

## THE GUARDIAN SPIRIT COMPLEX

### THE QUEST

Both boys and girls were sent on guardian spirit quests, though the latter were in the minority. The quest was neglected completely by only a small percentage of boys, though success eventually came to perhaps but half of those keeping vigils. There were no class restrictions; indeed, slaves, orphans and the children of poor families were more successful than others.<sup>1</sup> "They tried harder." Possession of a strong spirit, however, did not automatically elevate one in the social scale. Accomplishments, particularly the accumulation of wealth, were the criteria, though credit might be given to the spirit for making such achievements possible.

For both boys and girls the period of vision seeking began at about ten years of age. It ended abruptly for the latter with the appearance of the first menses. Puberty theoretically marked the termination for boys likewise, but since the coming of puberty was less definitely indicated, the cessation of quests was similarly indefinite. Under no circumstances, however, might a boy seek a vision after marriage, which usually followed shortly after puberty. Virginity, on the other hand, does not seem to have been a requisite for a successful spirit search. Dr. Boas gives an account of the last minute efforts before marriage of Charles Cultee's grandfather to obtain a tutelary, though he already possessed three.<sup>2</sup>

The child was sent by an old man or woman, often a relative, who gave instructions and encouragement. In Emma Luscier's memory each search was limited to a single night, but repeated often, sometimes several nights in succession. Mrs. Bertrand, however, stated that the average duration was three to five nights, which corresponds with Dr. Boas' data. The one night vigil probably was a final remnant of the longer ventures of earlier times. The vision seeker embarked upon his quest early in the evening, always going alone. His destination had been specified; it was usually a body of water or a point on the beach. In the latter case the outgoing trip was to be made largely by swimming, stopping at intervals to dive, each time in sequences of five, accompanied by shouting. This was to be repeated at the destination but the return trip could be made by land. A point farther distant was named for each successive venture. If a child returned early with his hair dry ("Some children were afraid of the water") ashes were thrown on him and he was told to "go back and wash," that is, resume the quest and carry out the original instructions. The activities were not always limited to diving; sometimes rolling boulders or piling them up was included. The seeker carried a stick with identifying marks which had been given him with instructions to leave it at the destination so that his presence there might later be ascertained. The stick was deposited after diving, not before. Or perhaps he was told to bring back some object or plant only to be found near the specified goal.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Boas, *Chinook Texts*, pp. 220-22.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *idem*, p. 214 f.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

Children were sent on vision quests at any time during the year, but at no time were they allowed to wear clothing or to eat food while absent. Emma Luscier declared that children were sometimes forced to undertake a spirit quest as a punishment for some unapproved deed, but psychologically this would be a curious procedure.

There were traditional spots for spirit-seeking though these do not appear to have been the locales of definite spirits. Mrs. Bertrand mentioned the following as common quest destinations: the top of Scarborough hill (above qwatsa'mts village), Saddle mountain (south of Astoria), the swampy regions near Ilwaco, the head of Skamokawa river and Naselle mountain.

The vision-seeker was sometimes told what sort of experience he might expect and how to react. "You may hear a voice, but don't run away. Stay and listen. Then when you start home, don't run, just walk slowly. If you pass a pool or a stream, stop and swim. Dive five times. Then if you are tired, lie down, but be sure that you are on the side of the water toward home. If you hear a voice again, don't be frightened. Stay and listen. The spirit will not cross the water; it will stay on the other side.<sup>4</sup> It will be an animal when you first see it, but it will change and look like a man. It will tell you what power you will have and what you are to do when you are grown." (Bertrand)

Emma Luscier said of her father, Sam Millet, and his quest: "When my father was very young his father died. He had only his mother to take care of him and the other three children. Two of them were younger. One day his mother said to him, 'You are old enough to go and swim now. You know what a hard time we are having. You may meet something that will help you. Then maybe you can stay in this land for a long time. You might find a good power. Now don't run away if you see anything. Stay and listen.' He went out many times. He went to Wahkiakum. He was swimming in the river thinking of what his mother had said to him. She had told him to make a fire on each side of the river when he was looking for a spirit. So he made a fire on each side. It was getting dark. Then he went to swim. He dived five times. He swam across the river. He dived five times again. Then he went to fix the fire. He walked around the fire five times [counter-clockwise]. Then he went in the water again. He dived five times again. He swam across to the other fire. He did the same thing there. Then he stayed there all night. All at once he got sleepy. He built up the fire and then lay down. It was nearly daylight. Then someone came and talked to him. 'Oh! You're here! Look! I'm here, too! I knew you were looking for me. I knew you were looking for a spirit. I know you've had a hard time. Now I'll help you. Now I'll stand you up on your land. You'll be a good hunter. It will be easy for you to kill anything that you want to. Now after a while, when you sing, you must eat a few bracken roots.'<sup>5</sup> The one that was talking looked like a man. But it was a bird, gray owl [?]. Before he left he told his name, t'sastc'nəm'tc. Then my father went home. Later he went out a few more times but he didn't get any other power."

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup>Symbolizing the snake.

Most animals, birds, inanimate objects such as rocks and water, and such natural phenomena as whirlwind, thunder and clouds served as guardian spirits. Animals and birds were by far the most common. Heavenly bodies and plants seldom or never became tutelaries, nor did fabricated objects. Specific spirits were not associated with particular abilities, with a few exceptions.<sup>6</sup> The power and talents conferred depended largely upon the nature of the vision itself. A child was expected to enter upon the vision quest without fixed spiritual or vocational objectives, but of course previous experience and personal interest played some part. A few spirits were reputed to be especially strong, including skunk ("Could he not turn away any animal, no matter how large?"), bear, cougar and thunder. Kingfisher, eagle and deer were ordinarily hunting powers, but served other functions as well.

There was no tabu against killing one's guardian animal. Indeed, those with hunting power found it easier to kill their guardian animals than others. Certain generalized favors were conferred by nearly all spirits, such as good health, wealth and long life. Emma's paternal uncle, toquna'u, advised vision seekers, "Be honest about looking for a power. This land will give you nothing and you will die young if you do not go. But if you do you will live long and be lucky."

When a child returned from a vision quest he told no one of his success or failure. However, if successful he was expected to sleep undisturbed all that day or longer. More important than the sleep, perhaps, was the continuance of the previous night's fast. Should this be broken during the day illness was sure to result.

Nor was any mention made of the quest experience for many years to come. Not until "maturity" (20 to 25 for women, 25 to 30 for men)<sup>7</sup> did the spirit return and become an active tutelary.

By far the greatest number of guardian spirits was obtained through intentional seeking. However, it was not unknown for spirits to appear unexpectedly to children while alone and away from the village.<sup>8</sup> Powers obtained in such a manner were quite as efficient as sought powers.

Spirit power was not ordinarily inherited but predilections were not unknown.<sup>9</sup> Sometimes an old man in charge of a vision seeker would send his spirit ahead for the child to find. Soon afterward he would die.<sup>10</sup>

Shamanistic power was acquired in the same fashion as any other power. A seeker embarking upon a quest could not know whether a successful vision might bring him shamanistic power or not. Nor was the identity of the spirit a determining factor. As Emma Luscier explained, "One person might get cougar power and become a great hunter; another might have the same spirit and become a great shaman."

In addition to conferring talents and bounties, a tutelary conveyed a song and a dance to the visionary to be used at the time of initiation into the guardian spirit dance (or winter dance) and at subsequent dances.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. Boas, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

<sup>7</sup>John kəl'p had been married two or three years before his spirit returned; Emma Luscier's father was likewise married.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. Boas, *op. cit.*, pp. 220-22.

<sup>9</sup>Cf. *idem*, pp. 214 f.

<sup>10</sup>Cf. Boas, *op. cit.*, pp. 209, 211, 214, 221, 229 f., 236 f.; Swan, pp. 42, 174 f., 193.

## THE SPIRIT DANCE

In common with peoples along the entire length of the Columbia river, the major religious ceremony of the Lower Chinook was the guardian spirit dance. The time of the yearly dance was determined, to the native mind, by the period of spirit visitations, September until spring. Each dance occupied five days only, but many were held in various parts of Lower Chinook territory during the dance season. Dancers travelled from one to another, other activities permitting. The dances were individually sponsored by persons with guardian spirit power. According to Emma Luscier, sponsorship occurred only upon the occasion of initial spirit return, which would limit the number of ceremonies greatly. This seems doubtful; at least in older times the possession of spirit power must have been the only prerequisite to dance sponsorship.

A close spiritual bond existed between men and their tutelaries only during this ceremonial period. At other times, the relationship was real, but remote. A person first became aware of his spirit's presence through an illness which could be cured only by singing one's spirit song and dancing one's spirit dance. This might be done at any spirit dance, or, theoretically, without formal ceremony at one's own home. Shamanistic diagnosis was necessary only upon initial return, at which time the illness was much more serious, and the symptoms far from uniform. When a shaman diagnosed a case as spirit illness, his words were in effect an announcement of an initiation dance. As soon as the news spread about, an audience began to assemble. The patient was placed, reclining, at the extreme opposite point from the door so that he could see all who entered and all who danced.

Immediately upon the shaman's announcement of spirit illness the patient selected an old man, proficient and experienced, to prepare his "power sticks." These poles, two in number, were to be used in beating upon a horizontally suspended, elevated plank drum. The old man searched for two straight cedar poles, about three inches in diameter, and as much as ten feet long. The poles were prepared exactly according to the instructions given by the patient. Sometimes they were left round, others were squared. The bark was always removed and the poles painted, one red, the other black. About a third of the length from the top were tied frayed cedar bark, deer dew hoofs, brightly colored feathers (those of a small bird called *t'se'uq*, particularly), or other pendants according to the patient's directions. The poles were prepared outside to be brought in in ceremonial procession. The shaman announced to the assemblage that the first step in the patient's cure was to be performed. All left the house and prepared to re-enter in single file. The shaman led the procession, followed by two drummers, young men named by the patient, who carried the poles. The dancers and audience followed in turn. As the procession entered, all were dancing and singing to the accompaniment of circular hand drums. They encircled the fires, counter-clockwise, five times and then, upon a signal from the patient, sat down. The drummers took their proper positions at the foot of the patient's bed, sitting and holding the poles vertically so that the upper ends might be beaten against the plank drum. The hand holds on the sticks were often wrapped with shredded cedar bark to protect the drummers' hands. This was especially nec-

essary since they were expected to remain at their posts until exhausted, fasting all the while. Mrs. Luscier declared that strong drummers might continue for as much as three days without sleep! They were well paid by the patient for their services.

As each visitor arrived, he entered the house singing his spirit song, if he possessed one. The patient listened intently to these, one after another, until he heard one which "satisfied him," relieved his illness. This indicated that the person singing possessed the same spirit as the patient. The latter then for the first time sang his own original song, the one which he had received from his guardian spirit at the time of the quest years before. He did not leave his bed, however. Indeed, he remained there for the entire five-day duration of the initiation dance. The person whose song had "released" the patient, remained near at hand throughout the remainder of the ceremony as aid to the initiate, but he did not supplant the shaman or treat the patient in any way. He was well paid.

Sometimes (often, Mrs. Luscier said), no one appeared whose song would appease the patient, who became more and more ill as a result. In such an event, messengers were sent to bring new guests, sometimes from far away. One time a cousin of Mrs. Luscier lost consciousness at his initiation. Visitors were called from as far as Georgetown and Westport. Finally, someone was found whose spirit was the same. A woman named Maggie nearly died under similar circumstances. Sometimes no amount of searching availed. The patient then died. Shamanistic treatment was of no value in such cases.

After the initiate had sung his new song, the shaman announced the nature of the power and the circumstances under which it was obtained. During the initiation period the patient did not speak of his spirit, but talked freely of it afterward. Each request made by the patient was announced to the audience by the shaman. He was not served by a speaker.

The uniform procedure during the remainder of the ceremony consisted of spirit singing and dancing by all of those possessed of power. The song was begun by its possessor, but soon the audience joined him. Even those guests who were without guardian spirits aided the singing, though they did not dance. They also, along with others, beat time with short cedar sticks on any board or log available. Soon after the song was started, the singer began to dance. Sometimes the songs and dances were requested by the initiate; at other times they were spontaneous, or rather, in response to the "call" of one's spirit. Dancing proceeded continuously throughout the five days and nights. Dancers served by relays to allow time for sleep.

Variant procedure, interspersed with the dances, included ritual compliance with requests of the initiate, and performances of power by the dancers. The most common request by the patient was that others join him in singing his song. He never sang alone; it would have made him more ill. Often, however, he made less usual requests, reflecting, often symbolically, his guardian spirit experience. He might ask that a fur robe of a particular animal be put over him. Or he might wish that his blanket be covered with down, or painted a specified color. He might request that his face be painted in a directed manner. Legs and arms were sometimes colored solidly, or with five alternating bands of red and black, at the patient's re-

quest (but other parts of the body were never painted). The forelocks of the hair might be cut so as to fall in five segments on the forehead. (After the initiation, these usually were cut off evenly.) If the execution of any of these requests necessitated leaving the house, all of the guests went out and returned with the article in the same ritual manner as for the "power sticks."

During the five days, the initiate was allowed water in limited quantities only, and this had to be taken from other than the regular water supply. The ritual procedure mentioned above was followed in this case, too. All drank water along with the patient. A complete fast was observed by the initiate, except when broken ritually. If his spirit "requested" a certain kind of food, he conveyed the desire to the shaman, who led all of the assemblage in search of it. A considerable quantity had to be obtained, for the initiate never ate alone; others ate the same kind of food at the same time. After the food was brought in in the usual ritual manner, five small pieces were given to the patient, five pieces each to all others. The initiate chewed on each piece for a while, then gazed at it a few moments, after which he threw it in the fire, thus feeding his spirit.

Before each request such as those above, the patient sang his song, aided by his guests.

Sleep was tabu to the novice during the ceremony. Lincoln Jim slept during his initiation, and everyone said that he would die young, which he did.

Shamanistic or power performances, though a part of the dance program, seem to have been relatively unimportant.<sup>11</sup> Foremost were the dances with "power sticks" and "power boards." The former were similar (or identical) to those used for drumming, but smaller. The latter were made of flat cedar boards, diamond shaped, with rounded points, and painted. The designs were simple geometric and semi-realistic figures, symbolic of one's guardian spirit. Both types were used similarly, but the boards served the further purpose of display (in the house) at non-ceremonial times. Some were fairly elaborate, with shell inlays as well as painting. Emma Luscier suggested that the boards were the more common in older times, the sticks, recently.<sup>12</sup> John *kəl'p* owned one of each type. At dances he would hand one to a dancer, whereupon the latter would be powerless to let it go. It would shake in his hands while he danced around (led by the board ?) until relieved of it by *kəl'p*.

These sticks also were used in ritual searches for lost articles and drowned persons. The typical procedure is illustrated in the case where Mary John, a shaman, was called upon (during a dance ?) to solve the mystery of a certain man's disappearance. She gave her stick to one of those present, and then began to sing. Soon the stick started shaking and drawing the holder along. "Follow me," the dancer said, and the others complied, singing. He led them to the water's edge and cried, "Put me in a canoe, quickly. He has drowned." A canoe was brought, and after a short journey, directed by the man holding the stick, the spot where the drowning occurred was found and the body recovered. (Luscier)

<sup>11</sup>Cf. the secret society.

<sup>12</sup>Cf. p. 126.

Power demonstrations also included the performance of tricks such as holding red hot stones and "swallowing" snakes. Sam Millet's spirit was an owl, and like the owl he was able to swallow snakes. During a dance he often sent several boys out to "bring back some bracken root." But instead of bracken, they found a snake at the place indicated. (This symbolism originated in Millet's spirit quest vision.<sup>13</sup>) Upon receiving the snake, Sam twined it around his neck and head, then "swallowed" it.

After three year's blindness, John *kəli'p* regained his sight (during a dance ?) in a demonstration of the power of his spirit, owl.

Sometimes a novice's spirit indicated during the dance that the group should move to some other place for the completion of the ceremony. During Dixie James' initiation, the procedure was halted and everyone moved to Jamestown. About thirty adults were present, requiring four canoes to transport them and their children. The group travelled by water to Georgetown where they loaded the canoes into wagons and took them to Westport (Washington). At Westport, travel by canoe was resumed to the destination. The four canoes were paddled abreast so that the ceremonial singing and drumming could proceed uninterrupted. At Jamestown, the group went to the house of "old *tcənu's*." This destination had been selected because *tcənu's* possessed a power similar to that of James. After resumption of the ceremony at the new location, James asked *tcənu's* for dried salmon to eat. This had been a part of his spirit's instructions.

The head of the household in which dances were held provided food for the gathering, but the initiate defrayed the expenses in all cases, aided if necessary by his relatives. In the example above, Dixie Jim gave *tcənu's* many presents including a gun and blankets, and Sam Millet, one of the party, gave him a canoe.

Feasting was not a part of the ceremonial procedure prior to the last day. In fact, eating in the dance house was prohibited except in company with the initiate as outlined above. Laughing was also tabu, lest the patient become more ill.

The termination of the ceremony on the morning of the fifth day was marked by a great feast and the distribution of the presents. The principal food to be served was named by the novice as dictated by his spirit. The shaman, in turn, dispatched certain persons to a definite place where the raw food would be found. Regardless of whom was sent, or the nature of the product, it was found at the point indicated and obtained without difficulty.

During the preceding days, presents had been accumulating in some depository outside the dance house. These were supplied by the dancers, and others if they desired, but particularly by the initiate and his relatives. When the food was ready for the feast, all of the dancers, with the exception of a few of the younger ones, left to return with the presents. Those remaining did so to continue the singing. At the depository the shaman gave each person the article that he was to carry inside, and designated his place in the line. When all was ready, the procession re-entered the dance house, each person dancing, singing and conspicuously displaying the article he carried. It was necessary that the novice be able to see clearly, from his

<sup>13</sup>See the quest.

position opposite the door, each of the presents. After the procession had encircled the fires five times, the presents were hung on the poles previously placed across the room for the purpose.

In the meantime, the food had been brought in and the feast followed. The novice ate from his bed; he did not arise until the guests had disbanded.

After the meal, the presents were distributed by someone named by the initiate. The articles were removed from the poles one at a time and the name of a guest was called. The recipient walked over to receive the present. The last article remaining was taken by the distributor. Those of high social position, shamans, good dancers, and aides of the initiate, were given the best presents, but the distribution seems to have been fairly democratic.

Following the presentation, the novice started his song and all joined and danced for a few moments. With this finale, the ceremony was officially ended and the novice arose from his bed. However, guests often remained for several days of informal visiting and singing.

Batons or power sticks were stored after the dance, except the more elaborate ones which were kept upon display. Sometimes, they were used to beat an accompaniment to informal family spirit singing. There were no restrictions upon the use of the common power sticks subsequent to the initiation. They might be used by anyone with spirit power.

Informal spirit singing was not limited to the winter ceremonial season. When a man was ill or in dire need of help of any kind, he would sing and "wish" for his guardian spirit to come. When Sam Millet was fatally ill, he sang and tried to bring his spirit to him, "but it wouldn't come near."

#### SHAMANISM

Shamanistic power was obtained by the guardian spirit quest in a manner similar to any other power. However, mere reception of the power from the spirit did not alone lead to practice. It was necessary for the aspirant to go through a period of training lasting about five years. As soon as it was felt by a practicing shaman that a young person had acquired the proper power and aspired to become a doctor, he was taken in charge for training. The details of the training are quite unknown except that the student accompanied his instructor when the latter attended patients. Gradually the novice was permitted to take part in the treatments, until he finally performed alone. For a period then he handled treatments alone but always with his mentor in attendance. During this period he received no pay. When he was judged ready to practice alone an initiation was held at the next winter dance. At this time the persons who had been cured by the new shaman proclaimed his abilities. The initiate danced and sang his spirit songs, and took his place with the other shamans.

Apparently the training period came after the initial spirit return.<sup>14</sup> Whereas initiation was held immediately for one with ordinary power, it seems to have been deferred for the shamanistic neophyte. Or perhaps two somewhat similar ceremon-

<sup>14</sup>See the spirit dance.



ies were held, one at the beginning and one after the training period. This seems to have been the arrangement in at least some instances.

Informants claimed that the mentor received no pay for his services. "It was an honor!" But it seems probable that he at least received some compensation from the patients of the novice during the period when the latter received no pay.

All shamans were general practitioners, but some were better able to treat certain diseases because of the characteristics of their tutelaries. Others built up reputations of proficiency in specific circumstances. Child-birth was one of these cases.

When a shaman was needed a messenger was sent, always with presents, to request aid. If no initial gifts were offered the shaman seldom accepted the call. If the presents were judged sufficient the shaman returned with the messenger. He took no paraphernalia with him.

Upon arrival at the patient's house the shaman was presented with food. When he had finished eating he went to the patient's bedside, sat down, and invited those who desired to sing to join him. The audience gathered at the bedside, bringing poles to be used in beating time on the floor or ceiling.<sup>15</sup> The shaman started singing and others immediately joined, drumming with the sticks. After two or three songs the shaman announced that he had diagnosed the trouble. The patient was not questioned, nor did the shaman touch the sick man during diagnosis.

Illness was considered the result of the intrusion of a foreign object, either inadvertently or through the agency of a malignant shaman, soul loss, or natural causes. The last category was not subject to shamanistic treatment.<sup>16</sup> If the diagnosis indicated an intrusive object the treatment was by rubbing, aspersion, drawing out with the hands, or sucking. Where no malicious cause was indicated one or more of the first three methods was used. If witchcraft were involved, sucking was the only adequate treatment. If the soul were lost it was sought by clairvoyant methods.

When the object was removed by drawing the hands over the patient's body, then clasping them together, the "sickness" so removed was invisible. Disposal was accomplished merely by rubbing the hands together, then throwing the arms in the air. But if sucking were required the removal was more difficult and disposal more involved. No tube was used in the procedure; the mouth was placed directly against the patient's body. This was usually in the region of the stomach. Treatment was completed only with the removal of some concrete object such as a piece of bone, or often a bit of blood. After showing the audience that which had been removed, the shaman asked what disposal should be made of it. The reply was, "Drown him," "Burn him," or perhaps, "Shoot him." If drowning were requested the object was immersed in water; if burning, it was thrown in the fire; if shooting, it was pressed on the point of an arrow.

Sometimes the shaman failed in the attempted removal. He could only succeed if his power were stronger than that of the shaman causing the affliction. In such an event a second shaman was called. The first remained but did not assist the newcomer.

<sup>15</sup>Cf. p. 81; Dunn, pp. 118 f.

<sup>16</sup>Cf. Swan, p. 182.

When a person was near death from the effects of witchcraft he became possessed and talked as if he were the responsible shaman. "I'm so-and-so; I'm so-and-so," he cried; "you can't put me down. I'm sorry for you but it's your own fault. I'll win the fight."

Such revelation often led to the death of the shaman thus indicated at the hands of the relatives of the patient if the latter died. Feuds sometimes started in this way but public opinion was usually on the side of the avengers.<sup>17</sup>

Shamans were occasionally hired to inflict witchcraft but the price charged was always very high and only the strongest of practitioners were willing to accept the responsibility.

A shaman sometimes dreamed of the procedure necessary to effect a cure, especially for children. The subject of the dream was not always a patient of the shaman. In such a case he made public the identity of the person indicated so that the latter might hear of the event and solicit his services. Thus while Emma Lus-cier was suffering from illness as an infant a shaman (qwalsi') dreamed that she would not recover unless she were placed in an old style cradle. Emma's father heard of this through a third person and called the doctor immediately. Upon his arrival the doctor was thanked profusely and led to the patient. He picked up the child, talked to her about the cradle she "wanted," and promised to make it the next day. When the cradle was ready he placed the child in it and secured the head board in place. (The board was later removed by Emma's paternal aunt who was opposed to the practice.) The parents then provided a small feast for the visitors that had assembled. Gifts were presented, not only to the shaman, but to all who had held the child during her illness.

At another time when Emma was ill a shaman dreamed that piercing her ears would lead to recovery. In a circuitous fashion Emma's father heard of the dream and sent for the doctor. Guests were invited at the same time. When the doctor appeared he reiterated his vision and announced that the patient would have died very soon without the piercing but as a result of it she would live to a very old age. The guests had arrived early in the morning. While they ate breakfast the shaman went to the river to swim. Upon returning he proceeded to his task immediately, using a hardwood needle to make holes around the rim and in the lobe of each ear. The holes were kept open with thongs of buckskin. The shaman and guests remained for two or three days of informal visiting, dancing and singing. Upon departure all guests received small presents. The shaman was given a gun, a blanket, and another article or two.

Shamans received payment whether a cure was effected or not, but the amount charged was greater in the case of a cure. The doctor made his own demands; this was in addition to the initial presents. Most shamans were quite rich but they were expected to give large presents at the winter dances.

The shaman was not served by a spokesman. Some shamans smoked before and during the treatment but this was not general. Children were kept away while the shaman practiced, lest they become ill. The aid of the shaman was often solicited in finding lost articles or persons.

<sup>17</sup>Cf. Scouler, pp. 165 f.

Female shamans were said to be as numerous as male.

Dr. Boas furnishes a full and rich account of the elaborate shamanistic procedure when illness was diagnosed as soul loss.<sup>18</sup> For its supplementary worth I present below the data given by my informants:

If a person became badly frightened his soul departed and illness resulted, of a general and diffuse nature. Sometimes the soul could be found and returned to the patient by a single doctor but more often several were required. In this case they worked together and the treatment took on the aspect of a ceremony.

Such treatment occurred not at the bedside but in the middle of the room. The assisting singers formed a large circle around the shamans. All sang after the leadership of the doctors who began their individual songs, one after another. As before, the assistant singers beat time with sticks. Soon the shamans began to peer into space and to walk about, apparently at random. They were seeking the lost soul. They followed its trail from place to place on this earth. They addressed the soul, hoping it would hear and requested it to return by urging that it was not yet time to go to the land of the dead. Sometimes the spirit was found not far away, in which case it was easy to turn it around and start it back toward the patient.

The stronger doctors "saw better" than the others. From time to time they conferred together and announced their findings to the audience.

The shamans often came near the land of the dead. The ground became sandy and the footsteps of the soul were easy to follow. Presently a great river was reached where a canoe awaited. This was the canoe that souls used to reach the other world. If the river had already been crossed there was no hope of bringing the soul back and the patient invariably died. The shamans could not use the canoe to continue the pursuit because return would have been equally impossible for them, once the river was crossed. But though the soul were found on the very banks of the stream, return was yet possible if the shamans were strong enough. Even if it had drunk water from the river it might be captured but in such a case the face of the patient became paralyzed. The shamans encircled the soul and "gathered it in," the strongest one clasping it in his hands. It felt like a pulsing or beating in his hands. The audience was addressed and success was announced, whereupon the soul was "rubbed back" into the patient's body. Immediately a change could be seen. Very soon he completely recovered.

Sometimes the shamans followed false clues in the search. A group of doctors once thought they were following a large herd of elk which had lured away the soul of the patient, a great hunter. They saw the huge eyes of the elk shining in the dark. But when they approached closer they found it was a lone snail. Later they followed a clue that led only to a pile of rotten wood. In this case success was never achieved; the patient, Alek Smith, died.

The soul hunting ritual always lasted the entire night. The soul could not be returned to the patient until dawn. If it were found earlier it was held by the shaman until the proper time. In the meantime the doctors conferred, then suddenly someone was pointed out and told that his soul had departed. The person indicated

<sup>18</sup>Boas, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-10.

then begged that a search be made and offered presents to the practitioner, whereupon a similar ceremony was enacted.

Predictions of coming events were sometimes made by the shamans during the search. At one time, about 1875, Dr. Jack (tsaa'x) spoke out, saying, "I feel sorry for the oysters; I feel sorry for the people. All the oysters will die. The people will have to leave this country. The people will have to leave or they will die. There will be nothing to eat. A great storm will come; all the oysters will be killed." Later in the winter, while the tide was out, the mud flats froze and killed all the oysters. They were very scarce for the next thirty years.

The shaman who participated in the search for a soul was well rewarded, but the procedure was not without its dangers. A weak shaman might mistake the soul of another for that of his patient, in which event he would suffer loss of his own soul.

#### THE SECRET SOCIETY

Only one order of the Northwest Coast secret society<sup>19</sup> reached the Chinook. Even this arrived at a very late date. Mrs. Bertrand explained that Concomly had purchased a slave from one of the northern groups (Stikine ?) for the specific purpose of learning the form of the society.<sup>20</sup> Knowledge of the society much more probably reached the Chinook via the Quinault, where a two-order organization was present,<sup>21</sup> but Mrs. Bertrand's statement is significant as a reflection of native recognition of the recency of the society.

The society, despite its lack of age, was well integrated with guardian spirit practices. The strength of the latter may have speeded the process of amalgamation. The society could not have come to the Chinook so integrated for such organization was not at all characteristic of the Quinault, to say nothing of groups further north.

Eligibility to membership depended upon two factors, upper class status and the possession of a "secret society guardian spirit." The latter phrasing merely implied spirit instruction to join the society plus the conveyance of the necessary type of power. Such power was obtained in exactly the same fashion as any other.<sup>22</sup> It consisted of the ability to inflict self-torture, followed by miraculous recovery. Spirits became somewhat specific, however, with black bear foremost and cougar and skunk secondary. When a boy returned from a spirit quest in which he obtained "secret society power" he confided the fact to his mentor but to no one else.<sup>23</sup> For three days the boy was supposed to sleep, after which the mentor arranged a feast of celebration, which friends and relatives attended, at which time public announcement was made that the lad had acquired power which would lead to initiation in the secret society at a later time. This was not an elaborate affair; it lasted but one day. The object was to make known and celebrate the important acquisi-

<sup>19</sup>Cf. Gunther, *Klallam*, pp. 281-88; Olson, *Quinault*, pp. 120-23.

<sup>20</sup>Of course a slave could not have known the details of the society unless he had formerly been an upperclassman.

<sup>21</sup>Olson, *loc. cit.*

<sup>22</sup>See the quest.

<sup>23</sup>Cf. p. 80.

tion which the boy had made. The lad himself participated in the feast,<sup>24</sup> which broke the fast he had maintained during the quest.

At this time the boy was assigned for training to some member of the secret society with similar power. For several years the novice received informal instruction. During the same period he accumulated with the help of his parents the property necessary for his formal initiation, and even more important, the payment due his mentor for the period of tutelage. The latter was the closest approach to an initiation fee. In some cases the amount demanded was small but more often it imposed a considerable burden on the initiate. Mrs. Bertrand suggested an equivalence of two hundred dollars as an average.

Prior to the public initiation a number of private rehearsals before society members was held. If the boy failed to perform properly he was further instructed, made to fast in order that he might recall spirit injunctions and obtain enlightenment on the cause of his failures. Then another trial was held. When success was achieved the public performance was arranged. The externals of this affair were identical with the guardian spirit initiation described above. The dance house was provided with a partition in one end behind which the novice and his attendants remained. No uninitiated person was allowed in this room under any circumstances. During the first two days the initiate did not appear; spirit singing and dancing in the outer room occupied guests during this period.

On the evening of the second day the initiate appeared dressed only in a breech cloth. Accompanying him were the attendants, dressed in the skins of various animals. The novice danced, jumped, and imitated his spirit as he moved with swift motions around the room. The particular color of his performance was determined by his specific power. At the initiation of Concomly's son (grandson?) about 1860, which was witnessed by Mrs. Bertrand, he appeared dramatically with blood flowing from his mouth. His spirit being black bear, he walked on all fours and imitated the actions of a wounded bear. He moved from one to another of the "strong ones" showing them that he actually was wounded. Then suddenly he clapped his hands before his mouth, removed them, and the bleeding was gone.

In other cases the performer, with power derived from a "burst of flame," walked over live coals or "stood still in the middle of the fire." Sometimes the initiate slashed his arms or body while the others watched, then performed an instantaneous self-cure. Dunn writes of seeing many Clatsop showing scars, sometimes several in number, where a dagger had been plunged through the folds of skin on the stomach. He furthermore witnessed the act.<sup>25</sup>

After the performance the initiate ran to the nearest body of water, plunged in, and then returned to the inner room where he was expected to sleep until the next night's appearance. The performances continued for three nights, after which ordinary spirit singing and dancing were resumed for a day or two. The ceremony was terminated with a feast but apparently without distribution of presents.

<sup>24</sup>Cf. the quest and the spirit dance.

<sup>25</sup>Dunn, p. 128.

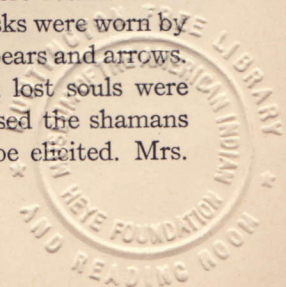
For the duration of the ceremony the novice observed a complete fast. Upon its termination he absented himself from community life for several days or as long as a month, during which he wandered alone along the beach and through the woods. Thereafter his place in the society was stable; the achievement of distinction within the group depended upon the same factors of character and initiative that operated on the outside.

Sometimes more than one novice was initiated to the society at the same time. This did not change the form of the ceremony; the individuals merely performed concurrently. But these ceremonies of joint admission did not occur often. Only a small percentage of the population were members of the society.

Ceremonies occasionally were held for purposes other than initiation. In one instance an enmity existed between two members of the society. A gathering was arranged wherein one was expected to prove his superiority over the other and thus end the friction. One of the pair was a man, the other a woman. The former had been quite generally suspected of witchcraft. He possessed "knife power" and caused others to become wounded. The woman's power, which permitted her to find lost or hidden objects, was phrased as hunting power and symbolized by a bow and arrow. She had not yet been a victim of the man's witchcraft but clairvoyant powers enabled her to divine his intentions. At the ceremony he hid his knife, with the point directed toward her, while she was in the inner room. She then danced out with bow and arrow in hand in imitation of a hunter. She began to search for objects in the room, all the while singing that her bow and arrows were much further-reaching in their power than his knife. An intentionally hidden object being much more difficult to find than one accidentally lost, she first recovered various articles of the latter nature. But soon the knife was brought to light and thrust into a board of the wall. The woman then shot at it with her bow and arrows, hitting it time after time without an exception. Next she retired to the inner room while the knife was again hidden, this time in the sand by the fire. The woman reappeared wearing a blindfold. Without removing it she turned toward the fire and shot the knife out of the sand. Again it was hidden, during her absence, and this time she lay flat on the floor while shooting, but hit the knife nevertheless. Under such disgrace the man gave up entirely and lost his power "as usually happened when one was publicly humiliated."

There is much that is instructive in this account but little that might not well have fitted into the traditional spirit dance performances. The presence of a woman in the secret society, here indicated, was not anomalous. Women were quite as eligible as men though decidedly in the minority.

Mrs. Bertrand spoke very vaguely of secret society performances in which "the experiences of people long ago" were dramatized. Scenes were reenacted in pantomime and songs were sung in which the audience joined. Masks were worn by the actors, who were quite numerous. Other accessories included spears and arrows. This resembles somewhat the shamanistic performance in which lost souls were sought. But it is doubtful that Mrs. Bertrand would have confused the shamans with these "actor people." More specific statements could not be elicited. Mrs.



Riggs, the interpreter, was unable to help. Masks were likewise worn, Mrs. Bertrand asserted, at the society initiations. She was unable to furnish any details of form, but stated that they represented guardian spirits.

The audience of the society was unrestricted; any one who wished might attend the performances. Sometimes the exhibitions were outdoors with the audience arranged in a semicircle. In such case the entire house was restricted to members.

The society was well represented over Lower Chinook territory. Concomly's son's initiation took place at a Clatsop town near present Astoria; the power contest recounted above occurred near Bay Center; one group centered opposite Astoria, and another at the mouth of the Naselle river. Performances were often attended by visitors from Quilleute and Chehalis; the Quinault were not welcome.

The Chinookan name for the secret society was not remembered, but it was associated with the Nutka term lo'kwali.

