanton, 1905b, p. 42)

This ritual could help language learners become stronger, and grounded in their mission to speak *Xaad Kil*. Many Haidas believe we still have the Haida language in us, it is just dormant. Haidas also believe there are spirits in everything, so it makes sense that there is a Haida language spirit! Maybe the Haida language spirit is wandering and needs help returning to us. It seems that only medicine men practiced the art of bringing back one's traumatized soul, therefore it would be important for specialized Haidas to perform this ritual and for us to further research the many soul catchers in museum collections. Maybe we could have a soul catcher specifically made for capturing and returning the *Xaad Kil sGaanawee*, the Haida language spirit.

Community Ceremonies

Community ceremonies are big, public events to commemorate big social changes. The whole Haida community is invited to celebrate and witness the events. There is often feasting, dancing, traditional naming and gift giving. In olden times, these ceremonies included the return-of-the-salmon, end of mourning, house building, naming and piercing and tattooing of clan members. We have since added graduation ceremonies, repatriation ceremonies, peace treaties and others. Public ceremonies are important to the language movement as they help to gain momentum and a renewal of the commitment to learning. They bring attention to the importance of speaking the language and revitalization efforts.

Waahlahl, Potlatch

The Potlatch or Feast is held to celebrate a major Haida event from a pole raising, a chieftainship, a house-raising, a marriage or end-of-mourning. An Eagle or Raven clan

commonly holds them and the opposite clan attends the event as witnesses. In modern times, Potlatches or Feasts have been held to mark community changes or celebrations. For instance, the George M. Dawson students held a Potlatch to honour their Haida language elder, Stephen Brown. The students hosted a luncheon, gave gifts, spoke high words of *Tsinni* Stephen and paid the guests for witnessing their honouring of *Tsinni* Stephen. His Haida name, *Sk'adalaay*, The-Teaching-Man was publically announced at the event. The community could continue to host potlatches to honor the language champions, to honor the Haida language and celebrate major language milestones and monumental events such as a language pole raising or new language buildings.

Honouring speakers and learners

The last ceremony I will mention is the Honoring Speakers and Learners Ceremony. We are at a time in history where every Haida language speaker is precious. With so few fluent speakers and a small number of learners, we need to honor those who have put in so much time and effort to speak and teach *Xaad Kil*. It is our custom to stand up our loved ones that we are proud of. I look forward to celebrating *Jaskwaan* and Primrose Adams' 900 hours of mentoring this year! Just as they showed us the way to pass on *Xaad Kil* with mentoring, they can also show us how we can honour our language champions. As with the Haida graduation ceremony, we could host a celebration and have their family members make a new button blanket, vest or language warrior belt for their language champion. Honouring them with the Haida graduation song would be a great way to honour them as *Nahiilaans* honoured his nephews David Jones, Elijah Jones, and Willie Matthews by composing this song for them for graduating from the Metlakatla school in 1910:

Graduation Song

Gii naa 'laa hlii king waa
Dii gwaan sdluu tliij gwii
Tlii naan naang k'uu yang
King uu daa
dii naang aa nGa
Dii naa aa 'laa kuu aaw
Sii hii ii ii yaay aa laa
Hii ii ii yaay aa laa

Translation:

When I see such a fine thing
Which way could I look in pride?
My dear ones are so fine

(Enrico, 1996 & Xaad Kihlgaa Hl Suu.u Society and the Tluu Xaadaa Naay Singers, 2010, p. 29)

We could host a ceremony where the family members stand up in public to commit to protecting and supporting the learner on their journey. It is time for us to show them they are loved, appreciated and important to the Haida community.

Xaadas kya'aang, Haida naming

Haida naming is an important part of Haida culture that is important to language revitalization. Everyone and everything of importance had meaningful names. People, houses, canoes and even feast dishes were once named. In the olden days, everyone, of course had a Haida name. The more high-ranking a person was, the more names he could have and he could acquire many throughout his lifetime. "Each person of noble birth received a feast name, which was to be used only on ceremonial occasions; having received this name, he or she took a place among the nobles of the tribe" (Curtis, 1916, p. 123). Parents worked hard to boost the rank of their children. Hosting a potlatch to name children was important. After a Naming Feast, the parents would often be referred to as

that person's mother or father instead of by their own name, especially by people of the child's generation. (Boelscher, 1988, p. 157). My daughter's friends could therefore call me *Gudangee Xahl Kil Awa* and her dad *Gudangee Xahl Kil Hadaa*. This old naming tradition should make a comeback so that we can ensure we are using everyone's Haida names and acknowledging the old tradition.

Just like the rest of our traditions, Haida name-giving became quiet for a few generations after the devastation of Smallpox wiped out most of the people and then later when children were sent away to Residential Schools. Many families quietly kept the name-giving ceremony alive within their own families.

Today, a person commonly receives a Haida name at birth, at the Baby-Welcoming Feast, during a clan Potlatch and at Haida graduation ceremonies. Names are clan property and are often passed down through the generations. My great-grandmother Lucy Frank, for instance, gave me her Haida name *Sdaahl K'awaas*, Sitting-and-Wanting, when I was born. This name has been in the *Tsiits Git'anee* clan for generations, even dating back to the times when my ancestors lived in *Yan* and Murdock wrote about *Sdaahl K'awaas'* house-building potlatch where many of her relatives were named and tattooed (1934). Haida names also make reference to a person's personality and physical characteristics and are therefore quite personal.

Haida names are important to *Xaad Kil* revitalization because a name gives a person a sense of connection to her clan and her culture. Addressing a person by her Haida name sets the stage for language learning. Many Haida language programs such as the Chief Matthews school program and the Skidegate Haida Immersion Program insist on using peoples' Haida names.

Piercing

Parents would often pierce their children at a house building to show that they are *yah Giid*, high ranking. Reviving this ritual is important to acknowledge and honour our precious children. The *skaanalang*, the opposite clan aunties would pierce the baby's ears. Today, many aunties are taking on this responsibility. My daughter's *skaan*, Candace Weir took her to get her ears pierced when she was a toddler. This ancient tradition of ear piercing would acknowledge an ancient practice of holding our children up in public to boost their rank. It would also cement the relationship between a Haida child and her *skaanalang*. Today, a public ceremony hosted by the mother could occur, or babies could have their ears pierced and Haida names given to them at the Haida Baby-Welcoming Feast given in Old Massett and Skidegate every two years. It would be a time to restate the importance of teaching our babies their mother tongue and it is a ceremony that should be done in the Haida language.

Stiidgaa, labret

The labret was an adornment worn in the bottom lip of high-ranking women. It was often made of bone, abalone or copper by a woman's paternal male cousin, her '*lan*' (Murdock, 1934, p. 365). A girl's *skaan*, her paternal aunty, did the piercing. The girl's labret hole was stretched as she grew older and had children.

Like tattooing, the missionaries frowned this upon and the practice quickly died out. I include *stiidgaa* as an important ritual for Haida women because it would force us to perfect the glottal sounds such as 'X,' 'K,' and 'K' and make 'B' and 'P' sounds not traditionally found in *Xaad Kil* more difficult to pronounce instead. Norwegian voyager Jacobsen noticed in the 1800s that a labret interfered with speech so that no bilabials

could be pronounced (Jacobsen, 1977). Jacobsen may have seen labrets as a hindrance but to a modern Haida speaker, labrets may be a language enhancer, as Christian White suggests:

[The labret is] a “sounding-board” for women, “a symbol of their voice,” something to help “carry their voice.” He explains that, for a long time, it was rare to hear women speak at public events; but, more recently, they have started to speak at the potlatches not only in English but also in Haida. Christian describes this by saying that the women had lost their voice but that it was coming back again and that they were speaking more strongly. To honor and encourage this, Christian made a series of labrets to be worn as medallions, which he gave to all his female friends at a potlatch in 2006. Thus, although these labrets are not worn in the mouth, the meaning they carry concerns inner strength that is “sounded,” relating to women and the matrilineal both of which are empowered through speaking and being heard. (La Salle, 2014, p. 146)

Following Christian’s lead, the language learners could wear a *stiidgaa* around their necks to symbolize their *Xaad Kil* journey. For the braver female language learners, they could have their bottom lips pierced and even if the large traditional labrets don’t make a comeback, a bottom lip piercing could symbolize our grandmothers’ *stiidgaa* and our words could ‘hang off our labrets’ too.

Tattooing

Traditional tattooing is an art that has made a strong comeback and it has a role to play a role in language revitalization. Haida tattoo artist Greg Williams explains, “tattooing is new, but it is very, very old. Tattoos have been a part of our culture for thousands of years, our people put our crests on their bodies.”

(https://www.sfu.ca/brc/online_exhibits/haida_tattoo.html). Long ago, many people had crest designs on their chest, arms and legs. It would take a few sessions to tattoo a design on a person and often a person would start his tattooing at a young age. According to Swan, who documented Tattooed Haidas at Port Townsend, “the Haidas seem to have the

greatest variety of designs, and they seem to be the principal tribe who tattoo themselves to any extent” (1874, p. 7). He also noted that Chiefs and Haida women were quite noticeably tattooed, but he may have been comparing them to the prim and proper Victorian women of the time.

According to Curtis, tattooing was only done at house-building potlatches in the 1900s. It cost ten blankets, which equated to 100 80-pound sacks of potatoes (1916, p. 123). Today, a tattoo only costs a few hundred dollars because there is no traditional ceremony associated with it. A hundred years ago, this price would be estimated to have been up to \$5000. Its no wonder tattooing was for the high-ranking people only. Swan documented tattooed Haidas in Port Townsend in 1874 before the practice started to die out. (Swan, 1874). Besides noticing how good-looking Haidas were, he also documented many tattoo designs, producing the most thorough inventory of Haida tattoos of the time. With no knowledge of the Haida language, he did not document any of the rich traditions associated with the tattooing practice, however.

When the missionaries started drastically changing Haida beliefs and traditions, they discouraged tattooing.

Maggie Yeltatzie (Florence’s sister’s husband’s sister) was one of the last people tattooed. She was real ashamed of the tattoos on her hands. She used to wear gloves to hide them whenever she went out. “I wonder why I let them do this to me,” she used to say. (Blackman, 1982, p. 68)

Today, although crest tattooing is common, it is missing the ceremonial importance that boosts one’s rank. Tattooing and Naming Potlatches could give a Haida a deep sense of belonging and pride. To be strong language speakers, we need to feel proud and connected, therefore I recommend tattooing as a language revitalizer. A new

twist on this could also be to give language learners a common design to represent their language journey just as weavers have their own tattoos that identify them as weavers.

Gyaa'aang/Gwaahlahl, Totem pole raising

Raising totem poles is a major part of Haida culture and one that fits well with honoring the Haida language. Totem poles recognize a new chieftainship, show a clan's crests, memorialize a loved one or store the remains of a person. When Haidas lived in longhouses in villages all over Haida Gwaii and Southeast Alaska, there were totem poles in abundance. Totem poles lined the outside and inside of the houses. After Smallpox and Christian influence, totem poles were stolen, burned and sold for less than \$1 to collectors. There was a hundred-year period where totem poles were not raised on Haida Gwaii. Today, totem poles line our Haida villages.

A totem pole could be carved to recognize the Haida language and could depict the figures of our elders, young speakers and some of the supernatural spirit helpers I mentioned, such as the Greatest-Crab, Killer Whale, Story Woman, the Singers and Mouse Woman. Interestingly, all of the Intermediate male *Xaad Kil* learners in Old Massett are also carvers and could carve an amazing *Xaad Kil gwaahlahl*. The totem pole would not only bring awareness to the importance of language learning but it also would honor our mother tongue in a very Haida way.

SGalangee isgyaan Xyaalee, song and dance

I include singing and dancing as important rituals because of their connection to the Haida language. Learning the language comes so naturally when learned as a song. A song or chant is often more easy to remember than a lesson on paper. There are many

lessons to be learned from our ancestors' song as well. Also, we could learn from the stories of composers used traditional medicine and conducted rituals to acquire a song. It is only fitting that language students learn about these rituals to learn songs in *Xaad Kil* and embrace our singing and dancing tradition.

Our ancestors also made special regalia and pieces for special events and to help in ceremonies. The salmon pieces at the Pitt Rivers museum, collected by Harrison in the 1800s is an excellent example of a Haida object used in song and dance ceremonies to bring about a change. The cedar salmon pieces were used in a dance when the fish stocks were low.

Having a song of one's own is important to nourish the soul according to Woody Morrison:

You always have to have your own song. You learn from water, the most powerful of all your relatives. To become a man, you have to have your own song...The way you get a song... it's not so much the words or tune to a song, it's the insight into how I fit myself in the rhythm of life. (Morrison, 2014)

Haida songs mark significant rites of passage from lullabies to crying songs. There were thirteen categories of traditional songs at one time. They were sung at major events as well as quieter moments like singing a baby to sleep. Many of the songs were documented by Halpern (1968), Enrico and Stuart (1996), Harrison (1925), Curtis (1916), Boelscher (1989) and the *Xaad Kihlgaa Hl Suu.u* Society & *Thuu Xaadaa Naay* Singers (2010) and the Haida Gwaii Singers (2009). Our ancestors continued to quietly sing Haida songs, even when they were forbidden to celebrate potlatches or even gather in a little group. Other nations like the Kwakwaka'wakw and the Heiltsuk also held onto Haida songs through the generations. During the Potlatch ban, many songs went

underground and Haidas really took to singing church hymns and playing contemporary instruments like the guitar, piano and saxophone. Our traditional songs were sung quietly for a few generations but have been making a strong comeback since the 1970s.

The use of traditional musical instruments is also making a comeback. In the 1970s, my *naanii* Grace Wilson taught Haida singing and dancing by beating a wooden spoon on an ice-cream bucket.

We didn't know any songs. I gave Ethel an ice cream bucket for a drum. Haksta! Haksta! and they all line up. Adrienne Collette, Adrienne Colette (singing)... Keep time, keep time. Adrienne Colette, Adrienne Colette. Everyone dance, I go ahead of them. Keep time, keep time. Boys go like this, when we get close, I said "*Nang SGalangas ..Laa Gwaa Jaadila, Laa gwaa jaadila*, keep time, keep time. With our ice cream bucket. It means young girl turning to womanhood. (Wilson-Dewitt, 1991)

The use of instruments has grown significantly since then. Hide drums, box drums, whistles, raven rattles and deer-hoof rattles are being revived. Artists like Vern Williams and Reg Davidson have studied musical instruments in museums around the world. Vern has done a great job of recreating one to three valve whistles. The revitalization of musical instruments is important to song revitalization because instruments help to keep time and makes it easier to remember and enjoy traditional songs. Drums and rattles are great additions to the language classrooms because they bring the language to life.

SGalaangaa, a composer uses traditional medicines, *xil* to help the songs come to them (Enrico, 1996, p. 58). My Tsinni Moses Ingram of Massett said cedar from four woodpecker holes is one of the four ingredients used. Hazel Stevens of Skidegate remembered composers going into a trance to create songs for the deceased. My great-grandmother's second husband Luke Frank of Alaska told of putting ten feathers gathered

at low tide into forty clam or wormholes. When the tide came in, they would shoot out of the holes as a song shooting out of one's throat (Steedman and Collison, 2011, p. 218). A composer would cleanse himself and refrain from drinking water and having sex. A composer would then go to the beach early in the morning and catch a loon going past. He would cut off part of the loon's tongue to give him the ability to understand birdsong, although we may have to rethink this as loons are so precious today. Singers and dancers would also use *xil* to remember songs and to give a good performance (Enrico and Stuart, 1996, p. 58).

It is important for language learners to have their own song to connect them to their ancestors and the Haida world around them. It is also important to investigate the traditional practices to compose and memorize a song so that we can incorporate these rituals into our language-learning rituals.

Conclusion

These rituals and ceremonies are ancient. They are what made our ancestors strong, lucky, proud and wise. It is up to the Haidas of today to delve into the old ways, to find what is necessary and what works for us to bring healing and to recover our lost language. The rituals and ceremonies in this chapter help strengthen our *liis*, the invisible thread that connects us to our Haida family and our Haida world.

As this chapter has shown, there are rituals and ceremonies that can help us speak our language. Spruce cones and labrets could help us with our speech. Medicine pouches, *kuganaa kwaa* and devil's club can protect our language and us. For strength, we can conduct coming-of-age rituals, bathe in the ocean, wear war belts, and conduct a bull-kelp ritual and the early-riser ritual. For cleansing ourselves to accept the new

knowledge, we can drink seawater, fast, sit in the hot springs and in a steam bath, use devil's club medicine and use feathers to brush ourselves and our space. Many of the rituals and ceremonies in this chapter are done to deepen a connection to our ancestors, the Supernaturals and our language. Prayer, offerings, meditation, wind rituals, devil's club and single delight rituals, singing and dancing, naming, tattooing, piercing, labrets and soul-catchers all have the ability to deepen our connections. Lastly, the theme of honouring comes through in this chapter. We can honour our ancestors, our language and our language champions with Potlatches, naming, labrets, piercing, singing, dancing and pole-raisings.

It is time for us to wake up all of these rituals and ceremonies in the name of *Xaad Kil*. We need to make a conscious and collaborative effort to implement the rituals and ceremonies that connect us with our ancestors and the Supernaturals to ensure we are strong, lucky, protected and brave in our language efforts. Together, we can breathe life back into *Xaad Kil*.

Chapter 6 - *SGaanawee*, Supernatural Powers

Introduction

Supernatural beings, *sGaana* are all around. There are spirits in everything. It only makes sense that we strengthen this connection to strengthen our Haida voices. Stories of powerful Killer whales, Lady-luck, *Taaw* and others are common knowledge amongst today's generation, who learned from our grandparents, in schools and at Rediscovery camps yet there are many other supernatural beings waiting to be remembered and called upon. *SGaanawee* are known to be powerful and can bring about incredible change in the world; therefore, they need to join in our fight to revive our language.

Language learners who just focus on studying from their books often miss the spiritual connection to their language. Being connected to the Supernatural world brings also us to a deeper connection to our language. We are all capable of connecting to this special world if we conduct ourselves as this man did:

A chief would say, "my lucky day will come." In preparation for this he observed sexual continence, bathed, and drank salt water as an emetic. The best of whatever was taken in war, as in hunting, was given to him in return for his influence with Supernaturals. (Curtis, 1916, p. 119)

In this chapter, I will identify over two dozen *sGaana*, supernatural beings including ancestral spirits, the ocean spirits, forest spirits and sky spirits that could help us in our language revival. Swanton also organized the supernatural beings into four categories, "beings of the upper world or atmosphere; beings of the sea; beings of the land, and those which might be called, for want of a better term, "patron deities" (1905b,

p. 13). Our ancestors, called upon Supernaturals to make great change, bring luck, guide them and teach them songs and stories. It is up to the individual to conduct rituals mentioned in the previous chapter to be prepared to accept supernatural help. It is also important for us to listen for clues from the supernatural beings who decide to help us.

What are Haida Supernatural Beings?

“Every part of the environment that we live in has a spiritual quality to it”
(E. Collison, 1999, n.p.)

Every kind of quadruped and bird seems to have had a human form as well as an animal disguise, and each might help or harm men (Swanton, 1905b, p. 25). There are “supernatural beings which, instead of being in any way connected with natural phenomena, bear some special relation to human interest and industries” (1905b, p. 29).

Supernatural society parallels with how Haida society is organized. Supernaturals live in longhouses in villages, in the sky, sea or forest. They have a social ranking system, with *Sang SGaanawee*, the Creator of everything as the highest ranking followed by *SGaan*, killer whale and then the rest of the beings. They are competitive and like to show off by giving away property just like we do.

They are also human form underneath their animal skins. In the comfort of their own homes, they take their skins off, shaking them by the fire to dry. Supernaturals can also shape-shift and turn into other beings by putting on their skins. Raven is the most famous shape-shifter in the legends, along with *stlaguu*, land-otters and *sGaan*, killer whales. The Haidas believe that since all beings are the same under their skins, we are all related and they deserve great respect.

All of the beings I mention have supernatural powers and they can use

their powers to positively or negatively affect humans and the world around us.

What Can Supernatural Beings Do for Haida Language Revitalization?

That connection, I can feel the strong connection, I know it's there...to feel that what our great-grandparents did to strengthen themselves through spirituality, I know that will help us with the language. (Bedard, 2014)

There has always been a strong belief that we can benefit from the relationship with the supernatural beings. "In mythical ideology, power obtained through contact with supernatural beings can be transformed into symbolic and material property, which in turn translates into social status" (Boelscher, 1988, p. 167). People used to fast and make offerings for strength, wealth and confidence from Supernaturals. Ever since the influence of the church and other non-Haida influences, these types of prayers have become a whisper. We just have not been thinking of connecting with the supernatural world for language revival. Besides praying to the Creator, we have forgotten how to ask the other powerful forces for help. Many indigenous people believe our languages are given to us by the Creator and we need to respect and protect this special gift (McIvor and Napoleon, 2009; Thompson, 2012; Pitawanakwat, 2009). Many others, such as the Maori and Hawaiians are recognizing the importance of incorporating indigenous epistemology in language and school programs (Harrison, 2005 & [www.https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lmJJi1iBdzc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lmJJi1iBdzc))

The stories of supernatural adventures are important to Haida language revitalization. Besides being a wealth of cultural knowledge, the stories recorded in the Haida language are also a valuable language teaching resource. They teach us not only the language but also history, morals, place names and survival lessons. Learning the stories of our ancestors and Supernaturals also gives us inspiration to challenge ourselves

to learn and to excel. The story of *Taaw* is a good example. *Taaw* lived in Juskatla with his elder brother and mother. When his mother did not give him any dog salmon, he got spunky and left. He moved down the inlet, looking for a new spot. He finally settled on North beach, where can be seen today (Swanton, 1908, p. 393). Not This story is available in Swanton, as an animation, radio recording and is taught in language programs. It is taught to not only teach the language but also to teach the valuable lessons of Haida social structure, place names and the importance of dog salmon. Learning these valuable lessons in *Xaad Kil* is very important to language and cultural revitalization.

How to Connect With Supernatural Beings

There are specific ways to help a person communicate with the supernatural world. It is important to have a clean mind and body when wanting to connect with supernatural beings. Having good intentions is also important. Making offerings to the Supernaturals is a common way to connect with them. Gifts of food, eulachon grease, tobacco and flicker feathers were a way to connect to the supernatural beings (Boelscher, 1988, p. 177). “Things thrown into the fire were supposed to go to the land of souls” (Swanton, 1905b, p. 42). The people of Skidegate gave Big Tail cranberries, wild crab apples, *sig.aan* roots, berries and grease. Big Tail offered the food to the Supernaturals through a fire, and he put fresh water around the fire. He asked Supernatural-Being-at-Whose-Voice-the-Raven-Sits on the Sea for help. This ended the famine (Swanton, 1905a, p. 300). Putting tobacco in your mouth with calcified shells will also help to bring you to the supernatural world, as Big-Tail did after fasting and drinking salt water (Swanton, 1905a, p. 296).

In the olden days, the shamans were best able to communicate with supernatural beings after cleansing themselves by fasting, abstaining from sex, meditating and drinking salt water. A medicine man could have one supernatural being that talked through him or sometimes he could have different beings communicating through him. Today, we could conduct rituals to connect to specific *sGaana* or to be open to receive messages from whichever *sGaana* decide to help us. It was also the medicine man who could capture a lost soul, using a soul catcher or his bare hands to capture the soul and put it back in the person's body. Today, there are no self-proclaimed Haida medicine men although there are a number of people who practice these important rituals and have strong connections to the supernatural beings. These people would be excellent mentors for the language learners to work with on this spiritual journey.

Literature Review of Supernatural Beings

For the examination of the supernatural powers that could assist us in our language learning, I listened to the words of the elders and I turned to some valuable literature.

Swanton's *Contributions to the Ethnology of the Haida, Haida Text and Myths – Skidegate Dialect and Masset Texts* (Swanton, 1905a and 1905b, 1908) documented over two hundred stories during his year amongst the Haida. He documented the stories as told to him and did not provide any analysis or explanation of the stories. They are extra valuable because many of them were also written in the Haida language. More than a hundred years later, *Xaad Kil* learners are able to study the stories in English and Haida. Having the stories in the Haida language allows us to analyze the deeper meanings behind the stories that may not appear in the English version.

Curtis (1916), Harrison (1892, 1925) and Dawson (1880) make mention to the supernatural beings and ancient stories of the Haida, however their works are not as detailed as Swanton.

The Curtain Within (Boelscher, 1989) also had a number of stories of supernatural beings. Boelscher provided valuable insights into the stories and the supernatural connections. Over twenty years later, I am honoured to be learning these stories with Marianne Ignace (Boelscher), Lawrence Bell and a cohort of learners.

I also listened to contemporary recordings from the Haida Heritage and Repatriation Society's Haida Legends project that I worked on in 2005 and recalled the many stories we documented from Mary Swanson, Stephen Brown and Gertie White. Their stories and explanations of the supernatural beings brought killer whales, *Yaanii K'uuka*, *Taaw*, *Yaahl* come to life for me.

The Skidegate Haida Immersion Program also recently created a database with over 500 entries relating to Haida supernatural beings (2014). My job was to analyze and interpret the stories through a language revitalization lens and determine which Supernaturals I thought could make a person smart, strong, lucky, strong and to help one become an excellent storyteller, singer and orator.

The Souls Around Us

Haidas strongly believe in the ancestral spirits around us. We have a deep connection and reverence for our ancestors. I will begin this chapter with a discussion on our individual souls, *Gaahlandee*; reincarnated souls, *xanj*; and our ancestors, *kuniisii*. I will then examine the importance of the ancestress of the Raven clans, *SGuluu Jaad* and ancestress of the Eagle clans, *Djila Kuuns*. Lastly, I will delve into the stories of

influential spirits of the sea, forest and sky. The lessons in these *gyaahlangee* will inspire Haida language learners and hopefully call upon the reader to make a connection.

Gaahlandee, Souls

Every person has an invisible thread of life, *liis* that connects her to her home. When the thread runs out or it is cut, a person dies. Haidas have a soul when they are alive, *Gaahlandee*. It is important for Haidas to understand and care for their own *Gaahlandee*. We know it is important to care for our soul to feel healthy, grounded and fulfilled. A soul that is not taken care of and nourished could wander and the person could become extremely ill, fall into unhealthy habits, addictions or die. It makes sense that a person who feels connected with his own soul would have an easier time learning *Xaad Kil*. Caring for our *Gaahlandee* is an individual practice. Some ways are to eat well, pray, meditate, sleep well, appreciate nature, fast and conduct oneself in a respectable manner.

Kuniisii, Ancestors

We also strongly believe that our *kuniisii*, ancestors are with us. There is a belief that there is a thin veil between the living and the dead, a belief that gives us comfort in times of loss. We can call on them to guide us by speaking to them, making offerings through the fire, listening closely for their messages and paying attention to their visits in our dreams. *GwaGanad*, Diane Brown believes in the strong connection between today's generation and our ancestors:

Before I do a speech...I asked the ancestors to come and help. And I believe that it's basically something of what they want you to hear that's coming from me...We are our ancestors. Our ancestors are here. We're here because of our ancestors. (Brown, 2004, p. 68)

Hope Setso, also said it well:

That connection with our ancestors is really important because they had the wisdom to survive whatever. If we don't have this, we're just another part of society, and we'll continue with our struggles. (Setso, 1999)

From a personal perspective, I can say it is so important for me to feel connected to my ancestors. I talk often to my *kuniisii* and make food offerings to them. I often feel my late mother beside me as I learn, as I teach and as I work on my thesis. My late grandmother spoke to me in dreams while I was in the Haida immersion program. She was very old but alive and willing to teach me Haida. I understand that she can still teach me even though she has passed on if I pay attention to the signs she sends me.

My work in repatriating over 500 Haida ancestral remains has also given me a unique connection to those spirits and I feel them with me often. During the intense work of preparing and reburying the bones of my people, my ancestors were by my side. I heard their songs, I felt their nudges and felt their presence all around. As I wrote this chapter, I started praying to them for help in becoming a Haida speaker. Shortly after that, I began teaching *Xaad Kil* to a dozen new learners, my Intermediate study group got back into a routine and my thesis research became more productive. Imagine if we all prayed to our *kuniisii*!

Xanj, Reincarnated Soul

After death, a person's soul could become a *Xanj*, a reincarnated soul. It is important to respect the souls of the deceased and prepare for them to come back as a *Xants*. We can do this by acknowledging that they are still around us, praying and making offerings to the fire and hosting a memorial potlatch when the time comes. Since

reincarnated souls come back to newborns and remember their past lives, it only makes sense that they would remember their language. Irene Mills talks about the spirits of the Haidas we repatriated from museums, “When those people are able to be reincarnated, we’re going to have more of the old knowledge come back (Krpmotich, 2014, p. 47). We need to speak to these reborn souls in *Xaad Kil* because they will remember.

SGuluu Jaad, Foam Woman and Djila Kuns

In the beginning of time, not this lifetime, but the first time we ever came as a people to Haida Gwaii, we came out of the air. This was told to me by *Nang Kingaay ‘uwans*, James Young. So we became people from the air and then for some reason, we all disappeared. The second time we came out, we came out of the earth and again we disappeared. The third time we have come out, we came out of the ocean, as [in] many of our legends, in many different forms. There’s those at *Naay Kun* that came out of the clamshell. There’s those that were on the reef with *SGuuluu Jaad* and they came out onto the earth from that reef. And there were many, many spots all over Haida Gwaii that we can point to that say this is where our ancestors came out of the ocean. *Tang.Gwanaay Giisda kaat’lxa* – coming out of the ocean (Diane Brown in CHN, 2011).

Haidas come from two supernatural women, *SGuuluu Jaad* and *Djila Kuns*.

SGuuluu Jaad sat on a Reef near Ninstints. She had ten breasts on each side to feed each of her babies who became the mothers of the various Raven clans. When her firstborn emerged, foam came from its mouth and almost created another flood.

Most Eagle clans come from the womb of *Djila Kuns*, the greatest of all Creek Women, including her son *Gudanxee Wat* Stone-Ribs and her daughter Swiftly-Sliding Woman, who sat up and wove a yellow cedar blanket after she was born, and who later passed this art on to her children (Swanton, 1905b, p. 187). In a model totem pole by Charles Edenshaw, he depicted her with frog cane and a frog hat. According to Swanton, tattooing started with a tattoo of her (1905b, p. 125).

SGuluu Jaad is believed to be still amongst us and *Djila Kuns* became a mountain (Swanton, 1905b, p. 75). In our struggle to speak our mother tongue, it makes sense to ask these two grandmothers to guide us. Our grandmothers would want us to speak our language as they once did. It is up to us to make an offering of food, grease, flicker feathers and tobacco to the two women from whom we all originate.

Greatest Laughter

Raven and Mink Woman had a child. Their child died and Raven declared that people should cry when their children died. However, Greatest Laughter didn't cry, therefore today, people laugh after they cry (Swanton, 1905b, p. 209). This is an important being for us to remember on our language-healing journey. We often cry and mourn for our deceased language teachers, or feel sad because we did not learn Haida from our relatives that passed on. I have seen many learners walk away from learning *Xaad Kil* when their beloved teacher has died. This is not what our elders would have wanted. Greatest Laughter is amongst us to remind us to find joy and laughter as we remember our late teachers and as we continue to learn our language. This is an important lesson for us as we face difficult challenges as learners. Laughter is such a great medicine, and we need to remember to bring laughter and joy into every learning situation.

Waad Gadagang, Master Carpenter

Master Carpenter, or Master Canoe Builder came from the Eagle clan. He could build a house in a day, rolling a plank over and over. His carvings were so realistic; they seemed to wink at you. People made offerings to him for help, probably asking for

carpentry and carving guidance. They also threw mussel shells behind them and he ate the “eyes” of the mussels (Swanton, 1905b, p. 30). This is a significant supernatural spirit because of his abilities to build quickly and to make authentic life-like creations. He could help us create language-learning facilities as well as helping us build our creative language resources. I envision us creating a series of masks, regalia, songs and a totem pole to represent the Haida language, and I expect we will ask *Waad Gadagang* to help us do the best we can.

Skandaal, Little One

Skandaal took everything literally. When he went fishing with people from *Wi'dja* and caught a fish, his friend said “*Skandaal*, lie in the water with it (be very careful) and he jumped in the water and had to be rescued. Later he caught an abalone and tired of people admiring it so he threw his precious catch back into the water. He was told to carve up a whale if he ever came across one. He came across a whale on the beach and proceeded to carve elaborate designs into the skin. When the women began to prepare the whale by the fire, one woman said she'd lie in a certain spot. He read into her comment a little too eagerly and he told her he too would lie down. He ended up burning in the fire (Swanton, 1905a, p. 443).

Skandaal's lesson for language learners would be to not take things so literally: both within *Xaad Kil* and also within the learning environment. This story is also a reminder for learners to learn traditional metaphors and to open our minds to the traditional way of thinking. *Tsinni* Claude would tell me, “you're thinking like a white woman!” if I overanalyzed or didn't understand a Haida phrase or concept. He never

meant it as an insult but rather as a reminder to put my non-Haida way of thinking aside. *Tsinni's* words and *Skandal's* story is a reminder for us to think like Haidas!

HiGaa iinwaa Kwaay Jaad, The-Woman-Who-Is-Stone-From-The-Hips-Down

This supernatural being is an elderly woman who sits in the corner of her chief's house. She sees everything. She is a wise woman with the ability to help those in need. As an elderly woman, she has lived her life and is not as distracted as a younger woman can be. She often reports to the people when she sees something suspicious. She witnessed Raven entering the skin of a baby and told the people what she saw so they could take action (Swanton, 1905b, p. 73). She also helped the young woman who was kidnapped by the bears. She gave the girl a comb, whetstone and hair oil and told her what to do with it. The young girl escaped and threw these items behind her to create a thick forest of trees, underbrush and a lake to prevent the bears from catching up to her (Swanton, 1905b, p. 202). *HiGaa iina Kwaay Jaad* is a great witness to change and a strong advocate for righting the wrongs in the world. She reminds us that we can all make a contribution to language revitalization even if we are aging. She reminds me of the 'silent speakers' or heritage speakers who have an ear for the language and are wise about the Haida culture and life but are not fluent speakers. They are valuable and they have a good contribution to make to the language. The 'silent female speakers' especially could make food offerings to this spirit. She is certainly a being who could give us tools to stop the English language that chases us and to give us tools or medicines to revitalize the language.

Itl'gee Gan Jasgaas, The-Old-Woman-Under-the-Fire

This being bridges the connection between humans and supernatural beings. The old woman under the fire comes to life in the story of Those-Born-At-Skedans (Swanton, 1905b, p. 86). A young boy and his friends plucked and made fun of *hajaa*, a Cassin auklet/bufflehead. The boy unfortunately got caught in a crevice and the tide came up. His parents, upon hearing about the tragedy, put hides, paints and feathers into a fire. They talked to The-Old-Woman-Under-the-Fire. Once they sent all their property to the supernatural world, the boy was saved. The spirit under the fire is an important one for two reasons. First of all, we are reminded to make amends for wrongdoings. Maybe there is a lesson in this story for the churches, governments and those who refused to speak their mother tongue. Secondly, this female power is the one who brings our messages to the supernatural world and we need her. We need to communicate with her during our food-burning ceremonies and ask her to bring our pleas to the supernatural world.

Stla'ang Gud Ga sGaana, Great Fool/Poor-With-Hands

The story of Great Fool can help us become braver and to speak up when we feel we have a good idea. Master Carpenter wanted to wage war upon Southeast Wind for bringing too much bad weather to the Haidas. The Great Fool told Master Carpenter how to use his bent wedges to split a log to make two canoes. "Therefore, even a foolish person may sometimes make wise suggestions" (Swanton, 1905a, p. 35). *Stla'ang Gud Ga sGaana* could help us to be brave in class or when working on a language project. He reminds us to speak up. We need everyone's ideas as we strive to revive our endangered

language. I think of *Stla'ang Gud Ga sGaana* as I humbly write my thesis and make suggestions on how to revive the language.

SGaanguu

Haidas have a strong belief in “wild-man” spirits. *SGaanguu* was a chief’s son. He went hunting *hajaa*, Cassin auklets and never returned home. He lived alone as a hermit, avoiding all human contact. His relatives could see the smoke of his fire but never could see him. He hunted *hajaa* with a big spear, and acted as if he were hunting giant game. He moved about and finally flew up to *Taaxet*’s house where he punished troublemakers by putting them into boiling water (Swanton, 1905b, p. 33). The *SGanguu* spirit is now a crest of the *Stastaas* clan of Massett. Maybe if *SGanguu* could see the troublemakers that undermine and work against the Haida language, he could dip them into boiling water!

***Sahgwa* SGaaniwee, Spirits of the Sky**

Haidas have always respected the spirits of the atmosphere. We believe there are spirits in everything from the air to the moon and stars. I will mention the major spiritual beings of the sky that can help save our language.

Sang SGaanaa/ SGin SGaaniwee

Sang SGaanaa is the “Power-of-the-Shining-Heavens (1905a, p. 13). Haidas believed in this great power that is all around. As Chief *Weah*, Willie Matthews said:

They believe in a supreme being, our people. They didn’t know God. They didn’t know it was the Creator. But they believe a power in the air. They used to warn the children, young children: Be careful now. They call that in my language, *SGin sGaaniwee*, *SGin sGaaniwee*. There’s a power in the air, right around you, right around everybody. (Matthews, 1969)

Years later, Woody Morrison shared the same concept with me:

Sang SGaangwee, it's the big spirit in the atmosphere. It's intangible but you can sense its presence and it's so big it fills every corner of the universe and every fiber of our being. And it doesn't matter if you believe it, because it is and you can't turn your back because no matter which way you turn, you're in it, you're part of it. (Morrison, 2014)

To continue this practice of giving thanks to the Creator is important. Giving thanks for our family, our environment, our food and language should be a regular practice to improve our lives and to improve our language speaking. Humbling ourselves and surrendering ourselves to the Creator is an important quality to bring us closer to the Creator as in the story of *Ihldiinii* who was lost at sea. He sang a song and totally surrendered to *Sang SGaana*. He sang, "Lake (i.e., Ocean) spirit, calm the waves for me. Get close to me, my Power. My heart is tired. Make the sea very calm for me, ye ho, he ho' lo!" (Swanton, 1905a, p. 16) His prayers were answered and he washed up on the shores of the Stikine River where he lived out his life.

We must believe in the greater power around us and open ourselves to accepting what *SGin SGaaniwee* has in store for us.

Skil, Property

Supernatural beings who could bestow property and luck were favoured amongst the Haida. One of these was a bird called *Skil*, which was never seen although its voice was heard at times. Anyone who heard the bird became wealthy. It's voice sounds like steel on steel or a bell ringing (Swanton, 1905b, p. 29). This is probably the being that Henry Geddes referred to when he said, "Hear two steel banging together, grab the earth

and put it in pocket for luck” (Henry Geddes, 1991). In today’s world, we need to think of our language as being wealthy and to think of ourselves as being wealthy and lucky in our language knowledge. Language learners should have their ears peeled for *Skil* and follow Henry’s instructions for receiving wealth and luck! For more information on *Skil*, also refer to *Skil Jaadee* in this chapter.

Nang Kilslas - Raven, He-Whose-Voice-Is-Obeyed

Raven appears in many Haida narratives. He is the ultimate trickster-transformer with the power to bring about big change. “Some even said that *Nang Kilslas* was a great chief who put on the skin of a raven only when he wanted to act like a buffoon” (Swanton, 1905a, p.146). Because of Raven, the world has light, people, rivers and food. With his ability to bring about great change in the world, we could ask Raven for help to breathe life back into the Haida language. Raven is known to have created so many things in the world including our language, however Swanton’s only mention of it was to say, “Now come several episodes [of raven], which it will not be worth while to give at length... [including Raven’s] assignment of their respective languages and characteristics to the Haida and Tsimshian” (Swanton, 1905b, p. 74). This would have been such a great story for us to learn today! Knowing his mischievous and blunderous ways, the whole world could end up speaking *Xaad Kil!*

I will mention two Raven stories that tell of his great powers, when he created the world and when he created humans. At the beginning of time, there was a vast ocean with a small object, which sat Raven. Raven said, “Become dust” and he created the earth. Raven created the world by enlarging the object and dividing it. He probably intended to make Haida Gwaii the bigger piece of land but for some reason, the smaller

portion became Haida Gwaii while the larger portion became the mainland (Swanton, 1905 p. 207; 1908, p. 293).

After Raven created the world, he became bored and eager for a companion. He flew above *Naay Kun* and heard noises. Upon investigation, he saw that the noise came from a cockleshell on the beach. He found young men in the cockleshell. They travelled to *Ninstints* and found females clinging helplessly to the rocks. These first men and women populated the islands of Haida Gwaii (Chittenden, 1884, p.15). These stories show the great power Raven has to create things. If Raven could create a whole world, maybe he could make the whole world speak Haida!

Swanton documented a few opinions on how Haidas connected to this supernatural being. A West Coast man told Swanton that people sometimes left food on the beach for a raven and when the raven approached, they would ask the raven for something specific. In Massett, Swanton was told that Raven stole from humans enough and that people did not make offerings to it (Swanton, 1905b, p. 27). This is a good reminder to Haidas that no one way is the only way. We can all make our offerings and ask the supernatural beings for help in whatever way feels right to us.

Language learners can also draw inspiration from Raven's southern name, *Nang Kilsdlaas*, One-Who-Can-Do-Things-With-Words (Boelscher, 1989, p. 164) which attests the power of language and words!

Jaad ahl K'iiganaa, *Story-Woman*

The story of Canoe People, *Thuu Xaadaay* makes reference to Story Woman (Swanton, 1908, p. 370; 1905b, p. 213). A group of hunters went out hunting and killed a bear unlike any other. The hunters then got stuck in a crevice. To get out, they tried

throwing their hunting dog in the fire. They saw the dog standing at the top of the crevice so they threw the rest of the dogs in the fire. They saw all of the dogs on top of the crevice and followed the dogs, throwing each other into the hot fire. They later appeared to a Shaman in Massett inlet who realized that they became Supernatural beings. Story-Woman, Fair-Weather-Woman, Cloud-Woman, Great-Woman-who-Holds- Something-Under-Her-Blanket, Supernatural-Being-Who-Keeps-Off-The-Bow- and Supernatural-Being-Who-Bails-Canoe were created (Swanton, 1908, p. 370; Swanton 1905b, p. 213). They discussed their new names and they said of Story-Woman, “By means of you, too Story-Woman, future generations of people will tell stories” (Swanton, 1908, p. 375). Story-Woman is important because she could help us to learn and retell stories in the Haida language.

Chaan Xaadee, Spirits of the Sea

Beings of the sea, *Tsaan Xaadee* are also important, especially since the Haida live on an island and are surrounded by the ocean. I will mention the main ones that could be called upon to help us learn *Xaad Kil*. Killer whales and The-One-In-the-Sea are the most powerful. Like other supernatural beings, these beings also live in supernatural villages. Spirits of salmon, halibut, octopus and others are also abundant Supernaturals of the sea. Humans can make offerings to the underwater spirit people by putting the offering in the sea or the fire.

SGaan/SGaana, Killer whale

Killer whale spirits, *SGaan* are important beings of the sea. *SGaan* are powerful spirits of the sea and are mentioned many stories. Of all the supernatural beings, *sGaana* seems to be the one that strongly resonates with people today.

Interestingly, the term for killer whale *SGaan* is the same as the term for power or supernatural and “they represent supernatural power at its purest” (Boelscher, 1998, p. 182).

They live like us humans, having the same social structure and taking off their whale skin when they return home to their underwater longhouses. People offer food, grease and flicker feathers to *sGaana* to ask for food to be plentiful.

Killer whales are believed to come for the spirits of people who have drowned. It is a great honour and comfort to people when killer whales come up the inlet to take the deceased spirit or when they come near us.

When a Haida is drowned it is believed that his spirit is translated to the body of a killer whale. The whales were therefore formerly much honoured, and never killed by the Haidas. The appearance of one of them off the shore in front of an Indian's dwelling is always regarded as a 'call ' to some member of the household, who will shortly meet with his death by drowning. (Hill-Tout, 1898, p. 11)

Haidas and killer whales have a deep connection. Adam Bell taught Boelscher about the connection between people and killer whales. He said they are ‘touchy’ (sensitive) and intelligent and can therefore communicate with people (1988, p. 183). Vince Collison felt this connection as he was paddling in a canoe to Bella-Bella; “It was so cool when the killer whales showed up by the canoes. We were nervous that we had no escorts and they showed up right when we needed them” (Collison, 2014).

There is an old story of two Haida men who paddled all the way to Hawaii and were helped home by killer whales. I had the pleasure of learning the story in *Xaad Kil* class with Dr. Marianne Ignace, fluent speaker Lawrence Bell and a dozen learners. Ignace recorded this story from Adam Bell, Lawrence's father in the early 1980s. We were fortunate to listen to the old recording and then delve into the deeper meaning in the story. In the story, the men made it to a black sand beach in Hawaii and after an extended stay, they began the journey home. As they neared the west coast of Haida Gwaii, they were desperately exhausted. The men prayed for help, and killer whales came and carried their canoe back to Haida Gwaii. This story resonated with me as I worked on my thesis while visiting Hawaii. I looked up the black beaches of Hawaii, wanting to visit the beaches where the Haida men landed. I felt cheeky Raven's influence when I found out most of the black beaches are now nude beaches!

Bringing back the practice of feeding the killer whales and calling on them to carry us in our weary moments could be applied to reviving the Haida language. I can attest to calling upon killer whales after an exhausting session of language learning. I made an offering to them in the ocean and then they followed me in my dreams and literally came up to me by the seawall after a long three days in Haida language class.

Nasduu

Nasduu is a supernatural killer whale in the sea. In exchange for grease, he could give songs and even a whale! Chief *St'asta's* nephew put tobacco, flicker feathers and fresh water in the sea for *Nasduu*. The nephew received a whale from *Nasduu*. He then held a feast for his wife's clan, the *Ts'aahl*. *St'asta* wanted to find his hidden copper but could not find where he hid it. His nephew ate medicine to help find the lost copper.

Although the nephew did not see it, he was able to hear its song and taught the song to the people (Swanton, 1905b, p. 230).

Another time, *Nasduu* gave a song to a man. A careless man gambled away most of his father's possessions. He went up a mountain near *Nasduu* to eat medicine to return his luck. The young man received a copper salmon from the supernatural. He made many coppers to give to his father to repay the debt. The young man also learned a song while there (Swanton, 1905b, p. 230).

By fasting, making offerings and honouring *Nasduu* we could bring more life to our traditional song genre and bring wealth to our language programs.

K'uust'aan Kuunas, Greatest Crab

The Supernatural Crab comes to life in a few stories. The oldest story occurred when Greatest Crab lived between Graham and Moresby Island at *K'ijis*. *Gudanxee Wat*, Stone Ribs put on his halibut skin and swam around Haida Gwaii, and came upon the crab. The crab scratched his skin. This upset Stone Ribs and he swallowed the crab. He let the crab out in Naden Harbour where there are a lot of crabs now.

Greatest Crab is strongly connected to the Haida language. Chief *Cumshewa*, *Giitsxaa*, Ron Wilson brought in a crab design for the Skidegate Haida Immersion Program logo and it triggered James Young to remember a story from Luke Wilson:

K'uust'aan TlidaGaaw Unguu, The Crab on Top of the Mountain

K'uust'anaay tldaGaawaay unguu tay guuhlana gan.
The crab was lying on top of the mountain.

HlGaagilda K'iidaay Gii Xaaydas thuu giidal gyinuu,
When Haidas paddled through Skidegate Narrows,

K'uust'anaay xiidgii ll xaaGad gyinuu Xaaydas skaal 'laa tl'l xiidan

The crab would reach down and pinch their shoulder

Xaayda kil sk'aadGayaay gam xaang.ala kwaajuwaay 'laa gans, Gaaganah.
Because the Haida language wasn't progressing fast enough, that's why.

(Steedman and Collison, 2010, p. 102)

K'uust'aan Kuunas has visited language learners in their dreams. *Jaalen* had a dream when his wife *Jaskwaan* was pregnant with their first daughter. A crab talked to him in Haida and he didn't know what she was saying. He realized it was his *nanaay*. It really affected him. That's when they started writing down things in Haida around the house.

One crab came in and it was singing a song, it was almost riding away on top, I was listening, I was with Guuj. When I woke up I almost knew it, we heard old *naanaay* talking, and we picked it up. Trying to figure out if we should eat her or put her back in the water, I think we put her back in. (Edenshaw, 2014)

Barbeau linked the crab spirit to the medicine men (1973, p. 65). He noted that some people who almost became shamans came to an altered state and had a vision of a bunch of medicine men standing in the ocean around a big crab and that they were trying to throw the crab on the person to turn him into a medicine man.

It us up to us to conduct the cleansing rituals mentioned in the Ritual chapter to call upon *K'uust'aan Kuunas* to pinch us back to learning our language and to wake up to our responsibility to speak *Xaad Kil!*

SGaan Giidjas/Hlk'yaans Xaaydaay, Spirits of the Forest

“When one of the great heroes is about to break a taboo or commit some similar error, “everything in the forest” cries out to stop him (Swanton, 1905b, p. 29). Did they cry out when Haida children were being shipped away to residential school? Did they cry out when they no longer heard the Haida language being spoken? *SGaan giidjas* are

powerful beings. They have great ability to see and guard over things, to bring luck or to steal people away to their world.

The Creek Women, *Gandl kasGa Janaas* are the most important beings of the land. They live at the head of each watershed and “own all the fish in it” (Swanton 1905b, p. 23). There are also Grizzly-Bear People, Weasel-People and others. We all grew up hearing about *Yaanii K'uuka* or *Stiitga K'amaala* who stole children and *Sdlaguu*, Land-Otter People who lured near-drowned or lost people away. Some of the stories of these supernatural beings are still strong amongst the Haida and others have faded away. I will mention a few of the Supernaturals from the forest that we still remember and some we may not have heard about in recent times but that should remember on our language revitalization journey.

Skil Jaadee, Property Woman/Wealth Woman

Skil Jaadee, Lady Luck is one who brings good luck and medicinal plant knowledge. *Skil* is property or wealth, and is also the word for potlatch rings on top a hat. Property Woman is also referred to as the Fairy (Boelscher, 1998, p. 139). Henry Geddes, recalled a *Skil Jaadee* story:

Lots of stories about her. I'll tell you; one young fellow here, he heard about this *Skil Jaadee*. You have to keep clean, don't go with no woman. You bath. You're clean all the time. That's what he was doing, he was taking medicine. He was around the bush. And he see this lady, had a baby on her back. Got some kind of shawl. She was walking away and he started chasing her. He started taking off his clothes all the time in case there was any hot thing on there until he stripped naked, if he's near water, he jump in and roll around. He finally caught up to her and he took her baby away from her. She said, “give me back me my baby!” He said, “Not unless you grant me a wish.” She said, “Alright, what do you want?” And he said, “I want to marry you.” She thought about it for a while, she said “alright.” She was pretty. She used to always make him go get water; this went on for a while. She told him, “as long as you stay true to me, I'll be your wife. The day you're not true to me, I wont' be your wife.” One day he got

the water and she got a feather and stuck it in and took it out. When she took it out, it'd drip and she'd put it away. One time he got the water and he had a girlfriend before. She was there. So, they made love. And he come back with the water. His wife put the feather in the water and take it out. The water, there was no bite in it; it was just straight through. She got her baby and went between the house and left. Because he was unfaithful, he lost his power. There's quite a few stories about her. (Henry Geddes, 1991)

A person can fast and hope to see her in the forest. She has curly greying hair and she carries her baby, Child-Carried-On-The-Back with her. She has a basket in her hand and a digging stick, which she used like a hunting spear (Swanton, 1905a, p.153). When a man ate *xat* medicine and offered her grease and tobacco, he might be able to see her and become rich. He could become wealthy if he sees her and even wealthier if he snatched a piece of her blanket or heard her child crying. Seeing her mussel-shells arranged nicely on the beach could also make one rich (Swanton, 1905b, p. 29).

Turner's book *Plants of Haida Gwaii* starts with a prayer for Haida medicine by *GwaaGanad*, Diane Brown. In the prayer, she thanks Lady Luck for Haida medicines. "Xaayda xil sgaawdagii Skil jaad ga hll kil laa ga...I thank Lady Luck for Haida Medicines" (2004, p. 7).

Skil jaadee is such a popular Haida woman's name today, it's as if she were a super-hero! Chief Weah's *SGaaguuhl* Eagle clan has a special connection with her because of an ancestors' encounter with her when he climbed Algom Mountain and fasted and ate devil's club for a month:

He met the fairy! They claim it's a woman. She had a little baby on her back. That's why my uncles were called after *Skil*, fairy. *Skil Jaadee*, when we say Fairy Maid. *Skil Jaadee*. When we say fairy, we say *Skil*. This man who met the fairy maid, *Skil da Katdsuu*, when he came back he got another name, *Skil Da Katagun*, hunting for fairy maid. Another was *Skil Duugahl*, he went in the woods to get fairy maid. (Chief Weah, 1969)

We need to ask her to show us the medicines we need to be strong, to remember, to speak, to sing, to receive property that could help us become lucky and wealthy in our language.

Kaagan Jaad, *Mouse Woman*

Mouse woman is another Haida helper. She likes the world to be balanced and often helps humans to restore balance and ensure goodness in the world. She is good at finding things too. In exchange for her help, it is nice to leave her a gift.

In the Bear Mother story, she helped a woman escape from the bears. The woman was out berry picking and stepped in bear feces. She cursed the bears and the insulted bears kidnapped her and forced her to marry a bear. The young woman became lonely for her family and was helped by Mouse Woman. Mouse Woman did not like how the woman was treated and helped her to gain the respect of the bears. She told her to put a copper bracelet in her feces when she went outside to relieve herself. The bears saw this and believed her to be so high-classed that she defecated copper bracelets. She also taught her how to keep the fire going when the bears shook out their furs. (CBC, 2005).

From these ancient stories that exist up and down the coast, we can see that Mouse Woman is a good helper. By placing a gift of wool or something similar in the fire, we could gain her help in bringing balance back to the language world. As a good finder of lost things, she could help us find our language again.

SGalang Gaangaa, *The Singers*

Songs came from two Eagle sisters called “The Singers.” The eldest was named The One-Out-Of-Whose-Mouth-Songs-Hang and the younger one was named The One-Who-Dances-About. They lived at *Diin SGul*, Foamy Cave, north of *Kaisun*. The two sisters loved to weave and went out to refresh their cedar bark supply while the man went out fishing. They all got lost in the fog. Although he could hear the women’s voices, he could not find them. They all turned into supernatural beings. The man is now known as Supernatural-One-That-Travels-Alone. When people are lost at sea they call on him for a safe journey back to shore. The sisters were lost for a long time and eventually drifted up to the clouds once the fog lifted. These supernatural sisters come down in the spring to dance, and return to the clouds in the winter. Sometimes they leave feathers on Plain-Place-Mountain. Sometimes they even go through the air on a canoe singing songs. An elderly man from *Kluu* told a story of his uncle seeing them soaring through the air on their canoe. He learned three songs from them. Swanton also noted that when a person died, the song-leader would go off in his canoe after taking medicine in an effort to learn a song to honour the deceased person. Composers learned songs from The Singers, who originally learned the songs from birds (Swanton, 1905b, p. 30).

These two sisters could be powerful allies in our singing and dancing tradition. Maybe they already know what we wish for, as they knew the man’s wishes in the story. We could take a trip to the swampy area on top of Plain-Place Mountain to look for the feathers they left and to make a food offering to request their help for us to learn traditional songs and dances. The Haida dance groups and singers should know about these important Eagle sisters. Today’s composers should know to make offerings to the

fire for them and to make a habit of cleansing themselves with traditional medicine and rituals and going out in a canoe in search of them for new songs.

The song sisters could probably help us re-claim the melodies of songs whose lyrics were written down in the 1800s but whose melodies were not recorded. There is a small but rich collection of such songs. These Supernaturals could also help us become comfortable with the ancient style of composing songs. There is a lot of mystique in Haida songs, and we need to ask these women to help us with this musical tradition.

Taan SGaanee, *Bear Spirit*

The bear spirits are also forest spirits capable of helping on our language journey. Bears are powerful, steady beings that are like humans when they take off their fur. In the Bear story, a young woman stepped in bear feces while berry picking and cursed the bears. The Bear Spirits were angered and kidnapped her. She married a bear and had bear babies with him. One lesson in this story is to show respect to bears because they are the same as us.

Many people, such as learner Jenny Cross continue to give thanks to the Bear Spirit: “I give thanks to the bear of the North for his wisdom, knowledge, energy, protection and healing. I know the bear is a big part of our healing” (Jenny Cross, 2015).

Vern Williams Jr. learned a salmon song from the bear spirits. He saw a bear while at the Yakoun River with his son, Jeffrey. By the time he got home, the *Haw’aa Chiin*, thank you Salmon song came to him (Xaad Kihlgaa Hl Suu.u & Thuu Xaadaa Naay, 2010, p. 58). Vern also learned a healing song from the bear spirits. He sings this powerful song for people who are in great need of healing. We could pray to the bear spirits for healing and to be strong and brave like them.

Taats'iing.ga, Supernatural-Halibut-Gills

This supernatural being is said to be the gills or belly of a halibut. It crawls around in the woods, whistling. To find one and eat it would bring a person wealth. To keep this luck, the person would have to keep it a secret (Swanton, 1905b, p. 30). Albert Edenshaw came across this creature, according to his granddaughter Florence Davidson:

My grandfather, Albert Edward, once found a lucky sign, too. He was going up into the woods: it wasn't summertime yet but the bluebottles were clustered on some halibut gills, *haagu c'an*. They were moving, just like a killer whale sounding. *Kwaagindal*, they call it. Amongst the moss it went. Albert Edward grabbed it and he became *skililda*, 'lucky.' (Blackman, 1982, p. 70)

Since we need luck in learning our language, I would recommend keeping an eye out for *Taats'iing.ga* while walking in the forest.

The Wanderer

Raven's slave was unhappy with his life as a servant. He escaped and traveled back to North Island. Upon his return, he wanted to do as Raven and get himself a supernatural wife from the heavens. He shot an arrow at the moon, building a ladder that took a year to complete. He climbed and saw a beautiful woman swimming in the crystal lake. He snatched her and they dropped back to the shore on *Kiis Gwaay*, North Island. Raven happened to see all the excitement and demanded the woman be handed over to him. Raven seized the woman and transformed the slave into an invisible spirit and outcast. He was given the eternal job of caregiver for everything that Raven created.

Thus the Wanderer, as the slave is now termed by the Haidas, is always busily engaged causing the berries and roots to grow for the support of the people. Every plant, flower, and tree is under his control and thus it is that Haida-land

produces the finest trees for canoes throughout the whole northern region. (Hill-Tout, 1898, p. 8)

People used to offer him berries, salmon, roots and bear grease. “These they put into hollow trees to provide a meal for their most unfortunate ancestor should he require anything to eat” (Harrison, 1893, p. 31) It is up to us to make offerings to him so that he watches over Haida Gwaii, our food, medicines and our language.

Conclusion

Over the last century, the Haidas have gone through such drastic changes in our spiritual beliefs yet the supernatural beings are still all around us. Despite the influence of the Church and the devastating effects of the Residential Schools, the Haida belief in the supernatural world has survived. The *liis*, the spiritual string that connects us to our ancestors and Haida Gwaii is still there. The return to not only believing in Haida supernatural powers but also engaging and calling upon these beings is critical to our language revitalization. We all are capable of making connections to the supernatural world! We must relearn the stories, get back onto the land and sea, practice traditional rituals and ceremonies and take our traditional medicines that foster a spiritual connection. I mentioned two dozen supernatural beings that made themselves present during my research. For language revitalization, we need to call upon the supernatural beings that can bring luck, wisdom, strength, great change, songs, stories and a deep connection. For luck, we need to ask Supernatural-Halibut-Gills, *Skil Jaadee* and *Skil* for help. The Wanderer, Mouse Woman, Woman Who-Is-Stone-From-the-Hips-Down, Master Carpenter and *Skandaal* can bring about greater knowledge. Bear Spirits, Greatest Laughter and *SGaanguu* can teach us about strength. Raven, Greatest-Crab,

Killer whales, The-Old-Woman-Under-the-Fire, *SGuluu Jaad, Djilakuns and our ancestors can bring about great change and teach us the power of surrendering to the unknown and keeping our connections strong. The Singers, *Nasduu* and Story Woman have the power to teach us songs and stories. If we listen and pay attention to the signs, the spirits are calling out to us and even poking at us to wake up and speak *Xaad Kil!**

Chapter 7 - *Hawasan Hl Suuasaang* – I Will Say It Again, Conclusion

Concluding Thoughts

At the beginning of my research journey, I asked myself what was missing in our language revitalization efforts. I hypothesized that the *Xaad Kil* answers within our own Haida culture and that we had the answers all along. I had a closer look at the traditional medicines, foods, rituals and connections to the supernatural beings to see if the answers were there. From the archival research, from interviews and from practicing my findings, I believe I found a missing link in our language revitalization efforts.

The year I spent researching and practicing my findings has greatly helped my confidence and knowledge of my language and culture and to finish my thesis. I constantly said, “*Dii ga Hl tlaayd*, help me” as I searched for knowledge. I ate the traditional foods with a new gratefulness and purpose. I went to the forest and beach to meditate. I took traditional medicines to help me be strong, knowledgeable, lucky and ready to absorb the new knowledge. As I learned about the supernatural beings, I made offerings and talked to them. Killer whales started coming to me in my dreams and in real life to let me know they are with me on this journey. I often asked my late mother, grandparents and ancestors for help. They also came to me in my dreams and made their presence known in other ways. As I wrote my thesis, my naanii came to me in my dreams and agreed it was time to teach me *Xaad Kil*. Because of my research journey, I have felt an incredibly deep connection to my ancestors, my culture and to my language. I now understand there needs to be a balance between language lessons, living a healthy

lifestyle, taking traditional medicines, practicing ceremonies and connecting to my ancestors and supernatural helpers to be a good language speaker.

This research journey has helped bring me along in my own language journey. Learning came easier when I practiced what I preached. My determination to become a language speaker has grown and I look forward to learning *Xaad Kil* with the added benefit of what I learned from my research.

Thesis Findings

Throughout the thesis, I showcased nearly 100 foods, medicines, rituals, ceremonies and supernatural connections that all could serve a language revitalization purpose.

The following themes ran through the research and are important qualities for *Xaad Kil* revitalization and further details on these can be found in the appendix:

To purify the body, mind and spirit

It is important to be clean inside and out to accept new knowledge. There are many medicines and rituals from ocean bathing to drinking salt water and eating devil's club bark to cleanse the body;

To protect oneself and *Xaad Kil*

It is important to feel protected as a language learner and it is important to protect and nourish our endangered language especially at this vulnerable stage. Devil's club, false hellebore leaves, kuganaa kwaa, medicine pouches are some examples of way to offer protection.

To be connected to oneself, the ancestors, Xaad Kil, Haida Gwaii and Supernaturals

Every Haida person has a *liis* that connects her to Haida Gwaii, to her family and to the supernatural Haida world. It is so important to keep this connection strong.

The main thing is to get people out! Into the forest, into the waters and to understand our connection to the ceremony comes from connection to the forest and the water, just sitting still. That connection we are craving is there and accessible. People just need to make that choice. I know it's possible just because of my own experience, asking and asking for things and then receiving them. What we think is lost. It is not lost. (Williams, 2014)

Traditional ceremonies from Haida naming, tattooing, piercing to being on the land and eating traditional foods help to keep the *liis* strong.

To bring luck and property to oneself and Xaad Kil

Luck is an important Haida concept. The concept of luck is different from an aboriginal perspective. One can bring about luck and wealth by showing respect and acknowledging a system of reciprocal accountability (R. Ignace, personal communication, 2011). Following good protocol by taking medicines and conducting rituals such as a devil's club ritual, single-delight ritual, fasting and cleansing can bring about prosperity and luck to a language learner. A person can also become lucky from hearing a *Skil*, a supernatural bird, *Skil Jaadee*, Property Woman or the supernatural Halibut Gills.

To strengthen oneself and Xaad Kil

Haidas are known to be strong. Our ancestors were good at training themselves to be strong and brave. The coming-of-age ceremonies for young men and women were designed to make Haidas strong. Our language champions could wear war belts with their spouses to give them strength. Giving our children Haida names makes them

strong. Honouring our language champions in a potlatch ceremony would make them strong. Conducting a bull kelp ritual could bring strength to our language. Holding community Potlatches and raising totem poles in honour of the Haida language could also bring great strength to *Xaad Kil*.

To have good health and well-being

To be a good *Xaad Kil* speaker, a person needs to be healthy. Our Haida ancestral diet would help keep our language champions strong and healthy. Taking traditional medicines for common ailments would also keep us healthy. Drinking fresh water, getting fresh air and following the rhythms of the sun and the moon are also great for a person's well being.

To show respect and love to *Xaad Kil* and *Xaad Kil* champions

Yahgudang, respect is an important concept in Haida culture. There are ways to show respect to our language and our language as Jaskwaan says, "By committing to learning, speaking, and teaching the language of our ancestors and of this land that created us, I believe that I am following the teaching of *Yahguudang* (Bedard, 2007, p. 19).

Honouring Potlatches, totem-pole raisings, Haida naming, piercing and labrets are some traditional ways of honouring our loved ones. New songs and dances are other ways to honour and show love to our language champions and our language. Offerings to our ancestors and the supernatural beings is another way, especially of done with the high-ranking crab apples, soapberries, eulachon grease and highbush cranberries.

To be knowledgeable

Our ancestors were wise, and they made a conscious effort to be knowledgeable. The spruce-cone ritual can help a person become a better speaker. The supernatural beings Master Carpenter, *Skandaal*, Greatest Fool, the Singers, Story Woman, Mouse Woman and Greatest Crab are amongst the supernatural beings that could help bring us to greater wisdom. By making ourselves clean and making offerings of tobacco, crab apples, soapberries, eulachon grease and highbush cranberries we could encourage them to bring us greater knowledge.

It is up to the individual learner to determine which of these qualities he needs and come up with his own prescription to improve his language learning. I would recommend each learner begin with leading a healthy lifestyle and eating healthy traditional foods. I would also recommend conducting cleansing rituals, praying and making offerings to the ancestors and supernatural beings. From there, I would recommend following rituals, taking medicines and calling upon supernatural beings that could specifically help with the learner's concerns. The charts in the appendices give a breakdown of the various food, rituals, medicines and supernatural beings that could help with each of these eight qualities.

It is also up to the community to determine the specific practices to follow. It is up to us as individuals and as a Haida community to make our language healthy again. As a community, I would recommend organizing the boy's and girl's coming of age ceremonies, developing a community garden, protecting and re-establishing the traditional resources, hosting community language honouring ceremonies, creating new

masks, dances and songs, building steam baths as well as raising Haida language totem poles. Since reviving an endangered language is up to the whole community, it is up to Council of the Haida Nation, the Band Councils and the local organizations to work with the Skidegate Haida Immersion Programs, *Xaad Kihlgaa Hl Suu.u* and the school language programs to ensure their revitalization efforts come to fruition.

Limits of This Research

This language research does have its limits. First of all, this research is Haida-specific. The research findings are geared towards a Haida language learner. A Northwest Coast language learner can practice many of the findings since many of the foods and medicines are the same. Other nations could follow the basic idea of applying ancient beliefs and practices to their own language revitalization practices.

Time limits also impacted my study. I would have loved to gather my findings, put a group of learners through the practices and then add the findings to my thesis. However, I chose to not make my thesis my life work!

Impacts of This Research

There are five main benefits of this research:

First of all, this research has the potential to strengthen the *liis*, the cord that ties us to the land and people we come from. By following the recommendations in this thesis, a Haida could strengthen her *liis* that connects her to *Xaad Kil* as well. The more we get out on the land and sea, the more we eat our own Haida foods, the more we practice ancient rituals, the more we connect to the spirit world and the more we speak

Xaad Kil, the stronger we become. With this strength, we can accomplish anything as a Haida Nation!

Secondly, this research adds to the literature on Indigenous Language Revitalization. I strongly believe in aboriginal peoples telling our own stories and finding our own solutions to our language challenges.

This research could also benefit the education systems. The education system often fails aboriginal students because it is so disconnected from our traditions. Our Haida students would be stronger if we implemented more authentic Haida cultural practices in the curriculum. To have students actually going out for traditional medicines or catching their own fish or taking daily dips in the ocean would have such an impact on their learning. Traditional language and cultural knowledge correlate to suicide rates in aboriginal communities. Basically, a community where people are speaking their language and living their culture have lower rates of youth suicide and healthier youth. (Hallett, D, Chandler, M and Lalonde, C., 2007; McIvor and Napoleon, 2009, 2013). My thesis could be used to support language revitalization and suicide prevention on Haida Gwaii.

This research could also impact our health programming. We could use the thesis to implement healthy cultural and language activities for people of all ages and various health programs in the community.

Lastly, I hope other endangered language groups may gather inspiration and insight from my research and learn about their own ancestors' beliefs and practices to strengthen their own languages.

Hakwsda, t'alang 'waadluwaan hlGangulaa'asaang - Let's get to work, everyone!

I look forward to sharing my research findings with the Haida language learning community. I look forward to having further discussions and practicing the findings to help breathe life back into Xaad Kil. United, with hard work and by practicing and believing in the ancient ways of our ancestors, we will again speak Xaad Kil. *Dalang 'waadluwaan, Xaad Kil hl sk'at'uu!* Learn Xaad Kil, everyone. *Xaad kihl t'alang guusuusaang!* We will speak in Xaad Kil!

Huu Tláan Giidang. The end.

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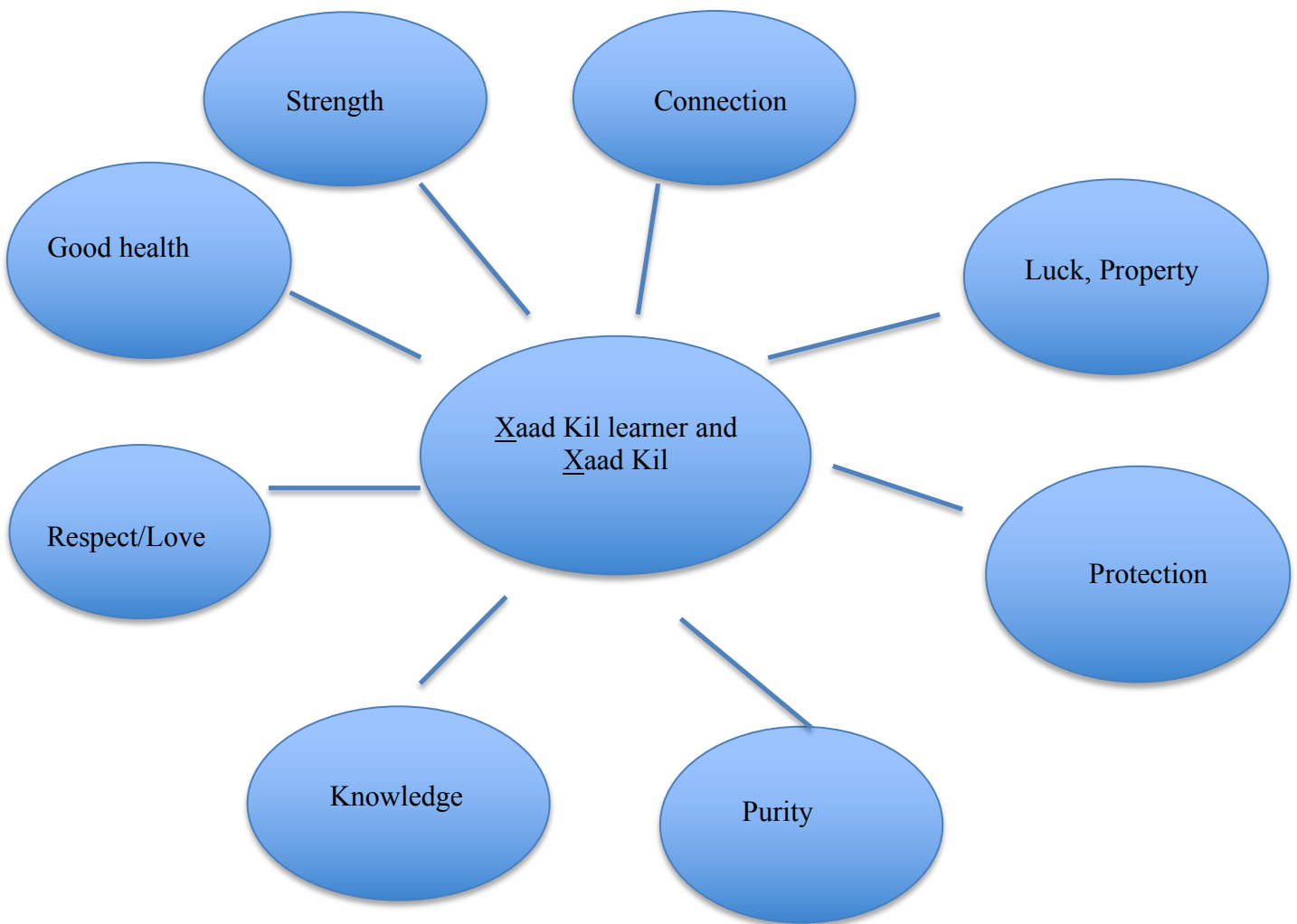
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Appendix

A. What Xaad Kil and the Xaad Kil learner need to succeed

Based on the research, these are the eight main values that a Xaad Kil learner needs to learn the Haida language and eight values that we need to provide to Xaad Kil.



B. Ways to purify the body, mind and spirit

Method	Preparation/Notes
Salt water purgative	Boil and drink salt water from ocean or water Salted with Himalayan sea salt
Devil's club	Drink devil's club tea, eat devil's inner bark as a purgative
Cedar boughs	Place around classrooms, use for cleansing ceremony
Single delight	Eat as a purgative and to bring on visions
Tobacco	Chewing encourages contemplation and is a gift gift for Supernaturals
Eagle feathers	Cleansing the air and energy in a room and to washes negativity from a person
Boy's coming-of-age ceremony	The ocean-dip ritual will cleanse the boy's mind and body
Ocean bathing ritual	Bathe ocean to cleanse one's mind and body
Fasting	Four days of fasting cleanses the internal body
Hot springs and steam bath	Cleanse the body, mind and spirit
Meditation	To bring to altered state

C. Ways to protect oneself and Xaad Kil

Method	Preparation/Notes
Kuganaa Kwaa	Carry crumbly rock, put in medicine pouch, place around the classroom and home
Devil's club	Wear devil's club beads, put in a medicine pouch and place around the classroom and home
False Hellebore	Place one leaf carefully in an inconspicuous spot in room (**Should be done by knowledgeable practitioner as it is very powerful**)
Medicine pouch	Carry a pouch and put under bed and in classroom
Honouring Potlatch	Community protection of <u>Xaad Kil</u> and learners
The Woman-Who-is-Stone-From-the-Hips-Down	She watches over us and offers ways to protect ourselves
<u>SGaanguu</u>	Protects from trouble-makers
Killer whale spirits/ <i>Nasduu</i>	Protects us
The Wanderer	Protects all that Raven created, including all the forest resources we need for language revitalization
Bear spirit	Offers protection

D. Ways to be connected to oneself, the ancestors, Xaad Kil, Haida Gwaii and Supernaturals

Method	Preparation/Notes
Prayer	Connects one to supernatural beings and prepares a person on their journey
Agates, red rocks and beach treasures	Carry in a medicine pouch and place around classroom and home
Soapberries, crab apple, eulachon grease, high-bush cranberries	Offering to Supernaturals connects one to supernatural beings
Flicker feathers	Connect to the Ocean-People spirits
Boy's coming-of-age ceremony	Ocean-dip ceremony connects boys to Haida Gwaii and to his male relatives
Girl's coming-of-age ceremony and women's mourning ceremony	Connects girls to her female relatives and Haida Gwaii
Ocean cleansing ceremony	Connects one to the ocean, supernatural beings of the sea
Offerings to spirits of the sea	Connection to killer whale and other ocean spirits
War belts	Exchanging belts connects learner with spouse
Early-riser ritual	The cobweb ritual gets a person up early, making her more available to elders and learning opportunities
Meditation	Connects one to the forest and the Creator, nature, spirits and purpose
Food burning	Connects one to ancestors and supernatural beings
Soul catcher	Brings one's soul back to him; capture the wandering <u>Xaad Kil</u> spirit

Labret	Connects to clan and community
Piercing	Connect to clan and community
Potlatch	Connects learner to community
Song and dance	Connects to supernatural beings and community
The-Old-Woman-Under-the-Fire	Takes our food offerings to supernatural beings
Greatest Laughter	Connects us to deceased loved ones and helps heal from sorrow
S <u>G</u> uuluu Jaad & Djila <u>K</u> uns	Connects us to our clan

E. Ways to bring luck and property to oneself and Xaad Kil

Method	Preparation/Notes
Devil's club	Wear devil's club beads, put in a medicine pouch and place around the classroom and home and conduct devil's club ritual in the woods
Round-leaved sundew	Put in medicine pouch to capture <u>Xaad Kil</u>
Water	Drink water in moderation to keep luck
Flicker feathers	Wear to bring luck
Steam rituals	Alder, devil's club, moss and a song in a steam to get rid of bad luck
Skil	Bird that makes steel-on-steel sound, bringing luck
Skil Jaadee	Offer her grease and tobacco to become lucky
Hemlock wreath	Hemlock wreath with abalone, money and treasures hung in classroom. Girl's coming-of-age ceremony
Spruce Cones	Ritual to ask for <u>Xaad Kil</u> speaking abilities
Raven	His ability to bring about great change could change state of <u>Xaad Kil</u>
Nasduu and Killerwhales	Food offerings to ask for <u>Xaad Kil</u> prosperity
Kaagan Jaad	Finder of lost treasures
Master Carpenter	Builder of things
Story Woman	Story keeper
The Singers	Song keepers, keepers of spruce pitch medicine

F. Ways to strengthen oneself and Xaad Kil

Method	Preparation/Notes
Haida naming	Strengthen pride and sense of belonging
Boy's coming-of-age ceremony	The cold ocean dips strengthen the boy
Girl's coming-of-age ceremony	Rub girl with red cedar to make her strong
Ocean cleansing ceremony	A cold dip will build up one's endurance
War belt	Strengthens learner in battle to revive <u>Xaad Kil</u>
Bull kelp ritual	Ceremonially cuts off heads of <u>Xaad Kil</u> enemies
Wind ritual	Wind's powerful strength can strengthen learner and blow away negativity
Potlatch	Brings awareness and momentum to <u>Xaad Kil</u> revitalization
Totem pole	Brings awareness and momentum to <u>Xaad Kil</u> revitalization
Song and dance	New songs, dances and regalia will bring awareness and strength to <u>Xaad Kil</u> revitalization
Killer whale spirits	Can offer us strength
Bear spirits	Can offer us strength

G. Ways to have good health and well-being

Method	Preparation/Notes
Pine	Headache poultice and rejuvenating inhalant
Spruce pitch	Sore throat poultice
Single delight	Drink to ward off colds and flu, depression and exhaustion
Hudson's bay tea	Drink to ward off colds and flu, soothe sore throats, headaches
Wild Rose Hip	Drink to ward off colds and flu
Licorice root	Drink or chew rhizomes to soothe a sore throat and to replace sugar
Stinging nettles	Drink tea as a memory booster, lung strengthener and for allergies
Fresh water	Energizes and cleanses
Halibut and black cod	Brain food, heart food
Salmon	Brain food, heart food
Herring-roe-on-kelp	Brain food, heart food
Shellfish	Brain food, energy
Seaweed	Overall wellbeing
Eulachon	Memory booster, stress, depression, immunity
Eulachon grease	Memory booster, stress, depression, immunity
Berries	Cold and flu fighter, digestive health
Mushrooms	Immunity and cardiovascular health
Licorice ferns	Cold and flu fighter
Peppermint	Cold and flu fighter, headaches, memory, stress
Deer	Brain food, energy

Garden foods (Haida potatoes, turnips, onions, carrots, raspberries, rhubarb)	Immunity, bone strengthener, energy, brain food, cold and flu fighters
Fowl	Energy, brain food
Eggs	Energy, brain food
Sunshine	Vitamin D to ward off depression
Fresh air	Ward off depression, headaches
Moon	Sleep, sense of calm

H. Ways to show respect and love to Xaad Kil and Xaad Kil champions

Method	Preparation/Notes
Honouring Potlatch	Community Celebration to honour <u>Xaad Kil</u> champions
Totem Pole	Pole with images of supernatural helpers and <u>Xaad Kil</u> symbols
Haida Naming	Naming of people, buildings to honour speakers
Piercing	Honours the young learner, strengthens ties to family
Tattooing	Honours a person, strengthens clan ties
Labret	Honours a woman and her ancestors
Song and dance	Songs to respect the language champions, dances to honour supernatural helpers
Food Offering	Offerings to deceased language champions
Greatest-Laughter	Allows us to show love and find joy again after our teachers pass away
Crab apples, soap berries, eulachon grease and highbush cranberries	Serving high-classed foods to language champions and Supernaturals shows them respect

I. Ways to become knowledgeable

Method	Preparation/Notes
Spruce cones	Rub spruce cones across one's mouth four times
Song and Dance	Helps one's <i>Xaad Kil</i> learning come easier
Master-Carpenter	Excellent builder spirit to help build <i>Xaad Kil</i> resources, regalia, language facilities
Skandaal	Teaches us to not take things so literally
Great Fool/Poor-with-Hands	Teaches us to take chances and share our ideas
The Singers	Teach us songs
Story-woman	Teaches us stories
Greatest Crab	Encourages us to learn <i>Xaad Kil</i>
Mouse Woman	Provides us with resources in challenging situations