# CONTRIBUTIONS TO ALSEA ETHNOGRAPHY

BY

PHILIP DRUCKER

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PUBLICATIONS IN
AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY AND ETHNOLOGY
Volume 35, No. 7, pp. 81–102

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA
1939

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PUBLICATIONS IN AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY AND ETHNOLOGY

EDITORS: A. L. KROEBER, R. H. LOWIE

Volume 35, No. 7, pp. 81–102

Transmitted December 8, 1936

Issued May 10, 1939

Price, 25 cents

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

LONDON, ENGLAND

[The University of California publications dealing with anthropological subjects are now issued in two series. The series in American Archaeology and Ethnology, which was established in 1903, continues unchanged in format, but is restricted to papers in which the interpretative element outweighs the factual or which otherwise are of general interest. The new series, known as Anthropological Records, is issued in photolithography in a larger size. It consists of monographs which are documentary, of record nature, or chiefly concerned with the presentation of new data.]

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

## CONTENTS

# CONTRIBUTIONS TO ALSEA ETHNOGRAPHY

BY

PHILIP DRUCKER

## INTRODUCTION

THE ALSEA, like other coast Oregon groups, suffered both decline of population and a shattering of their culture in the clash of aboriginal and European civilizations in this region. At the time the following data were obtained, there remained but three persons cognizant of the language and customs. The present description of the culture was given chiefly by Mrs. Leona Ludson, of Siletz, Oregon, and supplemented by John Albert, of Oakville, Washington.[1] Both these persons had a surprisingly full knowledge of the old life, which was little more than a memory at the time of their youth. Although there are gaps and minor inconsistencies in the account, it seems best to present it as it stands, for the opportunity of adding to it and of checking it may not present itself and there is little enough available material on the western Oregonians.

The data were collected in the summer of 1933, incidental to investigation of Oregon Déné culture, on funds provided by the University of California.

## LOCATION

Two short river valleys, the Alsea and the Yaquina, and the ocean frontage between them, comprised the extent of Alsea territory. Adjoining on the north were the Salishan-speaking Tillamook. To the south lived the linguistically related Siuslaw and Lower Umpqua. The Alsea were never a numerous people. It is doubtful if there were more than a dozen permanent sites in their territory and perhaps twice as many camps and fishing places up the two rivers, though a complete list of their villages could not be obtained. Most of the villages, or at least the more important ones, were situated between the mouths of the rivers and the head of tidewater.

## POSITION OF THE CULTURE

Alsea culture was definitely peripheral. It possessed the broader outlines of Northwest Coast culture, but lacked all the refinements and elaborations of the focal civilizations. The reason is not far to seek. Not only were the Alsea remote from the strong centers in British Columbia and northwest California, but they were also off the main lines of communication along which many complexes were diffused. The northern connections of the people of the lower Klamath appear to have been sundered long ago. The busy Columbia River traffic diverted northerly influences which otherwise might have reached the Alsea. The picture is one of a small nation dwelling in an isolated spot along the coast—an eddy in the swirling current of North Pacific culture. It seems that little of historical importance ever happened there, and it does not seem likely that anything ever would have happened.

[1] The writer is indebted to Dr. Melville Jacobs, of the University of Washington, for the opportunity of working with John Albert.

## GEOGRAPHY

Only a partial list of native sites could be obtained. Mrs. Ludson's parents had lived at Luhwiyu, about halfway between the mouth of the Alsea River and the head of tidewater (yàqais). The informant did not know the names of any villages farther upriver, but was sure there were some formerly. Near the river mouth, on the south bank, were snakiyu and tsihkˣ. South along the coast was the town of yahaitc. A short distance north of the river was kɛpaisk. Of Yaquina River villages, Mrs. Ludson knew only of yaqʷonà, close to the site of the modern town of Newport, which gave the modern name to the river.

There were doubtless several more villages and many minor settlements and camp sites,[2] but their names could not be obtained. There was a camp site a short distance up Big Creek (above modern Waldport) called natkiautcLo. Alsea Valley (ts!iphaha), back in the coast ranges, was a place to which many people went in summer to harvest camas and other wild crops.

## SUBSISTENCE

The Alsea were fisher folk. Their choice of dwelling sites, their seasonal migrations up and down their little valleys, and their technological interests reflect the importance of this pursuit in their lives. In their economy, salmon ranked first of the several kinds of fish taken. Dried, it was the mainstay which permitted a winter of leisure unknown to any people lacking a plentiful and easily preserved food source. Other fish and game served only to supplement the diet.

The times of the salmon runs in the Alsea River were said to be: Chinook, midsummer; coho and dog salmon, early fall; steelhead, late fall and winter. Other fish of economic value were smelt, herring, flounders, perch, lampreys, and salmon trout.

Of the rather full list of fishing devices, two, traps and harpoons, were regarded as most effective. Traps were used in conjunction with weirs, either in the main river or in side streams. The detail of structure of the weirs was not remembered clearly. John Albert said that heavy poles were laid across the river. These must have been supported by some sort of posts or braces, perhaps in pairs. Against this the sections of the weir were placed. There was a catwalk along the top of the weir, from which men could operate dip nets or harpoons. At apertures in the weir long cylindrical traps were placed. These had inverted cone mouths, through which fish could enter but not escape. Another sort of trap was simply a scoop-shaped tray of wickerwork, placed below a low section of the weir, with the far end raised above water. Salmon that passed the weir were frightened back downstream, and in throwing themselves over the weir were carried well up on the tray, out of water. A watcher stationed at the "trap" clubbed them before they could wriggle back.

The salmon harpoon consisted of a long fir or spruce shaft with a hardwood

[2] Dorsey gives a long list of Alsea villages, but it is obvious that in this as in his other Oregon village lists he did not distinguish between towns, camps, and even place names. J. O. Dorsey, Gentile Systems of the Siletz Indians, JAFL 3:227–237, 1890.

foreshaft on which the barbed head was set. The latter was made of a bone or horn point bound between two tapered fitted barbs which at the same time formed the socket. A short line connected the head to the shaft. The point was thrust into salmon fighting their way upstream on riffles or lurking in deep holes; it was not thrown. Some men erected shades along the riverbank at their favorite spearing stations to enable them to see into the water. John Albert would have it that harpoons with two diverging foreshafts, similar to those used on the Columbia River and in northern California, were used for killing salmon trout.

The dip nets used at the weirs were conical sacks, two or three feet across the mouth, fastened to a loop in the end of a long vine-maple pole. The effect seems to have been that of a large landing net such as sportsmen now commonly use, with the handle coming off one side instead of the center. Signal strings crossed the mouth of the net, warning the user of the entry of his quarry. Mrs. Ludson believed that the net used for smelt and herring was simply a finer-meshed web on the same sort of frame. John Albert said that for these smaller fish a scoop net on a V-shaped frame was used.[3] He also described a gill net for salmon (a device the existence of which Mrs. Ludson had denied). This net was said to have been two or three fathoms long by one deep. Poles were fastened across the narrow ends, and the device was drifted downstream between two canoes.

The salmon club was indispensable. It was simply a convenient length of some hardwood, such as vine maple, trimmed and smoothed, but undecorated.

Other fishing techniques may be briefly summarized. Flounder were speared with a sharp stick after the fisherman, wading about the tide flats at low tide, had stepped on one and thus located it. Crabs in tidewater pools were taken with the same sort of "spear." John Albert said that a herring rake was sometimes used, but that the scoop net was more efficient. Sharp-angled hooks and gorges of bone were occasionally used for trout; on the whole, angling was of minor importance. The Alsea did not fish offshore. Lamprey eels were taken with a gaff hook, or caught in eelpots. It was believed that the flesh of the "eels" was spoiled if they were allowed to wriggle about until they died, so the fisherman placed the creature's head in his mouth and broke its neck.

Hunting was considered an adventuresome way of augmenting the fish diet. There were probably many men among the Alsea who rarely if ever hunted, while some few found the pursuit more to their liking. Strictly speaking, hunting was not a profession, however; the chief occupation of every man was fishing. Fall was the best time to hunt elk. They were fattest then, and the approach of the rutting season made them less wary. The hunter would lie in wait by some trail or at a little clearing in the woods. If he could imitate well enough the bugling of the bulls, he might lure one within bowshot. Dogs were used occasionally, not to drive the animals but to hold them at bay till the hunter could catch up; it seems that elk stop to fight the dogs instead of running. Pitfalls were dug in runways, but the amount of labor involved

[3] This is the northwest California type of smelt net.

restricted their use considerably. Neither crossbars nor impalement stakes were used, and if a bear happened to tumble in he clawed down the sides until he got out, ruining the pit. Deer, like elk, were shot; in summer, the call of a fawn was imitated to attract them. Beaver were dug out of their dens to be clubbed, or speared with a salmon harpoon. Other fur bearers were shot with the bow. Neither informant knew of any sort of snare or deadfall for game, except for a slip noose used by children to catch sea gulls. Quail and grouse were caught with a basketry trap with a figure-4 release. Waterfowl were shot. The paucity of hunting and trapping devices in a region plentifully stocked with game serves to emphasize the lack of interest in any pursuit other than fishing.

Most of the Northwest Coast peoples hunted sea mammals at times, though of course only a few risked attacking the greatest creatures of all—whales. But the northwest Californians made of their seal and sea-lion hunting a miniature edition of the whaling of the northerners, with nearly as elaborate a complex of gear and ritual associated with it. If there was such a complex among the Alsea, it has been quite forgotten. John Albert recalled hearing of a rock off the river mouth on which sea lions congregated. Men went out there to club or to spear them (presumably with the same sort of two-pronged harpoon that the Lower Chinook used). There was a water-filled basin in the center of the rock into which the animals dove, so that the harpooner could hold his line, playing the sea lion with little difficulty. The old people used to tell of one man who dived into the pond to free a line fouled on a rock or snag—an unpleasant as well as dangerous task, for the "pond" had no outlet and was very foul. It seems likely that sea hunting was known but was adjudged too difficult to be worth while.

Women contributed to the larder plant foods and such animal products as mollusks, sea anemones, and the like. Equipped with carrying baskets and curved, crutch-handled digging sticks, the women dug great quantities of camas, which were stored for winter, and in their proper season other roots, such as those of fern and skunk cabbage. The same equipment served them for digging clams, and prying mussels and other mollusks off rocks. In summer they picked berries and various greens. Mrs. Ludson said that acorns were obtained in small quantities back from the coast. They were ground and eaten raw with salmon eggs; "they were so bitter that only a little could be used." One would expect that the acorns were either leached, the process of peoples to the south, or pit roasted, the process of the western Washington and Columbia River tribes, but the informant insisted that they were eaten raw.

The utilization of stranded whale carcasses may be included with the gathering activities. Discovery of a dead whale was a momentous event, for it meant a great addition to the stores. Unfortunately, neither of my informants knew the system by which the carcass was divided. In the days of the decadence of the culture, their elders had been content with assuring them that the oil rendered from the blubber was one of life's greatest delicacies.

Besides gathering vegetable products, women prepared and preserved the

game the men brought in. The cuisine would strike us as lacking in variety. Fresh fish or game was broiled over the coals or boiled in trough-like wooden "pots." Dried food was invariably boiled. By way of change, one could eat his dried fish uncooked, dipping it, if he were lucky, in a dish of whale oil. For special occasions, such as feasts, when it was necessary to cook large quantities at once, the earth oven was often used.

In the fishing season the women were kept busy cutting and drying the salmon as the men caught them. With a knife of mussel or razor-clam shell, the fish were split down the back and sliced off the ribs, so that the head, tail, backbone, and guts could be removed together, leaving the two sides of the fish fastened together at the belly. The eggs were dried on a tray, or in a container of some kind of gut. Mrs. Ludson said the fish guts were returned to the water; Albert, that they were thrown anywhere. The heads, backs and tails were partly broiled, then dried. The drying seems to have been chiefly a smoke cure. When finished, the dried fish were stored in baskets and bales overhead in the winter house, where the smoky warmth of the fire protected them from the effects of dampness. Smelt and herring were sun-dried whole. Lampreys were split with a knife, the "strings" were pulled with an awl of wood or bone, and they were ready for smoking. Clams, smoked and strung on a hazel withe, were a delicacy. Elk meat was the only flesh of land animals that was valued enough to be dried.

## HOUSES—CANOES

*Houses.*—From informants' descriptions, the winter dwellings of the Alsea closely resembled the Lower Chinook and Tillamook houses seen by Lewis and Clark.[4] A large rectangular pit, four or five feet deep, was lined with cedar planks. Posts at the corners and ends supported the gabled roof of horizontal planks laid overlapping. Apparently little or nothing of the side walls showed above the ground level. The dimensions of the houses varied. Some were large enough for three or four families, each with a separate space and hearth. A space left in the planking of the gable end served as a doorway. The door was simply a suspended mat of grass or reeds.[5] By means of a notched-log ladder one descended to the mat-covered dirt floor. Around the walls, at a height of two or three feet, was the sleeping platform, under which, and on which between the family places, a miscellany of dried foods, gear, and personal belongings was stowed. One hears nothing of tidiness as an Alsea virtue; to our eyes, likely enough, the house would appear littered. The more perishable foodstuffs were placed on suspended racks overhead, in the smoky warmth close to the roof.

[4] R. G. Thwaites, ed., Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition (New York), 3:358, 1904.

[5] Lower Chinook and Tillamook houses had doorways made by cutting an oval hole through a wide board. This was covered by a suspended plank door. It would be difficult to decide whether the Alsea differed so much in this matter from their neighbors, or whether the folk memory of my informants is at fault. With no desire to discredit these two sincere persons, it should be said that although they certainly knew the main features of the house type, their knowledge of details was vague. Neither had seen any but degenerate approximations of the old-style houses; beyond this they could only know what their elders had happened to tell them.

Mrs. Ludson thought poor people would have a house without any wall planks. The roof was simply set over a hole in the ground. Tule mats were hung over the dirt walls. She did not know just what would be done about the gable ends of such a house, but suggested they might be filled in with grass thatching. Both informants said that partitions were not erected between the family places, and that the posts and beams were never decorated.

Aside from the storage baskets, utensils, and implements proper to the household, there was little that could be called furniture except the tule mats. These were used for bedding, to sit on, and to cover the floor. Wooden stools and pillows were not used. There were no house names.

At the fishing camps temporary structures were built. The men erected a rectangular, gabled framework of poles. Meanwhile the women gathered quantities of long grass or reeds, which they bound together between pairs of light poles a fathom or two long. These sections of thatch were tied to the wall and roof poles. Such a house was good for a whole season, and with some repairs it could be made to do for a second.

Sweat bathing was practiced by the Alsea irregularly for luck, purification, and minor curing. The sweat houses were neither elaborate nor regarded as very important. The older type of structure for this purpose was a hole scooped out in a bank or hillside, so that only a few odds and ends of plank would be required to close the front. The pit was roofed with boards covered with earth. It was heated with steam. A good-sized sweat house would be one that three or four men could squeeze into at once. Another sweat house was a hemispherical frame of poles covered with mats, or, latterly, with canvas. It also was steam heated. John Albert said his people learned to make this type from Kalapuyans just before reservation times; it may be even more recent.

*Canoes.*—Being typical Northwest Coast people, the Alsea regarded canoes as indispensable to the normal pursuit of life. Travel, except for jaunts along the beach, or short hunting trips back in the hills, was invariably by water.

There were two or possibly three types of canoe in use. The most highly prized (and most suitable for sea journeying) was the Nootka or "Chinook" canoe. So far as the informants knew, this was never made by the Alsea themselves, but was purchased from northern traders. The native craft were smaller. The hull was of about the same shape as that of the Nootka canoe, but it and the ends were made of a single piece. Bow and stern were alike. Apparently both were shaped like the stern of the Nootka vessel. As a rule the hull was spread by filling it with water and hot stones, and thwarts were inserted. A strip of vine maple was pegged along the gunwales to take the wear of paddling. The outside of the finished vessel was scorched over with a pitchy brand to remove splinters and roughnesses. This blackened it and was supposed to be of value in seasoning the wood.[6]

John Albert described another canoe, which seems to have been a sort of shovel-nosed type, as an Alsea product.

[6] This canoe is very like those described as an old type by both Coos and Tillamook informants.

A canoe properly fitted out had paddles, poles, a bailer, and a painter. The paddles were of hardwood. They invariably had a mortised cross handle. Both pointed and notched-tip blades were used. The poles, essential for upriver travel, were long, pointed shafts of spruce or fir. The bailer is described as being carved of wood in the shape of a modern sugar scoop. A length of braided willow-bark or grass-fiber rope, tied to the forward thwart, served for mooring. Anchors were not used.

## TECHNOLOGY AND WEAPONS

The Alsea woodworker, although proficient in his craft, was a long way from achieving the high artistic plane of his northern contemporaries. The objects he made were neatly finished, but showed no attempt at decoration. Yet he worked in the same medium, soft straight-grained cedar (hardwoods were used only where essential), and had nearly the same kit of tools.

The significant point in regard to implements is that stone was little used. Shell, horn, and bone provided most of the cutting edges. The workman chipped away at his log with a club-like maul of wood and a chisel of bone or horn. The same maul was used to drive elkhorn or yewwood wedges when splitting out planks. It is likely that few large trees were felled before the introduction of the white man's steel saws and axes. Drift logs were used in preference. The informants were not certain of the degree to which fire was used as a cutting agent. The finishing was done with an adze, which according to Mrs. Ludson was of the elbow type and according to Albert was straight. A convenient chunk of sandstone, followed by a vigorous application of scouring rushes, gave the polish. To drill holes, a sharp splinter of bone was mounted in the end of a wooden shaft.

Yew or vine maple, preferably the former, provided the bow material. The bow was from three to four feet long, wide, and flat, with a constricted grip. Those with sinew backing were considered superior. Two-ply sinew cord was used for the bowstring. The arrows were tipped with flint or bone. The cased skin of a land otter, fisher, or animal of similar size was carried at the side as a quiver.

Blades, apparently of obsidian, were known, as well as stone arrow points. Neither informant knew anything about flintworking. Mrs. Ludson said blades and points already shaped were found in gravel bars along the river. It was supposed that they swam there "like fish." The finder was considered a very lucky person. Ordinary knives were of shell.

Neither spears, slings, nor clubs were known as weapons (except, of course, the clubs for salmon). A few men had voluminous gowns of doubled elkskin for armor, which were doubtlessly awkward and heavy. Most combatants relied on dodging. Neither helmets nor shields were known.

## DRESS

The success of early white efforts to clothe the natives in conformity with our notions of modesty has made it difficult to obtain a clear picture of aboriginal dress. Mrs. Ludson believed men wore one-piece knee-length skirts of shredded

bark or grass, like those of the women, or, on gala occasions, beaded "buckskin pants" (the latter probably being an article seen on the reservation). John Albert thought men wore breechclout and leggings. From our knowledge of neighboring groups, we may assume that men dispensed with any sort of apparel in mild weather. Both sexes used a rain cape woven (?) of shredded bark, or a mantle of fur or buckskin. Hats were not worn, according to the informants. Mrs. Ludson described buckskin moccasins worn on trips to the mountains; Albert said these were postreservation manufactures, copied from Yakima and Warm Springs styles. Both men and women wore their hair long. Women habitually wore it in two braids; men at times braided or knotted it to keep it out of the way. Women used red paint as a cosmetic to prevent sun- and wind burn, painting even the parting of their hair. According to one informant, men did the same. Men plucked their beards, and a woman who cared for her appearance kept her eyebrows trimmed to thin arching lines.

Both men and women used a variety of ornaments. The more elaborate and valuable were used only on festive occasions, of course. Men wore dentalia or bone pendants in their ears and noses, according to their wealth. Women wore necklaces and ear ornaments. The daughter of a rich man would tie dentalia in her hair so that they covered her head "like a cap." Facial tattoos were not used. There were no hairbrushes. Combs, much like our own but coarser, were carved from one piece of wood.

## UTENSILS AND TEXTILES—FIRE—TOBACCO AND SMOKING

*Utensils and textiles.*—Two kinds of receptacles were used. Cooking vessels and dishes were carved of wood, usually maple or alder. Cedar was not used because it gave an unpleasant taste to food. The cooking vessels were described as large, trough-like affairs. The dishes were round; Mrs. Ludson compared their shape to that of modern mixing bowls. The informants denied use of wooden mortars of the sort used by the Upper Chinook.

Other containers, for storage, carrying, and so on, were of basketry. Split spruce roots were closely twined to make the deep, round "water buckets" and berry baskets. Other baskets were flexible bags, woven in the shape of a blunt wedge, wider at the top than at the bottom. Materials were rushes and tough beach grasses. In a specimen which Mrs. Ludson made, the flat rectangular bottom was made over a board of proper dimensions, which could be removed when the basket was finished. Some carrying baskets were made in a coarse openwork. Large openings were always left along the top, through which the tumpline was threaded, and by means of which the basket could be lashed shut when used for storage. Smaller baskets of the same shape, but of finer work and with elaborate decoration in black (fern) and white (xerophyllum ?), were made for trinkets. Coiled basketry was a northern (Klickitat) product occasionally obtained in trade.

A number of plants supplied fiber for cordage. Two kinds of long, wiry grass found on the beach, the inner bark of willow, and tule leaves were used. The

preparation of all these was about the same. Women gathered the material, dried it in the sun, then soaked it in fresh water. When it was properly softened, they pounded it lightly with a convenient cobble until the fibers could be separated with the fingers. Both men and women spun two-ply cordage on the thigh. No spindles were used. Rope was made by braiding (?) a number of cords together. Tumplines, with a flat woven forehead band and braided ends, were made of the same cordage.

Tule mats were made, and served a multitude of uses. They were sewn with a long, curved, wooden needle, and were made double (probably the stems were twined in the middle, bent double, and each half sewn separately; the ends would be twined or plaited together). Neither informant recalled use of a creaser. Mrs. Ludson referred a number of times to "grass mats," but did not know how they were made. Checkerwork mats of cedar bark, so popular north of the Columbia, were not made by the Alsea.

*Fire.*—Fire was kindled with a simple drill of hardwood and a willow hearth. Heating and cooking fires were built of sticks laid against a backlog. The fireplace in the house was not in a pit, but on the level of the rest of the floor.

A slow match for carrying fire on a journey was made by twisting (or binding ?) shredded cedar bark into a thick rope. This was carried coiled in a basket, the smoldering end hanging out over the edge.

Both men and women got firewood. Fagots were tied in a bundle to be carried with the tumpline.

*Tobacco and smoking.*—Tobacco was said to have been grown in small sheltered plots well away from the village. Only a few men knew the procedure, practical and magical, necessary for raising it. For smoking, it was mixed with dried and mashed kinnikinnik leaves. It was never chewed. Small sacks of buckskin were used as tobacco containers; these may perhaps have been of a type similar to the pipe-and-tobacco sack of northwest California.

Pipes of two types were in use. One was a straight wooden pipe, concave in outline, and undecorated. The other was said to have been of elbow type, with a stone bowl and elderberry-shoot stem.

So far as either informant knew, tobacco was not used for offerings as in northwest California.

## MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS—DOGS—GAMES

*Musical instruments.*—The list of Alsea musical instruments is not at all long. Bone whistles, wrapped with wild-cherry bark and sinew, were used in the man-slayer's purification dance. Double whistles, and perhaps flutes, of wood, were played for amusement. Roof boards thumped with poles did duty as drums in shamanistic dances. Tambourine drums were introduced only during reservation times. A buzzer, used as a toy, was made of a flat disk of wood, with two perforations through which strings were passed. The strings were twisted by swinging the disk with a circular motion, and when pulled they unwound, producing a buzzing noise.

*Dogs.*—Aboriginal dogs were described as medium in size, with pointed ears, curled tail, and hair of medium length. They varied in color, piebalds being not uncommon. Dogs were named from their appearance; for example, "white neck" (ugat). These names were not considered to be property. Dogs were not kenneled, nor, one may suppose, did they receive much care. Only a few were trained to aid in hunting. They were not eaten, because they were "like persons." When a dog died it was simply thrown into the bush, not buried. There were few other pets. Mrs. Ludson, when a child, had a tame sea gull; it was not caged, but was free to come and go as it liked.

*Games.*—The following games were described as ancient. Probably these do not exhaust the list. Shinny, with a hardwood ball, was played by men and women separately. The ball was buried at the start of play. There was a hoop-and-pole game, but John Albert, who reported it, could not describe the exact method of playing. Men gambled at lahal, played with two pairs of bones. After the removal to the reservation, the many-stick game played by southwest Oregon Déné had great vogue, as did the grass game of Shasta and Takelma. Women also played the common beaver-tooth dice game. Tops, buzzers, cat's cradles, and the like were amusements much in favor.[7]

## CALENDAR—ECLIPSE

*Calendar.*—The moon count was of the descriptive type. Its chief peculiarity lay in the fact that certain names were derived from games which were played at that particular period only. Frachtenberg was able to obtain a longer list of names than I; his information on this subject follows:

> The Alsea divided the year into periods corresponding more or less to our months. The name of each month was usually determined by the particular berries picked or by the varieties of games played during the period. Thus, February was called "the month for spearing" (i.e., a spear-throwing game); March was called "the month for top spinning"; April was referred to as "the month for rolling hoops"; May was called "the month for picking salmon berries"; July was indicated as "the month for picking salal berries"; etc.[8]

John Albert recalled the following names: qa'atoxskenq (*ca.* July–August), "month when salmon arrive"; qea'ahtoskenq (*ca.* October), "month when they cease drying salmon"; xeqeyaikenq (midwinter; i.e., December ?), "month for telling myths"; wosaikenq, "month of top spinning"; phapashawaikenq, "month for making cat's cradles." No more were remembered, nor did the informants know when the count began. Summer and winter solstices were noted, but had nothing to do with the calendar.

Bundles of sticks were made up as mnemonics, one being broken each day, or moon, or whatever were the units to be counted.

*Eclipse.*—An eclipse of the moon was believed to be caused by great flocks of birds, chiefly birds of prey, such as eagles, hawks, ravens, and the like, who

[7] Frachtenberg's texts on Alsea games add: target shooting with arrows, throwing spears at grass bundle, ring and pin with skunk-cabbage blossoms, whipping tops, and grace sticks (?). L. J. Frachtenberg, Alsea Texts and Myths, BAE–B 67, 1920.

[8] Frachtenberg, *op. cit.*, 204, fn.

flew up into the sky to fight the moon. When this occurred, people turned dishes and even canoes upside down, lest some of the moon's blood be caught. Beyond this, nothing was done.[9]

## WEALTH

Dentalia were the most important wealth tokens. The Alsea knew that the shells came to them from the northward. They believed that in a far land a fierce tribe jealously guarded its monopoly of the dentalia grounds. These most fortunate, if niggardly, people subsisted entirely on the flesh of the dentalia (which the Alsea were sure must be delicious), piling the shells in great heaps on the beach. All this became known when an Alsea hero visited this land long ago. The inhabitants treated him well, as befitted a voyager from so far, feasting him with dentalium flesh, but they refused to let him carry away any shells. In leaving, he managed to drag his canoe over one of the shell heaps so that some stuck in the hull, and thus he laid the cornerstone of all Alsea fortunes.

The informants did not know precisely how dentalia were graded and strung. A distinction was made between the large or "money sizes" (aqaiyu) and the small ones used for necklaces (kumtoic, and qwaphelautus). These latter were strung in fathoms and their value was relatively small. The "money sizes" may have been strung in tens. They were decorated, usually by incising. It is not clear whether the Alsea did this or whether the shells were already ornamented when they got them.

Mrs. Ludson said her people made clamshell beads which were about as valuable as the dentalia; the other informant thought these, too, were traded in. Redheaded-woodpecker scalps, so dear to the hearts of northwest Californians, had no value until reservation times. A few men of great wealth had robes of the silky black or brown fur of the sea otter, which were, so to speak, crown jewels.

Slaves were another item of wealth, though the informants insisted their people never went on slave raids, but only bought and sold captives of their neighbors. A slave was quite valuable, being reckoned the equivalent at least of the bride price of a girl of good family. There were probably never very many at any one time.

## SOCIAL LIFE

It is not an easy task to restore the time-faded picture of Alsea social life. The domination of European culture and the early dwindling of population have dulled its tints until all perspective has been lost. From what the informants knew of aboriginal conditions, and from our knowledge of neighboring cultures, however, we can work out the salient features of the society.

Like all other groups along the coast south of Cape Flattery, the Alsea did

[9] According to Frachtenberg's information, an eclipse portended the death of some person of wealth. At a shaman's behest people drummed on the houses with sticks, danced, and sang. Vessels were turned over, the reason being the same as that given by my informants. (Frachtenberg, *op. cit.*, 229.)

not constitute a real tribe. They were a linguistic division occupying a number of autonomous villages. The sole intervillage ties were individual ones of blood and marriage. Each village had its headman (kiautc). The informants believed a large village might have two or three headmen, certainly no more. Only by oversynthesis could these headmen be pictured as forming a noble class.[10] Among none of the neighboring peoples were lines of caste clean-cut, or of much moment: wealth, rather than birth, was what counted in this region. Mrs. Ludson stated,

> The kiautc was kind of boss. He was supposed to look after the people. If they were hungry, he would give them something to eat, if he had anything. Sometimes if they caught a lot of fish, they would give him some. [But apparently he could not demand that they do so.] He would advise the people, but they didn't have to do what he said.

John Albert added,

> The kiautc got just the same kind of food as the other people. He dressed the same, except when something was going on [i.e., on ceremonial occasions]. Then he would wear a sea-otter skin (robe), if he had one, and more dentalia than a poor person. The kiautc had to work just like anyone else, unless he had a slave to help him. He might have several wives because he was rich and could afford to buy them.

It seems clear enough that a person was regarded as a headman because of the wealth which he inherited from his father. He had little or no real authority. His "rank" got him only the respect given the possessor of worldly goods; the concept of nobility of blood was beyond Alsea ken. Conversely, no sharp stigma or handicaps attached to the poor man's status. Such a one fared about as well in daily life as did his headman. If he needed a sum of valuables, to purchase a wife, for example, his relatives and headman helped him. It is long since too late to obtain certain proof, but the information on social life and the relationship between rich and poor that could be gleaned reminds one strongly of the situation in northwest California and southwest Oregon, where the richman-chief was simply the nominal head of a paternal kin group. All the data at hand—the small groups, mutual-aid obligations between rich and poor, lack of sharp caste distinctions or chiefly prerogatives—point to such a simple social order.

Farrand has published a list of Alsea kin terms.[11] My informants added some designations which he does not give, and gave a few which differed from Farrand's lists. For comparison, Farrand's terms which differed markedly either lexically or phonetically from mine will be given in parentheses. Farrand obtained his information thirty years earlier than I, when there were more people who spoke the language and the kinship system was no doubt in daily use. At most points of difference his list is more likely the correct one.

[10] Farrand (Notes on the Alsea . . ., AA, n.s., 3:242, 1901) speaks of three social classes, the "nobility," commoners, and slaves, but adds that a common man, by reason of extraordinary power or wealth, could rise to the dignity of chief and thus raise his family in rank. This indicates the instability of "rank" and the importance of wealth among the Alsea. Such promotion would be inconceivable to people who had really stratified social groups, as, for example, Nootka or Kwakiutl.

[11] Farrand, *op. cit.*, 244.

Blood kin, sunhitslum (lit., "my people")
f, taah (F: tā)
m, Lieh
gp, ti'tcaxt (F: tīt)
o b, o♂ // c, hat'
y b, y♂ // c, motcik

s, qwon
d, piâ'ts (F: pīätc)
gch, sintciph, (F: k'e'p)[12]
o ss, o♀ // c, saa
y ss, y♀ // c, qâsânt; (mn sp.); k'ahtim (wm. sp.) (F: no difference according to sp.: k'sint)

o xc, hiyus (F: no age difference: hia)
y xc, hiya'n
m b, f ss, tats (F: tatc)
f b, sihpk
m ss, kimiL

ss ch (mn sp.), b ch (wm sp.), sihpxun
b s (mn sp.), ss s (wm sp.), tumamus
b d (mn sp.), ss d (wm sp.), tkots (F: b s, tEmāmus; ss s, sīpxan; b d, tk'ōōtc; ss d, sīpxan)

Affinal kin: awiLlio
h, siht

w, mokwasLi
co-w, h b w, tcaqai

pl, mâl

sl, mon
dl, maton

w b, ss h (mn sp.), komhat
w ss, b w (mn sp.), h b, ss h (wm sp.), tumaxt
h ss, b w (wm sp.), mâsoxstau
ch pl, kiman

The most important difference in the two lists is found in the terms for the nephew-niece class. Since the terms as my informants gave them are consistent with the peculiar classification of the mother's brother and father's sister, I should be inclined to consider these more nearly correct than Farrand's. On the other hand, I am somewhat skeptical of my younger-sister terms which differ according to sex of the speaker. Probably Farrand's single term is correct.

Marriage to close kin was prohibited. The informants felt definitely that it was possible, even commendable, to marry someone who was a distant relative, but just how distant they could not say. Apparently they meant by this that it was considered better to take as a spouse one who was addressed as a relative by virtue of the classificatory kinship system (and not because of any easily traceable blood relationship) than to seek a mate among strangers. It is scarcely necessary to remark that although an Alsea called a multitude of people "sibling" and "cousin," he had no doubts of which were his real blood kin and which were thus addressed by custom and courtesy.

The elders arranged matrimonial alliances for their children. A young man's parents sent an intermediary to the family of the girl they fancied as daughter-in-law. The intermediary's duty was to arrange the amount of the bride price, as well as to deliver it. The bridegroom, accompanied by his relatives, came for the bride. Residence was patrilocal as a rule, but the husband might reside for a time with his parents-in-law before returning home.

The woman's family usually gave a dowry (when their son-in-law took his

[12] My term may contain the first-person possessive prefix (sun), in which case the difference is smaller than appears at first glance.

bride home, perhaps). There was no standard amount, nor was the sum ever arranged beforehand. That given by a wealthy man, informants believed, might very nearly equal the bride price, and all the bridegroom's family got a share of it. There were no essential differences between marriages in rich and in poor families except in the amounts transferred. Some wealth had to be given to legitimatize the union. John Albert said a woman's kin would kill the man who "took her for nothing"; perhaps poor folk reacted less violently.

Divorce was easily arranged. In cases of adultery, the woman's seducer might pay damages (the amount of her bride price ?) and keep her as his wife. Anyway, he had to pay compensation. Should the fault be the husband's (for infidelity), a woman returned to her parents. Her husband had to compensate her family before they would allow her to return to him. In cases of separation the bride price was refunded at least in part. Mrs. Ludson did not believe that barrenness gave grounds for divorce; "he would just get another wife." Polygyny was doubtless restricted, however, to men of means. Some few men were married simultaneously to several sisters.

A marriage once contracted established a bond of no small importance between the two families. Theoretically, if a man's wife died he had the right to demand a return of his bride price (perhaps this was only if she died childless). Actually, so the informants said, the dead wife's family would have considered such a demand a grave insult. The implication would be that the widower and his kin had no regard for them. A feud might be precipitated as a result. Therefore a widower usually espoused some kinswoman of his former wife. The same principle seems to have applied when the husband died; for even though there was no available male relative of the deceased, the latter's family retained a claim on her. An outsider would have to pay them in order to marry her. The informants were not certain whether the widow's family were paid if she remarried.

Conflicts between persons and families were adjusted by blood payments. Mrs. Ludson was convinced that an affair "paid for" was never wholly settled, but was likely to flare up anew on the least occasion. "Payments were supposed to stop troubles, but they didn't really." Whatever the actual working out of the wergild system may have been, we may be sure that the blood-money concept was a social force of significance, as it was in most other Northwest Coast cultures. At the same time, it is no less certain that the Alsea system was not nearly so elaborately and consistently worked out as that of the inhabitants of the lower Klamath.

The amount of internecine and intervillage strife in former times is impossible to estimate. That bitter feuds arose, especially over witchcraft, seems probable, yet one doubts if the Alsea were as prone to violence as the volatile, prideful Tolowa to the south. It would be hazardous to judge the temper of a nation, even a tiny one, from the personalities of two of its members, yet it may be indicative that the two informants were possessed of a gentleness and kindliness of nature rare among Northwest Coast people. Even more significant, perhaps, is the view that a man-killer was in a most dangerous predica-

ment. Supernatural vengeance seems to have been feared even more than retaliation by the living. A slayer kept a sleepless vigil for five days, fasting and sweating; then he danced outdoors before a fire, blowing a bird-bone whistle. So strenuous was the training that his kinsmen often had to support him, for he might be too weak to stand alone. He danced until he received some supernatural token that he was out of peril. Mrs. Ludson thought that he might see the spirit of his victim. Just why such a vision should release him is not clear. If he did not get the proper revelation, he had to continue his training for another five-day period. The way of the transgressor was hard indeed; and he usually came to an evil end.

## LIFE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

Pregnancy was indicated by cessation of the menses and spells of nausea. The gestation period was said to be longer for the first child than for subsequent ones; women kept count of the time (by moons ?). Sex relations were continued until pregnancy was well advanced. When the woman's time came, someone who had special power was called to assist at the birth. The informants were not sure from what being a midwife's power came, but from it, they said, she learned how to care for a parturient, and to understand the language of a newborn infant. Parturition took place in the dwelling house. The parturient supported herself in a semisitting position by holding to cords fastened to the roof beams. The midwife cut the umbilical cord with a stone knife, and when the afterbirth had been expelled she hid it in the woods; the woman would bear no more children if the placenta were burned. The infant was placed in a cradle. Although neither informant had ever seen an old Alsea cradle, they supposed it to have been similar to the wooden trough-like affairs used by the Lower Chinook and Tillamook. The baby's arms and legs were rubbed to make them grow straight; a head-presser was put on the baby shortly after birth. "Only a slave would have an unflattened head." The mother lay in for five days, abstaining from fresh food and cold water. She did not have to use a scratching stick. Her husband was subject to no restrictions whatsoever, it is said. All the things used during childbearing—mats, the knife, and so forth—were given to the midwife as pay. After a few days, when the stump of the umbilical cord detached, it was put in a little skin sack and tied to the child's cradle.

The child born last of twins was called "afterbirth" and was killed; it was not a real person. Mrs. Ludson said she never heard of an Indian woman bearing triplets. If a means of producing abortions was known to some, it was kept secret. Mrs. Ludson believed possessors of such knowledge might be hired to use their medicine or power, whatever it was. She had known a young Alsea woman in the early reservation days who bound herself tightly to cause abortions, "but it didn't seem to do much good, for she had four bastards anyhow."

Infants were all left-handed when small, it was said. Most changed to right-handedness as they grew, but some did not. A left-handed person was stronger than a dexterous one.

When a child was five days old a feast was given for it, which was attended by the families of its parents. It appears to have been usual for the woman's parents to come to stay with their daughter at the time of her first childbearing. They were given presents as though "to buy their daughter some more." These gifts they reciprocated. This was done only for the first-born child. "The rest have already been paid for." Aside from this usage there was little emphasis on primogeniture. All children were considered equally good.

Two other important events took place while the child was still quite small, perhaps even at the time of the feast. Its nose and ears were pierced, and it was given a name. One of its paternal relatives bestowed the name, giving his own or that of some deceased kinsman (whereby the name taboo was lifted). Names were inherited in this fashion for generations. Many were untranslatable. Mrs. Ludson's name was łiwea'hal; it had been her (paternal) grandmother's. Some other women's names were: tsumsla', q'witshun, satiLàn, nestasn (all untranslatable), słtowaitsło ("covering" or "sheltering" ?). Some men's names recalled were: kaihos, mqoqwoits (untranslatable), kłiyu ("maul"), qwoł ("thumb"), tcskoholeo ("walker" ?). These names were used in address. Nicknames, referring to personal peculiarities, were common. It may be supposed that objectionable ones would not be used to refer to a person in his presence.

The first of any sort of game a youth took he had to give to the old people. It was taboo for him to eat it himself; bad luck would befall him should he do so. A girl too had to give away the first fruits of her industry, the berries, roots, or shellfish she gathered. Otherwise she would become selfish, and no one would like her. Nor would she ever be able to gather as much of that particular food again if she ate of it herself.

Shortly before puberty, and for a time afterward, a boy might be sent on a spirit quest. Not all boys sought power, however. Only those who showed an interest in supernatural experience, or those who were "sickly, or different" (psychologically unstable ?), were sure to be sent out.

A girl at puberty was confined for five days. During this time she lay on her bed in the house, screened from view by mats. She abstained from all food and drink. Early each morning she bathed, using a wood bowl. She used a scratching stick, which she wore suspended from a necklace. On the fifth day an old woman combed the girl's hair and tied dentalia in it, put ornaments in her ears and nose, and painted her face red. The proctor "prayed" for her protégée (recited a formula ?) and fed her. For five mornings at dawn she took the lass, veiled with a robe or mat, to a brush hut in the woods, and each evening brought her home to be fed. The girl might work on baskets during the day if she liked. This part of the ritual seems to have been in the nature of a spirit quest, for some girls obtained supernatural guardians at this time. At the end of the second five-day period the proctor trimmed the girl's hair in bangs across her forehead, and tattooed rows of dots on her wrists to strengthen them for womanly tasks. There was no public performance of any sort. As reward for her services the proctor received the mats and other things used by the girl.

Restrictions of women at subsequent menses were not severe. The strictest

rule was that she must avoid the sick, for her presence would do them harm. A menstruant was allowed only dried food (except red huckleberries, which she might eat fresh when they were in season). She was not confined in any fashion, although she stayed about the house and refrained from strenuous work. Her husband might fish or hunt during this time. He kept his gear and weapons out of the way lest she come in contact with them. A woman did not use a head scratcher during her periods.

At death the body was dressed in its best garments, and the hair combed just as in life. It was flexed tightly and bound up in mats. Mrs. Ludson said she had never heard that her people took a corpse out by any other way than the door. Canoes were used as depositories for the dead. They were not raised on posts, but rested on the ground, covered with boards or with another canoe. Holes were made so that no one would be tempted to take them. The canoes of the dead were placed not far from the village; Mrs. Ludson recalled playing near them as a small girl. Sometimes several members of a family would be put one after another in the same canoe. Valuables, such as dentalia and clamshell beads, were used as grave offerings.

Now and then, it was related, a rich person might be interred in his house, which would be burned down. Otherwise, houses were not destroyed at death.

After the burial, close kin of the deceased were taken to the river by a shaman and washed to remove contamination resulting from contact with the dead. The doctor's power enabled him to discern such dangerous infection. Whether the rite involved more than a simple washing could not be learned. Probably it was not elaborate.

On a widow's return to the house, her hair was cut to her ears, and burned. She wore old clothes, did not paint her face, and ate only dried food for perhaps half a year (or five months ?). Every morning she bathed, then went to wail at her spouse's burial place. At the end of the time, she was bathed again by the shaman to free her from the restrictions, and her dead husband's people painted her face, telling her to sorrow no longer. The mourning observances of parents and widowers were the same, but of shorter duration.

## FIRST-SALMON RITES

The observances connected with the season's first catch of salmon were not of great moment. Mrs. Ludson had no knowledge of such rites. John Albert said that after a weir was built, the owner of the place cooked and ate the first salmon trout caught. All its bones were wrapped up in the leaves of a water plant to be saved until enough salmon had been caught to feast all the people. Then the package was unceremoniously thrown away. "After that it was all over; you could throw fishbones anywhere."

## SHAMANISM

The chief religious outlet of the Alsea lay in shamanism. There were no ceremonials of great importance. Occasions elaborately celebrated by other peoples—crises of life, first fruits, and the like—were observed with but meager

ritual. In this respect, however, the Alsea were not unlike their neighbors, for (except for such late introductions as the Lower Chinook secret society) ceremonialism was little emphasized by any of the Lower Columbians. These nations were interested only in individual supernatural experience, and the same general pattern of shamanism prevailed among them all.

Power derived from the acquisition of a guardian spirit (solhàtłiu). Minor guardians might be obtained in a chance encounter, but those of importance were met only after a long quest, which involved fasting and solitary vigils in the woods. Most prospective shamans began their training quite young. Preadolescents of either sex were sent out by their parents, either because they showed aptitude for the calling by dreaming a great deal, or because their parents wished them to become shamans on account of the lucrative nature of the calling. A close relative who was a shaman usually had a hand in urging the child to go out, and in instructing him. One reason for this early beginning may have been that persons old enough to realize the hardships and dangers of the profession were loath to undertake it. So it had been with Mrs. Ludson, at least, and she thought that many others reacted similarly.

There were a variety of supernatural beings which one might meet. Many kinds of birds and animals and a few natural phenomena (sun, moon, comet, thunder, west wind) were potential guardian spirits. There were also beings, such as a long-haired female woods sprite (osun), who gave power. A person might have several subsidiary spirits besides the main one; in fact, the more powerful shamans usually had a number of spirits. Laymen knew about the spirits only in a general way; people who had them were secretive about their experiences with the supernatural. Apparently the being appeared in a dream after the seeker had fasted, bathed, and remained alone long enough. In this dream or vision, the guardian told his protégé how and when to train, visiting him in dreams from time to time to instruct him in the shamanistic arts. Songs, special regalia and paints, and similar tokens, would be "given" to the novice in this fashion. The latter continued his training in secret for a fairly long time, often until after he had reached maturity.

Finally his familiar spirit told him to undertake the novice dance (phkilhit). The novice's relatives would be ready to help, for they were expecting him to dance. Repeated absences, fasting, and troubled sleep revealed the supposedly secret quest. Two or three accredited shamans were hired (or perhaps, if relatives, volunteered their services) to assist the novice, singing and dancing with him. The people sat about singing. Some drummed on the roof boards with long poles "carved to look like persons." (These may have been rude representations of the novice's familiars, as, for example, the Quinault "tamanawous sticks," but a specific statement to that effect could not be obtained.) It is not clear whether the novice sought to demonstrate his shamanistic abilities, to hang out his shingle, as it were, or if he danced to gain control of the supernatural power. Sometimes he fell unconscious in the midst of the performance. The assisting shamans hastened to revive him. Laymen interpreted such an event variously. Some believed the older doctors threw "pains" at the novice

to test him; others thought "his own power came on him too strong." Only shamans themselves knew what really happened to them in the dance, and they were not disposed to tell. The performance was repeated for a number of nights, and apparently at intervals for several winters, until the novice was informed by his guardian that he was ready to begin curing. Then he tried his hand at doctoring someone (perhaps free of charge), and, if successful, would be a full-fledged shaman (tcuyaLicLo).

When a person became ill, his relatives sent for a shaman. The messenger served as an intermediary, for the fee was offered and accepted before the doctor would come. Perhaps a part of the sum was handed over then and there. Informants were not sure about the degree of a shaman's obligation to take a case when called. Likely enough a refusal, if the fee offered were reasonable, would be taken to mean that he harbored ill will toward the sick man, and it would be but a step from this to an accusation of culpability in the illness.

The paraphernalia a shaman took along varied according to the instructions of his familiars. He would have about his person amulets such as he had seen in his dreams, usually objects indicating the nature of his guardian. For instance, a shaman with a Wolf or Bluejay spirit would have some ornaments of wolf fur or bluejay feathers. Each shaman had his own style of face paint. Most shamans wore wide belts of elkhide. Each probably took along his own set of carved sticks for thumping against the roof boards.

When he arrived at the patient's side, the shaman began to sing, accompanied by the spectators. He did no preliminary smoking. As he sang, "his power came closer to him." Finally he began to dance. If his guardian spirit had granted him power to work minor miracles—such tricks, for example, as fire eating, plunging the hands in boiling water, sprinkling the patient with water which turned to blood—he displayed them. As the dance progressed he became frenzied, until at last he attained a state in which "he could see everything, all over the world." Through this clairvoyance he could diagnose the patient's malady. It might be that the sick person's soul (salsxum) had left him. Often sickness was caused by a disease object (łqulisxàm) lodged in his body, sent by some enemy or contracted by breach of some taboo. Or the sickness might result from a combination of the two. (Sometimes the disease object seems to have driven out the soul. This of course was quite serious.) To recover a vagrant soul the shaman sang, sending his familiar. He did not go himself, either in person or in spirit. When a person really died, his soul traveled swiftly northward to the place where it crossed in a canoe to the Land of the Dead, whence there was no returning. In soul-loss sickness, however, a soul seems to have loitered along the way, so that the shaman's familiar had a chance to overtake it.

To extract a disease object, the doctor threw himself on the patient either to suck it out or to draw it out with his hands. When he had it firmly, two assistants grasped him by his wide leather belt to draw him back. Such was the power of the malignant particle that it was all two brawny men could do to hold the shaman, once he had it in his grasp. If he had sucked the object out,

he spat it into his hands. His helpers seized his arms and by main strength forced them into a basket of water. This weakened the disease object. Then the shaman displayed it—a luminous white thing "like a little worm." The nature of these pains is rather vague. They were sometimes, at least, partly identified with spirits, so that when a shaman crushed one of them between his teeth and swallowed it, his powers were increased just as though he had met another guardian. At times, the informants spoke of the disease objects as if they had no connection at all with the guardian spirits.

If in his clairvoyance a doctor saw that he could not cure the patient, he was at liberty to announce the fact, pronouncing him past saving or recommending another practitioner. For his efforts he would get a portion of the promised fee. Should he attempt to cure, but fail, he was entitled to nothing. It was customary, however, to give him a small amount to repay his trouble, for a shaman was not the sort of person to be deliberately antagonized. Even if the kin of a sick man suspected malpractice, they usually would pay to allay the doctor's suspicions, biding their time until an opportunity for vengeance should present itself.

Besides their main business of curing, shamans were called on for various other tasks. A failure of the salmon run was usually attributed to magic. Some evilly disposed person might have put a disease object or a corpse in the river. A good shaman was expected to dance, calling on his familiar to reveal to him the cause of the threatened famine. When he had learned what it was, the people accompanied him to the place disclosed in his revelation. They sang the shaman's songs as he danced, until he could go out in a canoe to remove the malevolent object with a pole. The more daring of the men paddled for him.

For any food shortage, shamans were expected to do the same sort of thing without pay; those who sang for him also were not remunerated. The doctor's reward lay in the fame he thus acquired; his assistants felt compensated in having averted the famine.

It was a shaman, too, who was called on to bathe mourners after the burial of a kinsman, and again after the prescribed period to remove the taboos placed on them. Sometimes a doctor was requested to dance to foresee the future, predicting a famine or plenty from his vision.

Any good fortune or special talent attributed to minor gifts was most commonly the result of a chance encounter with some supernatural being, but might be conferred as the result of a quest.

There was another class of doctors (t'umsa) that approximated the formulists of northwest California. Whether or not this institution was truly aboriginal is not certain; the writer is of the opinion that it may have been acquired during the close contact with southern groups (southwest Oregon Déné) in reservation days. Such doctors cured minor ills by singing. They did not recapture souls, nor did they extract disease objects. The source of their power was not clear to the informants, who surmised that it may have been derived from guardian spirits. This would of course be quite inconsonant with the northwest Californian concept—for there the power resided in the

formulaic recitatives themselves. Both informants were sure these doctors did not perform the usual public novice dance, but thought they may have danced in secret. Because the t'umsa was therefore not always publicly known to possess supernatural power, it was all the easier for him to indulge in black magic. Indeed, he more often "poisoned" than cured.

The penalty for witchcraft by a shaman or anyone else was vengeance by his victim's kin. The informants were not sure that a "poisoner" could pay his way clear with wergild. If he did, it was merely a postponement of his ultimate fate.

The status of doctor possessed both advantages and disadvantages. The ease with which a shaman acquired wealth was its chief attraction. There was no other way by which a poor man could hope to become rich. Social prominence was his as well, for his services were in demand on other occasions than curing—bringing food in time of need, and so on. But in addition to the long, weary training period, the shaman's path was beset with dangers. Once let the suspicion of black magic be directed against him and his race was run. It was only a matter of time until a dying man's kinsman, mad with grief, would hurl himself on the hapless doctor, or send an arrow through him from ambush. No less efficacious were the wizardries worked against him, it was said. And in the informants' opinion he merited his fate, for few shamans could resist the temptation to use their power for evil, for hire, or to settle a personal grudge. One scarcely knows whether to admire or sympathize with the child who was cast, most often not of his own volition, to play the only spectacular rôle in the humdrum little drama of Alsea life.