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Chapter Six-Ritual, Shaman Art & Story Related Art

Introduction

In this chapter I will look at art found on artifacts used in rituals such as puberty drinking tubes and smoking pipes. I will also examine items used by shamans, such as drums and dolls. Finally I will show some examples of Yukon First Nations carvings that represent our stories. I like to stress that this chapter is not about the rituals or shamanism themselves, but will mostly focus on the art depicted on the objects. If you would like to learn more about Yukon First Nations rituals and shamanism I would recommend McClellan's *My Old People Say*.

Puberty drinking tubes

Drinking tubes or drinking straws were used as part of the ritual that girls went through when they had their first menstrual cycle. The tube was just one of the ritual items the girls used, along with scratchers, puberty hoods and raven feathers to comb their hair (to keep their hair black all their lives). The tubes are the only items that seem to have been commonly preserved. They were made by the mother from the leg bone of a swan and were decorated with geometric designs. The tube had a rope or band attached to it so the girl could wear it around her neck where it was always ready for use. Sometimes scratchers were attached to the rope or band. When the girl had her first menstruation she was isolated from the main camp as a sign of transition from girl to woman. She went into isolation as a girl and emerged a woman. The isolation may also have been so as not to affect the hunting luck of the camp. The period of isolation depended on the status of the girl and could be as long as two years! During this isolation the girl was ideally, but not always, tended to by the aunts of the opposite moiety. The girl observed certain rituals and was taught to sew very well. During isolation time the girl's sewing ability improved greatly. If she was not sewing she was pulling spruce needles off a branch, one by one, to keep her in continuous training. After the first four fasting days the girl could drink and eat. She also wore the hood that almost totally cut her off from the outside world. This hood hung in front of the face as well as over the shoulders and was effective in reducing the girl's vision as well as hiding her from anybody who may see her. See figure # 244 of a modern day puberty hood.



Figure # 244. Modern day Puberty hood made by Southern Tutchone Elder Ms. Mary Dequerre, 2006. UvK Collection.

Upon completion of the puberty ritual the hoods were given to women of the opposite moiety. The hoods were cut up and made into moccasins. This explains the present lack of puberty hoods. The hood below was made by Ms. Mary Dequerre, a Southern Tutchone Elder from Haines Junction in 2006. Sadly, Ms. Dequerre has passed away in 2008. The hood is made of commercial tanned hide and has floral bead designs on the sides as well as store-bought bone tubes reminiscent of dentalia shells. The puberty ritual declined after World War Two and is generally not practiced today although there are a few families, mine included, that do recognize the importance of the ritual and at least conduct a modified version.

Swan down was also part of the ritual, woven into sinew and wrapped about the hands and arms. Swan down was furthermore used to wipe the face, thought to increase the whiteness for beauty.

These drinking tubes were also sometimes used by men after giving a potlatch, as in the case of the Upper Tanana. In the Yale University publication *The Upper Tanana Indians* by Robert A. McKennan, he states the following:

For 100 days after the ceremony the potlatch-man can neither sleep, nor have intercourse, with his wife. He eats very sparingly, avoiding the heads of animals and subsisting largely on a soap made from fat of caribou or other fat animals. He must suck his drinking water through a swan-bone tube. He does not cut any meat lest he get blood on his hands. He scratches his face only with a scratching stick. (McKennan 1959: 137)

Note the similarities with the puberty ritual by using drinking tube as well as scratchers. The drinking tubes are all essentially the same except for the differences in engraved geometric designs and the design of the band that is attached to the tube. Below in figure # 245 is two examples of drinking tubes. These tubes have a similar style necklace, which is a single wide beaded strap attached to the bone. The one on the top is from the Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin and is listed as Tajunak. This may refer to the Tranjik-Kutchin of the Black River area in Fort Yukon and east up the Black River from the interior of Alaska and into the Yukon Territory or to the former general term for the Gwich'in: Takudh. The drinking tube on the right is in the collection of the Peter the Great Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia which would indicate it may have been collected in the Sitka area. The Peter the Great museum has a large collection of Tanaina artifacts but the tube's neck band is made of beads and the Tanaina were not great users of beads. Therefore it may have come from another area via the Russian trade network.



Figure # 245. Left: Drinking tube. IV A6109. SMB. Right: Drinking Tube, Peter the Great Museum.

The next two drinking tubes are using dentalia shells in the necklace part. The one on the left is also at the Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin and is listed as Tajunak. The tube on the right is in the Royal Ontario Museum and is listed as Athapaskan. There is a wide beaded band around the tube and at the end of that band is the necklace made of dentalia shells. Two strands are attached to the tube. Because of the value of dentalia shells one would assume that the wearer came from a well off family. See figure # 246 for the two examples with the dentalia shells.



Figure # 246. Left: Drinking tube. IV A6125. Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin. Right: Drinking Tube, ROM.

The next two drinking tubes in figure # 247 have thinner necklaces. The top tube has a beaded strand and is attached at the sides of the beaded middle covering of the tube. It is in the Alaska State Museum collection in Juneau, Alaska. The tube on the bottom is in the Peabody Museum collection in Boston. It is listed as 'Tinne' (Athapaskan) and was gifted to the museum in 1905. The bottom tube is attached in the middle and the string is wrapped with quills. The tube itself is decorated with the typical Athapaskan geometric designs. All seven drinking tubes shown here have geometric motifs engraved into the tube. The right tube in figure # 245 as well as the top tube in figure # 247 both have a series of lightly engraved geometric motifs, although they are hard to see in the photographs.



Figure # 247. Top: Drinking tubeII-C-119. ASM. Bottom: drinking tube, 05-7-10/64525. Peabody Museum

In the following figure # 248, is a drinking tube which has the scratchers attached to the string for convenience. This tube is in the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka, Alaska and is listed as Chilkat Tlingit. It has been traded from the interior, most likely from the Tutchone people. On the right is an example of scratchers by themselves. These scratchers are in the Royal Ontario Museum and the notes state that they were collected by the Tlingit Indians from the Hootchi River. This would be the Southern Tutchone village of Hutchi. As you can see, these are close in style to the scratchers on the Sheldon Jackson drinking tube.



Figure # 248. Top: Drinking tube & scratchers. I.A. 231 a-f, SJM. Bottom: scratchers, 939.31.90. ROM.

The drinking tubes were almost always decorated with engraving and hung from a fancy necklace so the tube could be worn at all times. As in most things Athapaskan each one is individual. While some follow the same pattern, the width of the necklace or the use of a beaded band around the tube seemed to be up to the maker. I have not been able to categorize the tubes by group.

Pipes

Before I started my research into early Yukon First Nation's art I had never heard or seen of any early Yukon First Nations pipes. Since then I have come across a number of examples. Smoking pipes was part of the early lifestyle of Yukon First Nations people. The 'tobacco' was obtained from the coastal Tlingits as stated in *My Old People Say*. McClellan writes about the early trade between the coastal and interior people:

Two other traditional articles brought by the Tlingit in precontact times were eulachon grease and a mixture of crushed clam shells and "tobacco," which Raven taught the

coastal people how to grow. Presumably it was not true tobacco (Swanton 1909:89, 334; Dixon 1933: 150) (McClellan 2001: 502)

Later reports indicate it was indeed tobacco and was very popular in the Yukon and surrounding regions. It was always part of trade. The Tagish and Inland Tlingit and most likely other groups used to have a 'smoking party' after the death of a member of the community and it was at this party that the practical details of the coming potlatch would be worked out. Smoking was a leisure activity and there were even smoking hats, made to wear when enjoying tobacco. Even today tobacco can be offered as a gift, for example when a person gathers red ochre. An early reference to the manner people smoked comes from Robert Campbell's 1843 journey down the Pelly River. He met some First Nations people who had never seen a white man before. They smoked a pipe of peace:

Two of their leading Chiefs, father and son, named Thlin-ikik-Thling and Hanan were tall, stalwart, good looking men, clad from head to toe in dressed deerskins, ornamented with beads & porcupine quills of all colours. We smoked a pipe of peace with them & I distributed some tobacco & presents among them. (Wright 1976: 40)

It's not clear who had the pipe, but it is obvious that the First Nations people were practiced in the pipe smoking ritual. Campbell describes the scene as if it was the most normal thing for the First Nations people to smoke the pipe. McKennan states about the Upper Tanana tobacco and pipe use:

Tobacco was also smoked in pipes made of both wood and horn. No examples of these now exist, nor do they seem to have been used much by the Upper Tanana. According to the Indians, pipes were more common on the Yukon River, where they obtained them.

After the opening of the Yukon trade, the natives obtained tobacco from the traders, but previous to this it was obtained from the Kluane, who in turn secured it from the Chilkat. The Upper Tanana natives are of the opinion that the latter grew it. (McKenna 1959: 40)

McKenna conducted the research for his publication during fieldwork with the Upper Tanana people in Alaska between 1929 and 1930. But even by that time the Upper Tanana, although quite isolated, had already adopted many aspects of modern lifestyle. The result is that even research back then had to deal with gaps in northern Athapaskan culture as noted in the above statement. I could not find out who exactly used pipes. It does appear that young men could smoke and I seem to remember an old photograph of an Elder woman with a pipe in her mouth. I could not find out another function for pipes the use by shamans.

The first pipe I show is from the Alaska State Museum and is made of stone. I have very little information about this pipe but as you can see in figure # 249 it has the common Athapaskan geometric motifs engraved into the body. It is a good example of a geometric designed pipe that most likely found itself on the Alaska coast via the Tlingit trade network with the interior.



Figure # 249, pipe, possibly Tutchone. II-C-45. ASM.

In figure # 250 is a pipe from the Kluane Museum of Natural History in Burwash Landing, Yukon. There is only the bowl part of the pipe. The main body of the bowl is a face, combined with what appears to be a fish carved into it. There are pieces of abalone nailed to the teeth on the pipe but there are many teeth missing the pieces of abalone. The nails would indicate that this pipe was made after the introduction of nails into the area, either from nails that arrived through the Tlingit trade network from the coast or later once trading posts were established in the area. It is not carved in fine detail, like the pipes of coastal Tlingits, but I think it was carved by a person who was influenced by the coastal Tlingits, most likely a Southern Tutchone artist. Burwash Landing is not too far from the Chilkat Tlingits and there was a lot of interaction between them. What exactly the image represents, I do not know. It could have been representative of a person or deity.



Figure # 250, pipe, possibly Southern Tutchone. 995.74, KMNH.

There are a lot of Tahltan pipes in various museum collections. The next pipe has the same general appearance as the pipe in figure # 250. See figure # 251 for a photograph of a Tahltan pipe that is in the National Museum of the American Indian's collection. While not exact, there are the obvious eyes and teeth and use of abalone shells in the decoration of the pipe. This pipe was collected by George Emmons in 1906 when he was collecting Tahltan

artifacts. This pipe had obvious Tlingit influences with the use of the ovoid and “U” shapes. This is not surprising as the Tahltan were influenced in a lot of ways by the Tlingit.



Figure # 251. Tahltan pipe. 009237.000 NMAI.

The following two pipes are some of the finest carved Yukon Athapaskan artifacts I have seen. While Yukon First Nations artists were very capable of carving finely in bone, such as on the bone arrowheads, this intricate work was generally not carried on to other carved objects. The first carved pipe was collected by George Emmons in 1906 and it comes from the headwaters of the Alsek River. The headwaters of the Alsek River are quite close to present day Haines Junction which is Southern Tutchone territory. Unlike the two previous pipes this one has no Tlingit influences. See figure # 252 for photographs of this Southern Tutchone pipe. It has the typical Athapaskan geometric incised motifs including the dot within a circle motif. The National Museum of the American Indian artifact notes state that this is representing a grebe, which is a water diving bird. I would guess that this was told to George Emmons when he collected the pipe. It begs the question, why a pipe carving of a grebe? Was this the artist’s yek, his spiritual guide? Was it a tribute to a unique creature that could exist in three worlds: in the air, on the land and in the water? In any case, we are dealing with one of the finest early Yukon carved pipes.



Figure # 252. Southern Tutchone pipe. 009256.00 NMAI.

The next carved object is a pipe at UBC’s Museum of Anthropology. See two views of the pipe in figure # 253. This pipe was collected in Fort Selkirk in 1920 and is listed as Athapaskan. It was part of the Burnett collection and later became part of the collection at the Museum of Anthropology. The pipe is made out of caribou antler and has a face carved into the bowl part. It appears that a stem is attached onto the back of the pipe. This is an unusual find and I have to admit it looks Inuit. If so, perhaps the pipe arrived in the Fort Selkirk area through trade from the north, but lacking any other evidence, this pipe should be accepted as

Northern Tutchone. The few pipes I have seen often have faces or other animals carved into them. One can only guess at the reason, but since smoke and spirits were thought of as being one and the same, maybe the faces represent the spirit of the smoke.



Figure # 253, caribou antler pipe from Fort Selkirk. A2.229. MOA.

With the strong tobacco use pre-contact, it would stand to reason that there was a pipe tradition in the Yukon before the availability of pipes in stores. As you can see there is a wide range of pipe styles ranging from the geometric stone pipe to very finely carved faces. There were a large number of Tahltan pipes collected and even though they came from one group of people there is a wide range of styles.

Shaman's items

I will examine some of the items that were used by shamans in their practice. This includes arm bands, pendants, drums, masks and dolls. McKennan gives only a partial list the items used by Upper Tanana shamans in their medicine box in *The Upper Tanana Indians* on page 153:

- A drinking tube made of a swan's wing bone
- A packing rope of braided moosehide.
- An awl made from the fibula of a moose. (He replaced this annually)
- The neckskin of a swan.
- A small strip of skin from a piebald moose. (This is strong moose medicine.)
- A nugget of native copper, weight about eight pounds.
- A pouch of powdered red ocher.
- Bullets of all calibers, which he had dug out from slaughtered game.
- The horn of a caribou, still in velvet.

McKennan also described the following shaman items:

Besides this collection of esoteric objects an Upper Tanana medicine man usually possesses a ceremonial rod. These vary considerably among individuals both as to shape and use. John's consisted of a stave about six feet long, to the end of which a bull-roarer was attached; on one side of the latter was painted a swastika and on the other side was a crude sketch of a moose, his medicine animal. The rod from Scottie Creek Titus was about the size and shape of a skinny stick and from its curved end hung a few eagle feathers. Follett Isaac possessed a slender wand about a yard in

length. It was decorated with ribbons and one end was a leather disc with tufted rays; this device represented the sun which constituted Follett's spirit-helper. Also attached to the rod was a small leather cap and ball, a trident of beads, a beaded cross representing a star, and three buttons suspended on a piece of reddened mooseskin. (McKenna 1959: 152.)

While shamans used more objects in their art than the list I just gave, I am only commenting on those artifacts that had an obvious shaman connection. One could consider the role of shamans as covering the highest of three levels of traditional Yukon First Nations health care. The first level of health care was what everybody had knowledge of and could do themselves or for others. That health related skills included for instance the making of balsam tea to take care of stomach problems or low bush cranberries for treating a sore throat. A second level required more knowledge and this was handled by those people in each band who had more skill in treating cuts, assisting in child birth, etc. If the condition however was more serious, the third level of health care fell upon the shamans. The shamans were located outside the community and often beyond the general rules of everyday living. Clan restrictions often did not apply to shamans. The skilled shaman was able to see the big picture (including other-worldly) of a situation and thus knew how to deal with it. For example, if a person had a serious sickness, the shaman could see beyond that person's illness and the outside force that had caused it. The shaman would deal with that outside force to cure the person. The shaman had about eight spirit guides to give a vision beyond the normal. Besides health care, shamans assisted in hunting, war and other important matters.

Shaman items: bone/antler arm bands

Bone arm bands were not only used by shamans but also by other people for various ritualistic reasons. Since these bands were used by shamans as well as for ritual and other purposes I will present a cross section of arm bands that had various uses. Bone, horn and possibly antler arm bands were often traded from the interior to the coast and this is where many of the arm bands that I examined were collected from. These bands had a number of different purposes assigned to them. If the collectors obtained them from the Tlingits and at the time of trade recorded their purposes, they may not always have been correct. I will explain this later. They were all decorated very nicely and remind me of the small-animal skinning knives made from bone that I examined in Chapter Two-Geometric & Decorative Arts. The bone arm bands are like the round versions of the bone skinning knives. In figures # 254 and # 255 are arm bands from the Peabody Museum in Boston, Massachusetts. In figure # 250 are two bands that were collected by Capt. Edward Fast while he was stationed in Sitka, Alaska in 1867 and 1868. The bands are listed by the museum as: "Athapaskan?; Tinne?; Yupik?" and the museum notes state: "Worn on arm. The long cord with mitten at each end passes across the neck and through these rings and supports the mitten when not on hand (Gordon)./ Made by Athapascans and often traded to the Tlingits, Emmons." The left band in # 255 has a common pattern that can be seen in the breastband design in the tunic in figure # 67B on page 98 as well as in the bone gopher skinning knife in figure # 42, top image on page 70. The band on the right has a different design. While this band also has a geometric pattern that is found on tunics, I wonder if these two bands or two mismatched arm bands. Both are missing the hide rope that can be seen on many other bands. The practice of holding the mitt strings in place by the armband seems quite unpractical as the mitt's string would have to be passed through the arm band. I am assuming that the bands were worn high on the arm and slipping the bands on and off may not have been convenient. Perhaps using

the armbands without the hide thongs to tie and close the opening when wearing the thick winter tunics worked fine.



Figure # 254. Bone arm bands. Left: 69-30-10/2033. Right: 69-30-10/2034. Peabody Museum.

In figure # 251 is the other set of the Peabody Museum arm bands. They have a very nice meander pattern and these same patterns can be found on other items, such as the breastband in figure # 65C and in Inland and coastal Tlingit spruce root baskets. These bands came to the Peabody Museum via the father of Frederic Curtiss.



Figure # 255, Athapaskan armbands, 31-63-10/K96, Peabody Museum.

They are listed as Athapaskan from Alaska or British Columbia, which may mean that they could also come from the area between, the Yukon. The artifact is also listed as Tinne which is the early term used to describe the Dené or Athapaskan people. This would include the Athapaskans of northern British Columbia and Alberta, the western part of the Northwest Territories, most of the Yukon and the interior of Alaska. This same arm band is in Judy Thompson's *No Little Variety of Ornament* and she states:

The decoration of ritual equipment with incised motifs strongly suggests that at least some of this ornament was more than merely decorative. Some Kutchin groups wore "special carved wood arm bands...in connection with death rites." Koyukon mourners wore "hoops of birch wood around the neck and wrists, with various patterns and figures cut on them. (Glenbow 1987: 142)

The next arm band was used in a death ritual. It is in the National Museum of Natural History Smithsonian in Washington, DC. It is listed as "Tinne, Chilkat R. Alaska" which makes this a Southern Tutchone artifact. The museum notes identify the purpose as "Bone mourning Armlets". As you can see in figure # 256 it is decorated in the typical Athapaskan geometric style and has the hide thongs at the ends. This style of zigzag pattern is also common on other objects, for example on the shaman's pendants in figure # 261.



Figure # 256, Tinne death mourning armllets, 16307, NMNH.

The next arm band is said to be a shaman's bracelet. It is in the Field Museum in Chicago which have a number of these arm bands and all are listed as Chilkat Tlingit. It is most likely that they were all traded to the Chilkats from the Tutchone in the Yukon. This arm band, as many of the others, came to the Field Museum in 1902. I suspect they were collected by George Emmons. See figure # 257 for a shaman's arm band.



Figure # 257, Shaman's armband, 1902.807.78040, Field Museum.

This arm band does not appear to be made from bone but horn. It is also unique in that it has a series of holes drilled around the whole band. The other objects that sometimes have holes drilled into them are ganhooks, the ceremonial dancing paddles.

The Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka, Alaska notes for the next arm band yet another purpose. See figure # 258. The museum lists the band as Tlingit and also states:

"Collected by: Not recorded; came to museum in 1892; probably Sheldon Jackson."
And written inside the band is: "Chilkat Bracelet Used in shooting with bow and arrow 1892". Also in the notes under Materials and construction: "Bone (moose?) has been steamed and bent; fastened with thong through a pair plus one at the ends of the circlet." Under the notes Use: "to protect the upper arm when shooting with bow and arrows."



Figure # 258, Chilkat armband, I.A. 106, SJM.

While this last reason may be possible it seems to be the least valid, as I do not understand how the bands would protect the upper arms. To summarize, the speculation on the use of the bands ranges from the practical to the ritual:

To hold the mitt strings in place,
To protect the arms while shooting,
Used during a death ritual,
Part of a shaman's regalia, and
As decoration.

The bands were very finely engraved which illustrates that the Yukon First Nations mastered this art well. The workmanship of these bands, as well as the power they possessed, made them a valued trade item for the coastal Tlingits. As you may have noticed, none of the examples I have shown were in fact collected from the interior with the exception of one armband I will discuss later in this section. The south-central Yukon First Nations had no direct trade with the non-Native trading companies on the coast. That is with the exception of the brief Hudson Bay Company's Fort Selkirk trading post that started in 1848 and was pillaged by the Chilkat Tlingits in 1852. As with many other south-central Yukon First Nations artifacts, by the time the south-central Yukon First Nations people had steady contact with the trading companies beyond the coastal Tlingits, they had already adopted western clothing and tools and the items that they had previously traded were no longer made.

There is a child's copper arm band that is in the Cleveland Museum of Natural History collection. There is little information about the arm band but the artifact notes state: "Child's copper bracelet. Cold hammered from native copper. Made by father, taken from her wrist and given to miner." The remaining notes state that this is a subarctic artifact that was collected in Alaska/Yukon. Its accession number is a 1988 number indicating that it arrived at the museum in 1988. The arm band has a zigzag pattern all the way around it and this pattern is a typical Athapaskan geometric motif. Because of the geometric designs I suspect that it was made well before World War Two. I have seen no geometric designs on any artifacts in my research that were made after World War Two. This might indicate that at least some early arm bands were made of copper. The armband was collected in the Alaska/Yukon

border area and may have been in an area where there was a source of copper. These areas would be the Copper River in Alaska and the White River in the Yukon. Because of the mountain ranges I suspect there was a lot more movement across the border in the White River area than the Copper River area, so I think that this bracelet comes from the former. This would make it a Northern Tutchone or Upper Tanana arm band. See figure # 259 for my drawing of the arm band.

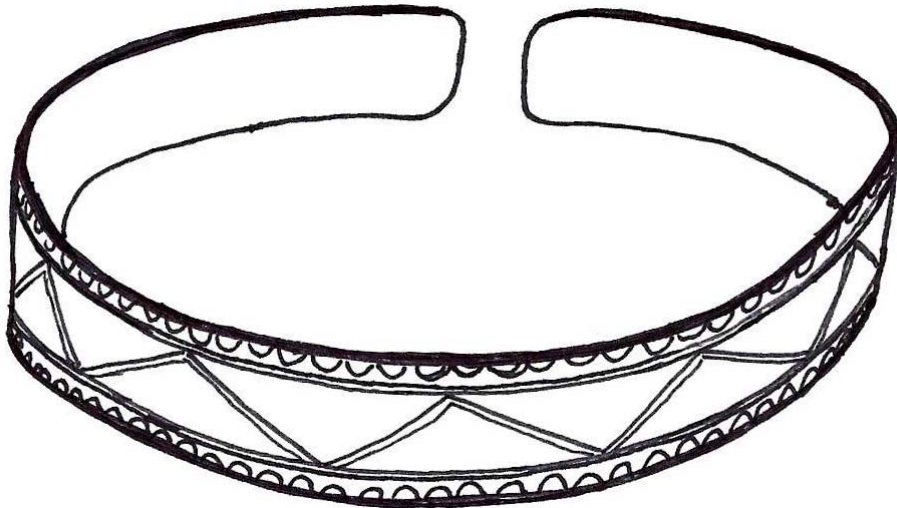


Figure # 259, Athapaskan copper armband. 1988-79; 12979. The Cleveland Museum of Natural History.

Wrist bands were made of metal as well. In the following photograph in figure # 260 is a series of brass Tahltan wrist bands. They were collected by George Emmons in 1906 and are in the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington DC. Note that they also have geometric designs but are thinner than the above copper arm band.



Figure # 260, Tahltan brass wrist bands. 010971.001 NMAI.

I do not know if there was any special function of the wrist bands and wonder if they were simply used as jewellery. This also begs the question: do the metal bands have the same status as the bone arm bands? The copper band that was worn by the girl in figure # 259 was quickly given away. This suggests a lower status of that copper arm band unless perhaps the father was wishing to impress the miner by his generosity.

Shaman items: pendants

As with the arm bands many of the pendants in museum collections were traded from the interior of the Yukon to the Tlingits and then traded on to collectors, finally ending up in various museums. The exception are those pendants that were obtained through archeological

digs. The following pendants in the Canadian Museum of Civilization were obtained by Richard Morlan near the trading post of Dalton Post in 1977 which is in Southern Tutchone territory. See figure # 261 for a group of pendants that Morlan collected.



Figure # 261. Pendants from JaVg-2 series; CMC.

The museum notes state that these were probably part of a shaman's neck ring. The notes also state: "Restriction: Potential or confirmed grave good or associated burial area artifact." It may be that these pendants were buried with the shaman after his death and later excavated by Morlan.

Because the pendants were intended to be used by shamans, it would be expected that the designs have meaning. In Thompson's *No Little Variety of Ornament* she writes of the Tutchone pendants:

Perhaps the clearest indication of a spiritual symbolism inherent in some forms of incised decoration is its presence on shamans' necklace pendants from the northern interior British Columbia. On the northern Northwest Coast, elaborate and complex pendants in various animal forms embodied "the spirit power of the shaman's zoomorphic assistants." Presumably, neighboring Athapaskan examples served a similar function. The Athapaskan pendants, while relatively simple in both form and decoration, show considerable diversity in shape and incised motif. The most common shape is lanceolate, although other forms occur, including stylized human figures. (Thompson, 1987: 142)

Note that the Southern Tutchone territory includes the western part of the southern Yukon, parts of northern British Columbia and bits of Alaska. It seems there was quite a trade in pendants and scratchers. Emmons in *The Tlingit Indians* states:

Flat pieces of caribou horn, incised with geometric figures and lines, were worn only by the shaman. These, I believe, were procured in trade from the interior people. The geometric character of ornamentation is Athapaskan in every line. (Emmons 1991: 248)

At first glance these pendants look only decorative but some may also be representative of humans or spirits. Thompson noted that these may be "shaman's

zoomorphic assistants”, but instead of animal representation I find that some look human. I commented on these in Chapter Five: Figurative Art.

In the next figures, # 262 and # 263 are more examples of shaman’s pendants. These are from the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology in Boston. They illustrate the wide range of pendant designs and the high level of artistic individuality that Athapaskan artists exercised.



Figure # 262. Yukon Athapaskan Shaman’s pendants. Left to right: 69-30-10/2018, 69-30-10/2011, 69-30-10/2012. Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology.

These were once all part of a shaman’s neck ring. All the pendants in figures # 262 and 263 were collected by Capt. Edward Gustavus Fast between 1867 and 1868. They were all sold to the Peabody Museum in 1896. The museum notes make several cultural identifications; Subarctic, Nahani, Eskimo, Athapaskan, Tlingit and are listed as coming from: United States, Canada? Northwestern (?) The two on the right of figure # 262 are listed as coming from the Yukon Valley United States. Considering the Tutchone-Tlingit trade routes I would say that these pendants were made in the Yukon River valley by the Tutchone and traded to the Sitka Tlingits via the middlemen Chilkat Tlingits. The two figures on the right in figure # 262 look very much like they are based on the human form. Is the “V” motif on 69-30-10/2011 representing the deep “V” pattern of the breastband of the hide tunics of the time? If so, this may be a person. The last figure on the right also looks like a head and the shoulders of a person. While these two seem to be stylized human figures the rest do not look human at all. See figure # 263 below.



Figure # 263. Yukon Athapaskan Shaman's pendants. 69-30-10/2017, 69-30-10/2016, 69-30-10/2021, 69-30-10/2022, 69-30-10/2019. Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology.

Again, many shaman pendants were traded to the coastal Tlingits from the interior. I do not think the coastal Tlingit shamans would import items that did not have a deep spiritual meaning. Since these pendants were intended for the Tlingit shamans I wonder if they were created by Athapaskan shamans. Because of the importance of the class system the pendants would have been created by a person of the same status. They could also have been made by a crafts person of high status. There is a wide range of these designs and I wonder if there was a secret pendant language incorporated for shaman use. Were these pendants ordered? Did the maker of the pendants explain what they meant to the Tlingit traders and shamans? When I questioned Alaskan Tlingits about their past practice of importing shaman's pendants they explained the situation to me in the following manner: The pendant is simply a transceiver between the shaman and the spirit world. An Athapaskan makes the pendant and trades it to a Tlingit Shaman who is able through the pendant to have a relationship with the spirit world. This works very much the same way as buying a radio that was made in China. When you turn it on you are listening to the local radio station and not a Chinese radio station. Nevertheless there is a great deal of information that is not known and a detailed look into the trade practices of Yukon and Tlingit shamans may answer some of these questions. Some pendants may have been for people other than shamans. For example, pendants could have been imported for hunters. In this case they would be, as Judy Thompson describes, zoomorphic assistants.

Shaman items: drums

Throughout this thesis you will see many drums, but the next drum in figure # 264 is the only one that has been identified with some certainty as belonging to a shaman and based on what is written by E.J. Glave. It may have held a lot of power. The drum in the Manitoba Museum in figure # 178 on page 194 is listed as used for dances and medicine making and therefore was not solely used for shaman rituals. This makes me wonder whether some drums were used only by shamans, such as the one in figure # 264, and others for various functions by different people, including shamans, such as the Manitoba Museum drum. The practice required that the shaman was buried with all his/her shamanist tools which would include drums. Therefore, the Manitoba Museum drum may not have been owned by a shaman, as it

was collected by the Stringers. I have not heard of them collecting from graves. The Manitoba drum is most likely a combination drum, such as described by McKennan, where he reports that the Upper Tanana shamans did not all use special drums:

I did not see a drum used in connection with shamanism, although after the séance one was brought out to provide music for the dance; but I was told that Follett Isaac used a drum in connection to his healings. (McKenna 1959: 152)

The image on the drum below is identified as a frog but it is not easily recognizable as such. See figure # 264 for the original drawing and also for my own drawing of the drum. While the image has a face that may look like a frog it seems to have a tail as well as teeth. Most of the time when frogs are depicted they do not have teeth. See figure # 222 on page 224 of the Tahltan cartridge belt with the frog showing teeth. The description of a drum with a painted design is found in E.J. Glave's story: "Our Alaskan Expedition: Exploration of the 1891-05 unknown Alsek River Region" for Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper. The description reads:

The drum of the village medicine-man was hanging in his hut, being a wooden frame two feet in diameter, and covered with shaved bearskin, which was covered with grotesque designs. The owner of this instrument was away, and perhaps had left it as his representative in order to keep the little settlement free from evil spirits, a power which is always credited to those worthies.

The image on the drum may also represent another spiritual helper of the shaman. The Elders I spoke to were unsure if the frog-like animal was indeed a frog. Some thought it could be another animal but did not know what type. I suspect that the frog is a spiritual helper rather than a clan crest. The Southern Tutchone "overlaid" the Wolf and Crow clan system over the Tlingit crest system and the Tlingit Frog clan is thought of as part of the Southern Tutchone Crow moiety. This design is not in the style of the Chilkat Tlingit clan crest frogs from Klukwan, which is close to the area where the drum was recorded. See the Chilkat Tlingit frogs in figure # 265. There is a more complex frog design on a dance bib that may be Inland Tlingit or Tagish, again a clan crest. See figure # 266. While the Inland Tlingit/Tagish frog is one of the more complex I have seen, it still is easily identifiable as a frog. If the image is a frog, then it must be rendered in the highly individual Southern Tutchone art style. Also, in all four legs are faces. There is a pair of almost leaf like parts coming off the tail. These 'leaves' are in a similar style as the design in figure # 226 on page 226. There are also three lines coming off the edges of the drum toward the front legs. Are these claws? Or are they representing the wave of water? I cannot help but notice that this frog has a lot of the same traits as the earlier lizard type animals I examined in the previous chapter, in figures # 197 on page 207 and # 198 on page 208.

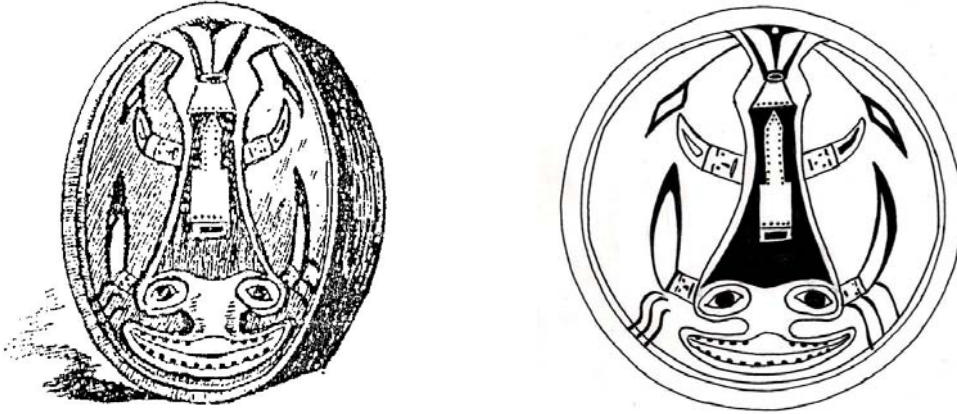


Figure # 264, shaman's Frog drum. Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper.

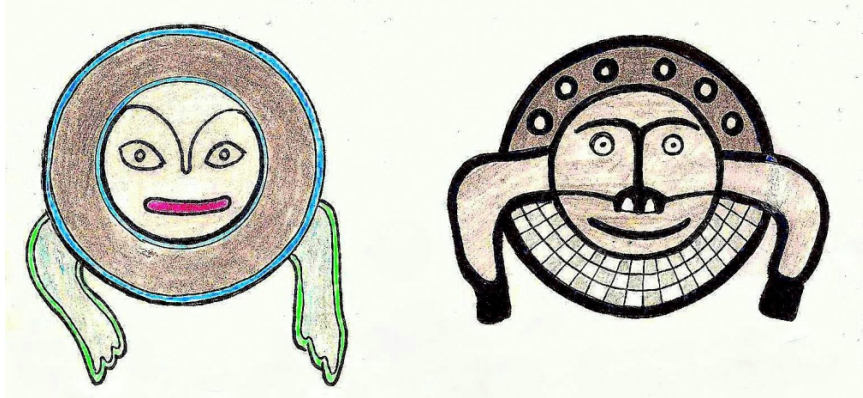


Figure # 265 Chilkat Tlingit frogs. UvK drawings.



Figure # 266, Inland Tlingit/Tagish frog image. VI-J-99 CMC. UvK drawing.

In figure # 267 is another image on a drum, a moon-like motif painted in red. This drum is on display in the MacBride Museum. This drum is made of beaver hide. The design is simple and yet strong. Because the image looks like a moon, I think it may have been a shaman's drum. I am basing this on what Honigmann writes in *The Kaska Indians*:

Dease River Kaska. Averaging about 15 to 16 inches in diameter, the tambourine drum of semi-tanned moose hide furnished the chief musical instrument of the

Kistagotena. Only shamans decorated these objects with symbols representing the sky, moon, and stars. (Honigmann 1964: 73)

Also what McKennan writes in *The Upper Tanana Indians*:

The neophyte secures his *diz'yin* in a dream. Although this may be represented by some natural phenomenon such as the sun or the moon, it is usually associated with an animal. (McKenna 1959: 150)

McKenna has the foot note stating:

Compared with the Han: "Some medicine men employ the sun, moon, or stars in their songs instead of an animal, while others call upon the trees, brush, or any convenient object" (Schmitter, 1910: 18) (McKenna 1959: 150)

The neophyte or shaman apprentice is securing his *diz'yin* which is equivalent to the southern Yukon's *yek*. Since the drum appears to have a moon design painted on it and based on the above foot note by McKenna, it can be argued that this is a shaman's drum. The drum is listed as *Kutchin* (*Gwich'in*) in origin and was donated by Frank Sidney. There is a man named Frank Sidney who is from Teslin, which makes me doubt that this is a *Gwich'in* drum, but rather Inland Tlingit.



Figure # 267, "Moon" drum, MacBride Museum.

Shaman items: dolls

Many people may not think of dolls as shamans' tools or even art, but some of the dolls made in the early Yukon and surrounding regions have been more than just children's toys. While there has been little research into early First Nations dolls in Canada, there has been a lot of interest in Alaska. In the book *Not Just a Pretty Face: Dolls and Human Figurines in Alaska Native Cultures*, which was published by the University of Alaska Press in Fairbanks, an overview is given of doll use in Alaska. Most of the descriptions in the book do not involve the Yukon Athapaskans and Inland Tlingit, but there is much information on Alaskan Athapaskans and the coastal Tlingit.

In *Not Just a Pretty Face: Dolls and Human Figurines in Alaska Native Cultures* human figurines and dolls are divided into three categories. On page 8 Angela J. Linn and Molly C. Lee suggest the following:

...Alaska Native groups used human figurines in three general ways: (1) miniatures were attached to the body or clothing of children and adults as charms or amulets, (2) larger figurines were made either for use in more formalized ritual and ceremony, or (3) children's playthings. (Lee 2006: 8)

Due to similar lifestyles, Yukon First Nations would have had a similar approach to doll beliefs and use. I have already discussed amulets or charms in the previous chapter (see figure # 196 on page 207) which would fall into the first section of Lee's categories. In a step beyond the amulets, in terms of human figures, are the shaman dolls. An example of what may have been a shaman's doll is in the University of Alaska Museum North on Fairbanks, Alaska. See figure # 268.



Figure # 268. Gwich'in shaman's doll. UA 78-15-1A, UAF Museum of the North.

The museum staff noted that this doll came from Canada and was made in the late 19th century. The doll has a late 19th century Canadian coin as part of its accessories. As you can see in the photograph there are clock parts, including springs and flywheels, and a little doll for the doll itself. We believed there was a 'force' in everything, so having something that had extra power, such as the parts of a tool that could indicate the minutes and hour of a day, may have been desirable for a shaman. Those parts then became a 'transceiver' for the shaman. Another example of the use of watch or clock parts can be seen in Julie Cruikshank's *Reading Voices* on page 100. The photograph shows a neck ring with various attached objects including buttons and clock springs. The curator of University of Alaska Museum of the North told me that when Elders saw the doll it gave them an uneasy feeling. The Elders felt that this was a shaman's doll. Going along with the idea that this is a

shaman's doll and that dolls may be more than toys, read the following statement in *Not Just a Pretty Face: Dolls and Human Figurines in Alaska Native Cultures*:

In addition to the Deg Hit'an, several other Athabascan groups also used human figurines in their rituals. Among the Tanaina Athabascans, for instance, the so-called "devil doll" was employed as a means of removing the evil spirit from an afflicted person. Devil dolls were carved by shamans and were sometimes clothed in complete suits of caribou skin. (Lee 2006: 18)

In the photograph accompanying the text is a Tanaina doll that is suggested to be a devil doll. The doll is in the Peter the Great Museum in St. Petersburg in Russia. That doll looks close to the following dolls that I will be presenting in this section. While I don't claim that we are here dealing with devil dolls, there may have been some dolls made in the Yukon that were used for rituals. To illustrate the importance that dolls held for Yukon First Nations people, the next photograph is of Chief Isaac of Moosehide taken in Dawson City. This photograph is shown in figure # 92 on page 120 and here again in figure # 269 below. The doll appears to have the traditional First Nations hide trouser-boot combination pants but is also wearing a western style jacket. It is obvious to me that the doll held some degree of importance.



Figure # 269. Chief Isaac with doll. 984.32.1.16 DCM&HS.

Many dolls were of course made for children and some were made to sell to tourists. This last category was a natural follow through from the trade practices with the coastal

Tlingits, as early dolls were traded from the Athapaskan to the coastal Tlingits. In *Not Just a Pretty Face* it states:

Among the northern Tlingit of Dry Bay and Yakutat, mothers made play dolls for their daughters, or obtained them already made from the interior. The dolls had round stone heads, made either of beach stone (de Laguna 1960:107) or from a powdery white marble obtained from the Interior, purportedly from a mountain near the headwaters of the Alsek River in Canada. (Lee 2006: 12-13)

Dolls are no longer made to be traded with the Tlingits but sold to tourists. See two modern examples in figure # 272.

The following dolls are in the Canadian Museum of Civilization collection. No collection date is listed. They were collected by Clement Lewis which would suggest around 1912. The place was likely Teslin where he was collecting the other Inland Tlingit artifacts. In figure # 270 is two examples of Inland Tlingit dolls. The style of VI-J-38 suggests a reflection of the early style dress worn by the Teslin people, as well as all early Yukon First Nations people, with the “V” cut breastband and bottom of the coat. The decoration on the jacket is in the embroidery method, in the same manner that clothing was decorated before the use of trade beads. Note that this doll is missing its headdress and bow & arrow. These items were lost from an exhibition in 1988. Even though these two dolls were collected at the same time, the beadwork and coat style on VI-J-39 shows an evolution in styles. The decoration on the coat is now beaded and the breastband and bottom are square cut, something that became common after trading posts were established in the Yukon. The hide in VI-J-39 appears to look newer and less worn than in VI-J-38, maybe indicating that the creation dates of the two dolls are different. On the Canadian Museum of Civilization information card of VI-J-39, it was originally listed as “Pelly Indian Doll”. This may be so, but being collected from Teslin and with an Inland Tlingit bead style, I doubt it is from Pelly, which is presently Kaska territory and in the past was also Northern Tutchone territory. It is however possible that an Inland Tlingit spent time in the Pelly area and created these dolls there.



Figure # 270 Inland Tlingit Doll. VI-J-38, CMC. Inland Tlingit Doll. VI-J-39, CMC

In figure # 271 is shown more examples of early Yukon First Nation dolls. The doll on the left is from the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka, Alaska. The doll on the right is from the Glenbow Museum. The doll from the Sheldon Jackson Museum is generally the same in design but appears older than the Inland Tlingit doll in figure # 270, VI-J-38. The museum notes state that this doll is Athapaskan but there is no record of when the doll was made, who obtained it and from where. The doll has the same style older tunic common in the interior, but unlike the doll above, has also the older type trousers that had the moccasins attached and the geometric designs coming down the front of the trouser. This is obviously a doll that has been traded from the interior to the coastal Tlingits sometime in the past. The other doll in figure # 271 on the right is more recent as it was collected in 1966. It was obtained by the museum in 1992. While there is little information on this doll I decided to include it as it is made from gopher (ground squirrel) skins. Gopher skins were often used in the past and after World War Two their use quickly reduced. The museum notes state that the doll was collected from Pelly Crossing, which would make this most likely a Northern Tutchone doll, although some Mountain Dene families live there. This doll was collected at the same time as another doll, but the notes do not state who made them.



Figure # 271. Early Athapaskan dolls; Left: Athapaskan doll from collection of Sheldon Jackson Museum IV.X.25ab. SJM. Right: Tutchone doll from Pelly Crossing, Yukon. AC 549, Glenbow Museum.

More recent dolls can be seen in figure # 272. These dolls were made in 2006 by Southern Tutchone Elder Annie Smith from Whitehorse. Mrs. Annie Smith was making dolls and selling them to tourists in Carcross in 1939 at the age of 14. The dolls shown here are in the same style as she made them almost 70 years ago. These dolls have the same appearance as the earlier made dolls that are in the Canadian Museum of Civilization collection in figure # 270. There are however detail differences. Mrs. Annie Smith uses a more Tutchone style beading to decorate the dolls and also uses slightly different cuts for the breastbands and bottom of the coat. There are many dolls in museum collections which indicate that they were quite common. It suggests their importance in early Yukon First Nations culture.



Figure # 272. Southern Tutchone dolls made by Annie Smith. Ukjese van Kampen collection.

Shaman items: magic war stones

These magic war stones are in the collection of the National Museum of Natural History Smithsonian in Washington DC. I have only seen one example of a set of stones like this with holes and hide bindings attached to them. The other magic stones were loose without any form of attachment. I would suspect that they were carried in a small hide bag. This set is attached to each other by porcupine wrapped hide. There was no description other than that the stones came from around Eagle, Alaska on the Yukon River. This would make them Han. See figure # 273.



Figure # 273. Han 'Magic War Stones'. 255333, NMNH.

These stone were part of the shaman's tool kit and used during times of war.

Shaman items: masks

There are limited written sources about mask use by Yukon shamans. I am asking the reader to keep this in mind. When I asked carvers and Elders about shaman mask use, I was mostly told that they didn't know. As mentioned earlier, it is a First Nations trait to withhold information when this knowledge has not been gained first hand. Furthermore, it is safe to say that shaman knowledge was for the bigger part secretive and not to be shared with the "common" members of the group. I also have no masks to show you in this section. In all my research trips to over 40 museums in North America and Europe I have not seen a single Yukon First Nations mask that was carved before 1986. Despite the lack of evidence I decided to add this section because, as I will try to explain later, we know that shamans did use masks. This is in fact a good thing as the items used by shamans were all buried with the person and this custom does not seem to have been tinkered with. Although I do believe that some Yukon First Nations masks and other objects have ended up in private collections in the United States and elsewhere. This is because of the high rate of grave robbing that occurred with the building of the Alaska Highway and afterward.

In Yukon First Nations spirituality, animals occupy an animal spirit world while people occupy this human world. Animals and people, mostly with or because of the animals, can transform to each other's spiritual world. There are many stories of animals becoming human and taking spouses, or of animals taking humans to their world and the human changing into an animal. With the help of a shaman or a 'doctor', the transformed human could be returned to human form. Many of the people who got transformed were in the wrong place at the wrong time. It was then the shaman's job to make a direct connection to the animal spirit world. In the myth time the mixing of these two worlds was even more pronounced. This is what Catherine McClellan writes about the two worlds in *My Old People Say*:

What is really important is that myth time was of a slightly different order than the human present, for it was a time marked by the fact that all the animals often looked, talked, and behaved as men. In fact, the line between the humans and non-humans of myth time becomes so blurred that it is hard to know how best to conceive of many of the early inhabitants of the world. In the end, however, those beings that are now animals seem to have pulled on their masks or skins permanently to assume the external appearances they have today. (McClellan 2001: 71)

These transformations continued to occur even after the Myth Time that McClellan writes about. Transformations happened after the coming of the white man and I know of stories occurring after the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898. One man, a distant relative of mine took the form of a moose and as a result was shot. In another case a man turned himself into a Raven in order to escape being hanged by the police. This is a well known story among Tutchone Elders. McClellan continues:

In myth time, people might look either like an animal species we know today or like the humans we know today, depending on whether or not they wore animal clothes and masks. (McClellan 2001: 325)

From this, we can guess that the shaman used masks in order to become the animal he was trying to reach and to call on those animal spirits for help. In my research I have only come across a couple of references to masks and they mainly had shaman connections. A reference to Southern Tutchone masks and shamans is made in *My Old People Say*:

(...) My Aishihik data suggest that the use of rattles and masks and the cutting of tongues were pretty well restricted to those bands closest to the coastal Tlingit. (McClellan 2001: 530)

McClellan is suggesting that only the most southernmost Southern Tutchone, Tagish and Inland Tlingit shamans used masks. I do not feel this is correct since the Northern Tutchone, Kaska and Han also used masks and therefore there is no reason why shamans from those areas would not have used masks in their practice. You can see examples in Chapter Eight- Art of the Potlatch and Death.

Later in *My Old People Say* McClellan writes:

Every Yukon shaman also had various animal skins, bones or other body parts, rattles and other objects to symbolize each one of his helping spirits. Present evidence suggests that only a few shamans who had close coastal ties used actual masks to represent their yek. (McClellan 2001: 538)

Yek refers to the animal spiritual guide of the shaman. As we can see, the shaman's use of masks made a direct link to the animal spiritual world. In Emmons' *the Tlingit Indians*, it is written:

The mask, *klah-kate*, *klo-ket*, was the most important part of the shaman's outfit. It alone represented the particular spirit in feature, but necessary with in were the skin wrist robe, the bone necklace, the carved neck charm, and the spirit rattle. Numerous other articles of dress as well as implements were used as accessories, but were less important. Every shaman had four masks representing the four spirits he controlled, but the most powerful shamans processed eight [spirits and eight masks]. (Emmons 1991: 377).

While the above description is from the coastal Tlingit there are a lot of similarities to Yukon First Nations. For example, in the shaman's outfits are examples of Yukon bone necklaces and carved neck charms. The rattles however were rare. Also similar is the relationship with the numbers four and eight. There is little to no description of what the masks looked like. Some Kaska masks were made of bark. There is also an Upper Tanana story that involves a man who wears a hide mask. This would indicate that hide masks were used by the Upper Tanana. Since hide masks were used by sub-arctic people outside the Yukon I see no reason why Yukon First Nations did not use hide masks. Large wooden masks like the coastal Tlingit used would be difficult to transport in the Yukon semi-nomadic society. Everything had to be light and transportable. Bark or hide would therefore be the choice of material. Not having wooden masks and the lack of other masks to examine may have led researchers to conclude that other than those closest to the coast, there was no Yukon First Nations mask tradition. Another reason for the lack of Yukon shaman masks was the burial tradition of putting the masks and other shaman items with the body of the shaman. The corpse of the shaman was either put on a platform, under logs, or in a grave house in a prominent location far from camp. Those that were close to the Alaska Highway and other roads were discovered and robbed. Northern Tutchone Elder Gary Sam told me that all the gravehouses that had masks placed in them and that he saw as a youth, later vanished, stolen by tourists. This included the more recent wooden masks made by people with more permanent life styles in settlements.

In summary, Shaman's masks were made of either hide or bark but after people began settling in permanent villages, people began to use wood to make masks. The masks were

used as a shaman's tool to connect with the spirit and animal worlds. All these masks have been lost in time. When the shaman passed away his shamanistic tools were left with the body on grave platforms or later in gravehouses. I have never seen a photograph, drawing or actual Yukon shaman's mask, therefore their existence is inferred from early records and the existence of neighboring shaman masks.

Chapter Eight-Art of the Potlatch and Death covers masks used in potlatches and you will show photographs and drawings of early Yukon First Nations (non-shaman) masks.

Story related art-Kitty Smith's carvings

The following carvings are not linked to rituals or shamanism use themselves but refer to stories from the time when people and animals had powers, could talk, transform into human or animal form and Crow was still in our world. While many of the art examples throughout this thesis have connections with stories, I decided to include in this section Kitty Smith's work as an example of art that was carved to illustrate Yukon First Nations stories. Kitty Smith was a Tagish storyteller and carver. Her carvings are the most numerous by any Yukon First Nations artist from the period before and around World War Two.

Kitty Smith's carvings are larger than in earlier times would have been done. They are on average about one foot higher. I believe the increase of size reflects the transition from a semi-nomadic to a more settled lifestyle. The carvings are all based on Tagish stories. Kitty's son, Johnny Smith, stated that Kitty carved stories to target the tourism market and as a result allowed her to carve larger works of art. Kitty Smith did a lot of carving in the 1940s and 1950s and we are lucky that Julie Cruikshank worked with her, recording her stories. In *Life Lived Like a Story* Cruikshank records the start of Kitty's carving career:

One time we're in Wheaton [River]. Ida saw that popular tree. "Look, Mamma!" I think about it all night. Next day, I went to get it. That's the time I carve those things, poplar. My own daddy made silver [jewelry]. Talk about fancy job! That's why I guess I carve me. I did that when we were living at Robinson. (Cruikshank 1990: 248)

That was in the 1930s and 1940s. Kitty was born in the 1890s in a fish camp near the mouth of the Alsek River to a coastal Tlingit father and Tagish mother. Her style is quite recognizable, which helps, because not all her work was credited to her. Her works were originally listed as "Made by Mackenzie Indians" at the MacBride Museum. I discussed Kitty Smith's carvings with well known Yukon artist Jim Robb and he stated that he recognized her carvings and brought her family into the Macbride Museum to confirm that Kitty Smith was indeed the carver. It seems there was the idea that a woman should not have done a carving. I suspect that this idea came from white people as I have never heard of any such restrictions for women in our culture. As a result Kitty Smith did not openly identify herself as the carver of these art works. See figure # 274 for an example of her work.

This work is in the MacBride Museum collection. This carving represents the story of *Àjana Zhaya*. Julie Cruikshank describes the story in *Reading Voices*:

Mrs. Smith herself started carving after she and her husband were living near the Wheaton River. This carving, which is 33 cm high, is made from poplar, and Mrs. Smith calls it *Àjana Zhaya*, "Got Lost." When she talks about the carving, she tells Crow stories-particularly stories in which Crow makes elaborate promises and then disappears. One of the stories begins like this:

*That big tree, popular tree, rotten inside. Crow cleans inside. He clean him.
"I'm going to fix some of you people yet."
"Ah," they say. "Always he talk too smart, that man."
Gone. He got lost!*

The carving itself also got lost for many years, but is now in the McBride Museum, Whitehorse, Yukon. (Cruikshank 1991: 56, 57.)



Figure # 274, Àjana Zhaya carved by Kitty Smith. MacBride Museum, 73.1.106c.

Based on this story it appears that this is a carving of Crow while he is in his human form, which he turns to when desired or required. He is wearing an earring. He may have had an earring on his other ear, as there is a hole for it. It also appears as if Àjana Zhaya has no clothes on. This contrasts with the carving of Dukt'outl in figure # 276 where he is obviously wearing traditional style Yukon clothing. A possible explanation is that when Crow transforms into human form he would be naked, just like all animals that transform into human form. Likewise, whenever a person is transformed into an animal, all his or her clothes fall off.

In the next carving we can see Crow but in bird form. This piece is in the Klukshu Museum and represents a whale or possibly a giant fish with Crow on, or more likely just emerging from, the whale's back. This is from the story of Crow going inside the whale and then eats the whale's fat from the inside until he leaves through the whale's blowhole. In the interior version Crow gets inside the giant fish and then eats until he makes a hole through the giant fish and emerges from the fish that way.



Figure # 275, Kitty Smith carving. Klukshu Museum.

In *The Social Life of Stories* there is a narrative of the story by Kitty Smith:

Crow sees that whale, going like that... "Phewww, phewww" [imitating the whale alternately diving and blowing]. Way out there, eh? And he parked his boat and he looked at him.

"Gee," he said, "I wish I could be inside...I bet there's lots of fat in there."

Crow, he just loved fat. He wanted to eat fat, fat, fat all the time. So he said. "I know. When he goes...Pheww...I'll just jump in there. He'll suck me in."

Then he got inside his packsack, and he got lots of little wood. He breaks in all up and he put it inside his packsack. Filled it all up with wood-pitch wood, everything. Then he waits for it up there.

That whale came up just like that! Just as soon as that whale opened [his blowhole], he jumped inside! He just jumped inside that whale.

He stayed inside that whale, ate all the fat inside.

It's just like a big house!

Finally, he made a fire inside. Might as well kill it now, after I eat all the fat!

The story goes on to recount how Crow maneuvered the whale to shore and escaped through the hole in its back after people discovered the carcass and cut it open. He rested in comfort while they cut up the whale and began the laborious work of rendering grease from the carcass. He then tricked them into fleeing so that he ended up in possession of all the processed grease. (Cruikshank 1998: 109-110)

This story is a coastal version involving a whale but there are also a number of interior versions, such as Tommy McGinty's *Inside a suckerfish*. This story was published in Dominique Legros' *Story of Crow*. Another story, Jessie Jonathan's *The Crow and the Whale Fish*, was published in the Yukon native Language Centre's *Kwäday Kwändiir*. In these interior stories Crow is in fact inside a giant fish. Of course there are no whales in the interior but basically the stories are the same, most likely an interior adoption of the coastal version. This work is very refined and has the traditional "repeating dot" motif that shows up in other examples of her work and throughout Yukon First Nations art. On the base of the carving is a repeating dot motif in the outline of what is obviously a fish. This makes me question, is the carving of a whale as it would be on the coast or is it a giant fish from the interior? Kitty Smith tells the coastal version of the story even though she is living in the interior. This would confirm that the carving is of a whale but she also engraved fish on the base. Does she do this to also represent the interior version of the story?

The following Kitty Smith carving is also at the MacBride Museum and is Dukt'outl, also known as Little Blackbird or Black Star. See figure # 276. Cruikshank has the story of Dukt'outl in *The Social Life of Stories*, again as told by Kitty's daughter May:

The orphan Dukt'ootl', May says, was raised by an uncle but was belittled because of his low status. When a monster sea lion began to terrorize people, each adult male tried unsuccessfully to destroy him, but Dukt'ootl' was always dismissively left behind to tend fires. He trained secretly, becoming stronger and stronger. Finally Dukt'ootl' (sometimes called "Little Blackbird" because he was covered with soot from tending the fires of others) managed to destroy the behemoth and save camp. (Cruikshank 1998: 110)

In this carving Dukt'ootl' has either a hat or hair that is represented by moose teeth. If it is a hat, these may represent the feathers sticking out of his hat. They could also be feathers sticking out of his hair. It was common for First Nations people to wear hats that had plummets of woodpecker feathers stuck in them. Note the repeating dots on the figure. These were often used as part of the early Yukon First Nations geometric designs on tools and other items. In this case they appear to make up the patterns in Dukt'ootl's clothing, the common 'V' shaped breastband in the shirt and the common embroidered patterns that went down the front of the trouser.



Figure # 276, Dukt'outl carving by Kitty Smith. MacBride Museum, 73.1.106a.

I will make some additional comments about Kitty Smith's art work. Her work is simple and at the same time refined and meaningful. A great thing about Kitty Smith's carvings is that there is a definite link between the strong Yukon First Nations oral tradition and visual culture. Cruikshank echoes this in her statement in *The Social Life of Stories*:

When I worked during the 1980s with Athapaskan and inland Tlingit elders on a project to develop high school curriculum materials for Yukon schools, two themes emerged repeatedly. First, elders spoke about the continuing importance of *words*, insisting that people still make use of long standing narrative traditions to think about social life. (...) Second, they pointed to the continuing importance of *things*-the visible, material heritage that is steadily vanishing over time-the traps, the snare, the many strategies people used to provide a life based on hunting, fishing, and trapping. They spoke about ceremonial clothing, the decorated tools, the small works of art that were part of everyday life. (Cruikshank 1998: 103.)

Kitty Smith was an artist that provided a link between the oral cultural past and present modern day society.

Kitty has also made carvings of people while in an animal state, for example two bears. The two bears represent the story of Kaats' being taken by the Bear Woman and Kaats' abandoning his wife and child. Kaats' becomes a member of the Bear people. Cruikshank has the story of Kaats' in her book *The Social Life of Stories* as described by Kitty's daughter May Smith Hume:

The narrative traces the journey of Kaats', who accidentally stumbles into Bear Woman's world. She takes him to a separate dimension of reality, where she puts his former life behind him and is permanently transformed into a bear and absorbed into bear society. Broadly, the story depicts the ambivalent relations between bears and humans, a theme common to circumpolar subarctic narratives, and how animals and humans, with their conflicting and overlapping powers, share the world. (Cruikshank Cruikshank 1998: 108)

There are a number of other versions of this story. In Jessie Joe's, *The Bear Story*, published in the Yukon native Language Centre's, *Kwäday Kwändür* it is a young girl who is taken by a bear. In David Dick's story, *The Woman Who Lived With the Grizzly Bear*, published in the Kaska tribal Council's *Dene Gudeji*, it is again a female who meets a man. She goes with him and ends up in the bear's world. The image in figure # 277 is of a human who has been transformed into a bear.



Figure # 277, Kitty Smith Kaats' bear carving. 73.1.106b, MacBride Museum.

Closing comments

This chapter gives a brief overview of some of the items that were used in rituals by shamans and other members of the community and the art that was created to depict a story. There are other ritual artifacts that I have examined during my research but did not include in this chapter since I mainly focused on the most common ritual artifacts. As for the shaman's art, some examples are common, such as the bone armbands and they were used by other people as well. Out of seven, the bone armband in figure # 252 is the only one identified as having belonged to a shaman's. Reason for discussing all the armbands together is to keep unity in the chapters. There is also a lack of other shaman artefact, such as the drums and masks. This is partly due to the secrecy around these objects and the practice of burying objects with the shaman after he died. Some of these shaman examples were stolen from the shaman's grave. Some of the articles would have been traded, either directly from the shaman or through another person. There have been no shaman artifacts made in the Yukon for at least the last fifty years, because the last Yukon shamans passed away in the 1950s and 1960s.

I have discussed some of story related art as I will in the next and later chapters. There must have been many other examples of story and history related art but unfortunately most of these artefacts and/or the possible relation to stories are lost. Lack of commonality (versus individuality) in representing art by the Yukon First Nations artists also plays a role.