

As I accompany sailing and powered vessels to the waters of Gwaii Haanas, I note that some ships' logs record these waters of the Hecate Strait as being much warmer. At TildaGaaw HIGaaga GawGa (*De la Beche*) in 2015, despite the fully running creek at the head of the bay, the water temperature was 18°C and very salty. In the open Hecate Strait, the ocean temperature was measured at 16°C.

With the drought conditions we have experienced each summer since 2015, our village council and maintenance have put us on water rations. The ancestors chose this site because the water availability was never an issue and the lake behind HIGaagilda provided a reliable source of fresh, clean, drinking water all year round. When I was a child, there were less than 200 residents, and now there are more than 900. This 80% growth is a result of changes to the *Indian Act* (Bill C-31) reinstating women and bringing them and their families home once more.

SGang Gwaay Lnagaay has been severely impacted, this time by GwiihlGihl (*hurricane force winds, or turning like a drill*) in December 2018. Trees, due to the shallow soil and lack of understory, toppled and damaged a large part of the forest adjacent to the old village. Erosion along the shoreline continues to happen as the tides and sea level rise.



Note. Photos with permission from Stacey Brown.

Figure 3. Photos of the Water Action at Kaahl Guusda GuuhlGa Kun in 2014, Showing Unusual Winds and Wave Action

KilGuuhlGa (Discussion or Talking it Over)

The information from workshop participants suggests that reducing the carbon footprint by the people living on Haida Gwaii (and those existing off/or extracting her resources) starts by transforming the current Canadian governance system. The first step is to understand the history of where the governance system came from and what impacts it has had on our people. In context of the *British North American Act*, and the *Indian Act*, I think now, that all those things, from the 1400s to the present, including climate change, are connected to these laws and the actions of capitalism. Once Canadian laws and their origins are understood, the next challenge is to look at the alternatives that could provide options and embrace respectful, inclusive, open, honest governance that treats all beings with respect and considers the long-term effects of climate change and other environmental losses. Given this, we may be able use our laws to reverse the effects of climate change so we can survive and thrive once more.

Kil ad Kil Yahdas (Law and Language)

Living in one place for thousands of years, our Nation has heard, learned, and practised kil yahdas, kil ad isda jii.nga (*and doing something for a long time*) as our kuuniisii did. The kil yahdas Gaal kingda (*showing around*) guided the kuniisii on how to live as 'laa guu ga kanhlln on this tllwaay (*canoe*) called Tllga AwGa (*Mother Earth*). These laws and ways of doing things, whether handing down an inheritance, gathering from the lands and oceans, building a house, or caring for each other, are the intricate threads woven into our life ways. The underpinnings of Haida kil yahdas are gud 'laa (*agree*), aasang.Guu (*doing something together*), ista ad isgid (*give and take or reciprocity*), and 'laa guu ga kanhlln, yahguudang.ngaay, yahk'ii (*speak truth*). They reside inside us and need to be reactivated and practised. Haida governance and laws have been disrupted by colonial efforts over the last few hundred years. We are resilient beings; re-activating and practising the old laws will be part of decolonizing as we acknowledge that the laws from across the seas do not work when examining the difference between capitalism and Haida kil yahdas. Gathering more for oneself has not worked; our laws tell us to only take what we need and to share. t

Our ancient systems still exist, and our modern government, the Council of the Haida Nation, works to safeguard the lands, waters, and people. Ancient stories tell us that we have a responsibility to live in balance on Xaayda Gwaay.yaay, including all our neighbours. The Haida Nation has initiated a title case in the courts to gain recognition of the rightful jurisdiction and rights to our Islands.

kihlgulas ad chii.a 'laa (speak truth and live with honour) is part of the way-of-living with all beings, whether animate or inanimate, whether living in the waters, on the lands, or in the skies; all beings deserve to be respected (Niis Wes, n.d., personal communication; George, 2018, personal communication).

The old laws are the foundation upon which our communities can strategize and design options to address climate change, offer relevant education, and accept the responsibility of making the world better for future generations.

Tllsda Gaagwii (*long, long time ago*; Wilson, 2005), this way of keeping balance by our kuuniisii was, and continues to be, an excellent building foundation for changes which need to happen. Ista ad isgid instructs that you must give something to keep free of obligations and honour the person or object that has given you something, whether it is food, fibre, medicine, or spiritual sustenance. I remember lessons taught to me when I was taken to Indian Residential School; my mom told me, never accept or take something from someone without tll yahda (*to make right*), meaning I needed to give something of equal value to the person who gave to me. I received information through the survey, and I have an obligation to honour those giving it by tll yahda. Along with honouring those who provided me with information, it is necessary to pass the way of doing things on to the younger generations.

Our laws are handed down to the younger generations through stories of past events and the consequences of ignoring them. A story gathered and recorded by Carter in 1977 called “The Vanished Oolichans” speaks of what happens when people take more than they need. In this story, Nang kilslas (*He who must be obeyed*) tells the ‘Laana AwGalang (*Town Chiefs*) the following:

You have been unwise in your treatment of the Oolichan River and have allowed your people to take more than you need, so this night as the moon rises, I will roll up the beautiful river and what remains of the little Oolichan and take it to the mainland. From this time on you and your people will have to go there and bargain for the little fish to make the oil because there will never be Oolichans in any river in the land of Haida Gwai [*sic*] again. (Carter, 1977 p. 44)

When reviewing the various words in Xaayda kil and thinking about how important it is for one to live their words, the old stories reflect the importance of yahguudang, such as gam kil daaGang.nga (*not bad speaking or making fun of other beings*) and generally yaanjahlilii xaanuu (*absolute truth*). In the stories gathered by Carter (1968), Deans (1895) and Swanton (1905a; 1908) from the Xaayda (*Haida*) living in Gaw Tlagee (*Old Massett*) and HlGaagilda Lnagaay examples are shown of what happens when we ignore these teachings.

In today’s world, we still use our old laws when dealing with various aspects of life. An example of this is found in *Raven Always Sets Things Right* (Frost, 2016), in which the writer recalls a potlatch held in 2016. During this event, the Yahgu Laanas/Yaghu Jaanas advised two of their House chiefs to apologize to their clan matriarchs and members for signing papers, using their positions to represent the proposed Enbridge Northern Gateway (ENG) pipeline. The ENG used a strategy of ‘divide and conquer’ to find people who would know individuals within the communities, hiring them to recruit the

weakest link with “standing.” What is it that this weakest link needed? The House chiefs were offered significant amounts of money that could be used to support our “culture.”

On August 4, 2015, the Haida Nation posted this along the proposed pipeline corridor:

The Council of the Haida Nation has posted a public notice in 12 community newspapers from Haida Gwaii to Williams Lake. The notice describes Enbridge’s latest campaign in communities and restates the nation’s position on the proposed project.

Our Nation is responding publicly to the tactics Enbridge is conducting behind closed doors in our communities,” stated kil tlaats ‘gaa. “Targeting individuals with a promise of ‘power and money’ is unethical and divisive, and our elected and hereditary leadership will continue to challenge these methods by speaking out and working with others to oppose this project.”

After waiting several months for the House chiefs to come forward and apologize to the clans and matriarchs, the clan hosted a potlatch to remove the two chiefs who had supported the ENG pipeline from their positions. People gathered to witness the proceedings in Gaw Tlagee. Witnesses came from Coastal nations as far away as California, as well as from the Haida Nation. The House chiefs’ act of using their position to represent an outside interest impacted more clans than just their own. Before the potlatch, the Haida Nation met, discussed the ENG pipeline, and collectively agreed that the protection of lands, waters, and food security are more important than any money the proponent could offer. This story is one example of the teaching, *yahk’ii kihlgulas* (*speak truth*). The potlatch was about honouring a decision and about other clans saying to the Haida Nation, “we stand with you.” Using ancient laws, we keep balance in our clans, in ceremonies, and in the way we treat people. In our *kuuniisii*’s way, we always want to be above suspicion. Today, as in their time, it is important to live honestly and keep your word. If we fail in that, there will be repercussions.

Workshop participants in 2017 referred to various aspects where the ancient laws, such as treating all things with respect, responsibility, open discussion, truth, or living your words are applicable. In ancient times, if a person could not be trusted to tell the truth and be accountable, it meant banishment and, ultimately, death. Stories Swanton (1905a, 1905b, 1908) and Deans (1895) gathered from our *‘Laana AwGalang* remind us that we are to be held accountable for our actions when interacting with all beings. The importance of practising and upholding Haida law was reflected when participants expressed that they wanted to have the entire community involved in educating our people, reducing our carbon footprint, and positively impacting global climate change.

Everything needs to reflect our own laws. This has been the foundation of our living together and agreements with other nations for living respectfully and practising good stewardship of our territories (Brown & Brown, 2009).

This stewardship concept was brought to the world's view in 1985, when a dispute over unsustainable commercial logging eventually led to a peaceful confrontation through the Lyell Island Blockade. With the need to stop the desecration of our lands, rivers, and ocean, and with the obligation to wake up from our deep trance, the Haida Nation's stand against resource extraction and the support of people all over the world brought the federal government to the table for serious discussions. Although our Nation did not want a Parks Canada designation on the southern part of our homeland, protection was the goal. The ultimate solution was the Gwaii Haanas Agreement (<https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/bc/gwaiihaanas/info/coop/amb>), signed in 1993 between the Haida Nation and the Federal Government. This Agreement established the first fully co-managed Heritage Site/National Park Reserve with Canada, and it includes equal management representation, which now involves the collaboration of three Haida representatives and three federal government representatives. They decide on operations, conservation, and planning for all parts of our southern lands and oceans, and they aim to preserve our culture in the context of Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site (Gwaii Haanas Agreement, 1993). Today the area is expanded to include marine habitats: Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve, National Marine Conservation Area, and Haida Heritage Site. Knowing exactly what you want, what you need, and what you already have, and being prepared to hold firm on what is important, are the important skills for obtaining the intended results.

Colonization, Climate Change, and Haida Lives

The great aim of our legislation has been to do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian people in all respects with the other inhabitants of the Dominion as speedily as they are fit to change. – John A. Macdonald, 1887, (as cited in Joseph, 2016)

Participants have lived under the shadow of colonial laws and legislation, yet they have held on to ancient teachings of how to be independent and respectful, and how to be caring family members and neighbours. Papal bulls issued by the Roman Catholic Church set the road for the Doctrine of Discovery, Terra Nullius, and the *British North America Act* (BNA Act, 1867). Widespread epidemics and deliberate relocation encouraged by churches severed the heritage carriers, our women, and prevented us from using our own laws. This imposed a patriarchal system on a matriarchal system. Specifically, the *Indian Act* separated women through laws that stated that when a woman married a man outside their band, they lost their ability to live in their community. In the Haida Nation, women carry the inheritance and the knowledge of genealogy, customs, and history.

The *Indian Act* required parents to send their children to residential schools or be sent to jail. In the residential schools, we were prohibited from speaking our own language, which was part of a planned assimilation. Crown laws prevented our continued control of territories managed through ‘Waahlgahl, kihl yahda Gan id tl’aa ijii (*potlatch is our legal system*).

The colonial *BNA Act*, which originated in Great Britain, continues to have sweeping impacts on chiiGa’ad ad Tllgaay Xaayda (*Haida lands and way of life*) as commented on by the following:

Most non-Aboriginal Canadians are aware of the fact that Indigenous peoples commonly regard land rights as culturally and religiously significant. Fewer non-Natives, I suspect, would consider their own connection with property in the same light; and fewer still would regard the legal foundation of all land rights in Canada as conspicuously theological. In fact, however, it is. The relationship between law and land in Canada can be traced to a set of fifteenth century theological assumptions that have found their way into both common law and the Canadian Constitution. These assumptions, collectively referred to as the Doctrine of Discovery, were initially formulated to mediate rivalries among European states vying for sovereignty rights in the New World. Although there were antecedents to the doctrine, it was Pope Alexander VI who applied them to the Atlantic World of the fifteenth century, in a two-part papal bull known as *Inter caetera*. The Doctrine of Discovery was the legal means by which Europeans claimed rights of sovereignty, property, and trade in regions they allegedly discovered during the age of expansion. These claims were made without consultation with the resident populations in these territories—the people to whom, by any sensible account, the land actually belonged. The Doctrine of Discovery is a critical component of historical relations between Europeans, their descendants, and Indigenous peoples; and it underlies their legal relationships to this day, having smoothly transitioned from Roman Catholic to international law. Upon discovery of a territory, the doctrine held that Indigenous peoples could not claim ownership of their land, but only rights of occupation and use. In this way, colonial powers claimed pre-emptive rights while conceding only restricted title to a territory’s owners. (Reid, 2010)

The Doctrine of Discovery philosophy has been used to separate the Xaayda from our ancient traditional territories (Reid, 2010). Most of the prize trees from our forests, fish in our waters, and minerals from our lands have been removed. The trees could have been an active part of keeping our carbon footprint smaller. Instead, laws designed to protect companies and stockholders ensure that the very things which could help us protect the world from rising oceans and hotter temperatures are being removed in the name of revenue.

As a result of the *British North American Act* of 1867, provincial and federal governments have developed legislation that permits them to hold, use, and develop all lands as a source of revenue for the Crown. Colonizing governments partitioned lands, which they gave away to encourage the settlement of “empty lands” that had once been actively used and managed by First Nations peoples (Figure 4). Examples of how these lands have been changed include the creation

of roads to access areas of “resources,” the imposition of the names of people who “discovered” these areas on lands, waters, and all other features that Xaayda had previously named, the removal of forests, the pollution of waters and their sources, the modification of rivers, lakes and streams by using them to move trees down to the ocean’s edge, and the mining of resources without free, prior, informed consent (UNDRIP, 2007).

Governments passed Acts that were aimed at removing any special distinction or rights afforded First Nations peoples and at assimilating them into the larger settler population. Examples of such Acts are the *Gradual Civilization Act* of 1857 and the *Gradual Enfranchisement Act* of 1869. The *Gradual Civilization Act* assimilated First Nations peoples through voluntary enfranchisement (i.e., a First Nations person would relinquish their status in exchange for land and the right to vote), but only one person voluntarily enfranchised. As a result, the government then began unilaterally enfranchising First Nations people (Henderson, 2006).

UNDRIP asserts that Indigenous Peoples have the collective right to self-determination, and all societal institutions—including legislators and government departments, courts, human rights bodies, and public institutions—must take this into consideration.

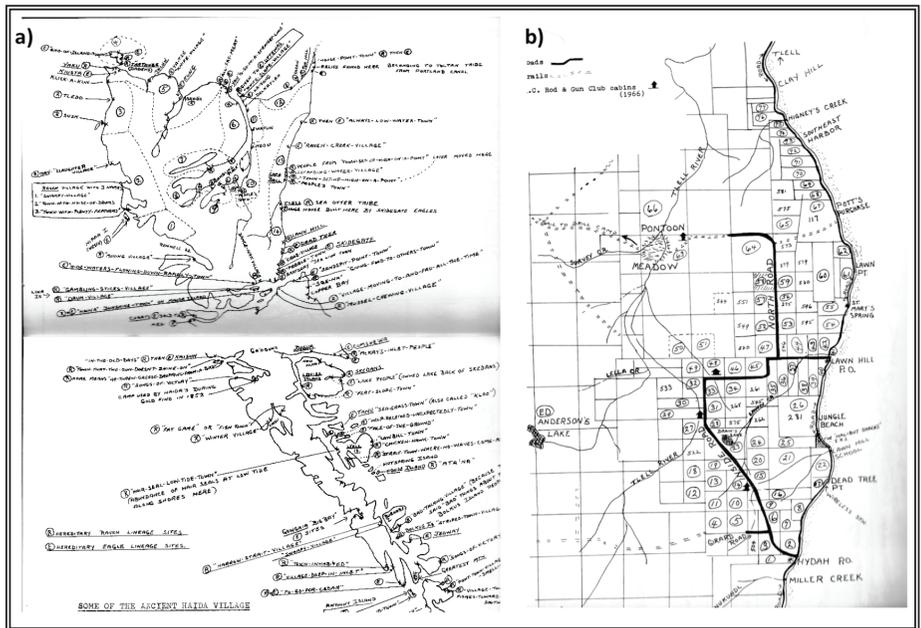


Figure 4. Maps of Haida Gwaii Showing (a) Haida Place Names and (b) How Colonialism Parcelled That Land and Gave it to Settlers. Adapted from Dalzell (1989).

As we look at the legal history of K 'aada Tllgaay (*North America*) and the various laws created from the *British North American Act* of 1867, these laws are grounded in the assertions of Terra Nullius and Doctrine of Discovery, gaining land and thereby wealth and power are the driving forces behind the laws that were brought or created by yaatsxaaydaGa when they came to our shores. Out of these laws came the *Indian Act* and guidelines for restricting our free movement around our traditional territories. Other guidelines denied clans ownership of our traditional territories and the traditional management of all sources of food. They also stripped us of the ability to care for our families. The idea of showing respect for all parts of our world while providing for our continued ability to gather provisions for food, housing, education, and transportation from the use of our forests and waters was not part of these laws.

Our supernatural ancestors created laws to control all our actions and prevent acts of disrespect. The old stories tell us that it was disrespect that caused foods or people to be taken away from us. Looking after each other and all other creatures in our domain is central to Haida law and absent from these other laws that were imposed. Canadian laws pertaining to Indigenous Peoples are adversarial, whereas Haida laws are built on principles of respect, reciprocity, and responsibility.

Governance: Using Haida Laws Today

Haida governance and laws have been disrupted by colonial efforts over the last few hundred years. Our ancient systems still exist, and our modern government, the Council of the Haida Nation, works to safeguard all the lands, waters, and people (Council of the Haida Nation, 2005). Our ancestors and the ancient stories tell us that we have a responsibility to live in balance on Xaayda Gwaay.yaay, including caring for the sky, waters, and all our neighbours. The Haida Nation has initiated a title case in the courts to gain recognition of the rightful jurisdiction and rights to our Islands.

Building an inclusive governance system or a system based on yahguudang dlljuu (*respectful acts*), xaaynang.nga kuuyada (*life values*), and sk'aadGa Gud ad is (*learning balance*), along with highlighting opportunities by which individuals and communities can reduce their carbon footprint, are the dominant themes that emerged from my research. All of these may require some aspect of decolonization and an infusion of Haida kil yahdas (*laws*) and xaaynang.nga kuuyada (*values*). Moreover, these ideas can be amplified and scaled up across Canada and will be applicable to other First nations. Canadian regulations, such as the *Indian Act*, *Species at Risk Act*, and *Fisheries Act*, hold Indigenous nations back and stop us from using our respectful, original laws.

The possibilities of an inclusive governance system would be to study the underpinnings of kil yahdas and principles brought forward by the supernatural beings. The major pillars of inclusive governments are gina 'waadluxan

xaaynang.ngas Gan yahguudang.ngaay ‘waagii kilxii gang ga (*respect every living thing*), yahk’ii kihlgulas honouring the words that we say to each other or living our words; ad ‘laa guu ga kanhlln (responsibility) that is part of privilege – returning to the principles. Our kuuniisii deserve to be able to say what it is that they need and the ‘Laana AwGalang and Kuuljaad to help each member of their clan and others as we see and meet their needs, whether that is physical, social, physiological or spiritual; tll yahda (make things right or balance) in all we say or our actions and sharing or looking after each other. Table 2 below shares some Haida words and their meanings for laws as identified by respondents.

Working together is part of looking after each other and is an oral insurance policy enabled by the principle of reciprocity (Troster, 2002). Reciprocity was a way of ensuring we looked after each other. It also guided us in our care as stewards of the lands and oceans. If we use Haida laws as our guiding principles (Figure 5), we are more likely to survive the uncertain weather oscillations and extremes of climate change.

Haida Words and Phrases	Respondents’ Interpretation of the Meaning
<i>Ad k’yaanang</i>	<i>To ask first. All acts must be done with consent.</i>
<i>Amass</i>	<i>A command to stop and restore balance.</i>
<i>Gina ‘Waddluxan Gud Kwigid</i>	<i>Everything depends on everything else.</i>
<i>K’aw kihl</i>	<i>The act of taking food home for the people to make sure they have enough.</i>
<i>Tll yahda</i>	<i>Making it right.</i>
<i>Yaahguudang</i>	<i>Respect.</i>
<i>Yah gid</i>	<i>Making it right.</i>

Table 2. Haida Words and Meanings for Laws Identified by Respondents

Governance: The Future

How long do we sit together under the thumb of the Federal government, knowing full well we are destined to remain wards of the Government if we do not choose to regain our power and independence? Choosing and preparing to move away from federal jurisdictions, such as the *Indian Act*, requires a firm plan in the areas of governance, including education, health, housing, conservation, monetary substitutes, revitalization of old fishing methods, and energy, to name a few. In this financially driven world, with vast areas of our trees already removed, survival and caring for each other require strong principles, good management, and forward thinking while we review and revitalize our ancestors’ laws and life ways. Imagine a world where each person matters and belongs.

Where does one start in the process of decolonizing government, Canadian laws, and us? A great place to start is by comparing the House of Commons and the Senate of the Canadian Parliament with ancient governance systems that reflect and use respect, transparency and inclusivity as their foundations. It is obvious the European laws imposed on K'aada Tllgaay and us are not working.

The principles of Terra Nullius, Doctrine of Discovery, and capitalism are based on taking without assuming the responsibility to care for the state of the lands, waters, and future generations. Look at the *Species at Risk Act* as an example of what prevents us from being responsible stewards. Consider what this type of thinking does to the future of coastal people. We need to replace laws that impede tried and proven ways of living with each other and all other organisms in our world. When we look at the origins of European laws and compare them with how our kuuniisii balanced their world, there are stark differences. Our laws and actions protect all life forms and ensure there is food and healthy lands and waters for future generations.

Coastal First Nations such as the Xaayda, the Heiltsuk, the Namgis, and the Nuu-chah-nulth are examples of Nations using the values and laws to care for people, lands, waters, and all other creatures that share their worlds (see Brown & Brown, 2009). Will this slow down, stop, or reverse the situation of climate change, the acidification of the air and the waters, the larger storms or droughts? As Borrows remarked,

Indigenous peoples' laws hold modern relevance for themselves and for others and can be developed through contemporary practices. While Indigenous legal traditions have ancient roots, they can also speak to the present and future needs of all Canadians. They should not be about, or even primarily about, the past. They contain guidance about how to live peacefully in the present world. They can be continually formulated to show us how to create stronger order. They can be constantly recast to teach us how to appropriately channel and cope with conflict. (Borrows, 2010)

Issues of Food Security

As mentioned by several of the workshop participants, commercialization, which has led to overharvesting, has made our ocean foods scarce. Our marine neighbours of the ocean world are overfished. The waters are polluted in many areas beyond use. These crises, along with the warming and acidification of all oceans, jeopardizes the foods we as Ocean people require to be healthy, thriving beings. The federal laws, such as the *Fisheries Act*, the *Oceans Act*, and provincial legislation, such as Conservation, Forestry, Fish and Wildlife, supposedly protect these same foods, but they do not always do so. As a result, they further impair our ability to maintain our health. This not only impacts us as Ocean people but also affects our neighbours, the whales, salmon, trees, birds, sea and land mammals, and other species throughout the food chain.

Upholding respect for all creatures means we would still be able to fish, gather shellfish, and use our native plants and trees for foods, medicines, and fibres. My father, Niis Wes, often told me that in the time of our ancestors and laws, if one person was hungry it meant everyone was hungry. Food, like other aspects of our life, was shared by all. When harvesting through “Terminal Fisheries” of salmon species, our elders and ancestors taught us to take the young, smaller, precocious fish because they did not contribute to healthy cyclical returns. The elders were taught that it is important to protect the larger, healthier salmon to allow them to continue their journey to spawn, thereby ensuring the strength of the cyclical returns. The way of harvesting halibut also followed the same principles: Leave the small ones for the next couple of years to ensure another fishery, and do not harvest the largest halibut as they are the breeders.

The Federal laws, such as *Species at Risk Act*, the *Ocean’s Act*, and the *Fisheries Act*, have all been designed to manage the various beings and creatures that are “protected.” However, these laws have had the opposite effect on First Nations people for many generations. The *Fisheries Act* has made it possible to overfish most species that we use as food but which are viewed by yaatsxaaydaGa as “resources.” Starting in the 1860s, the *Fisheries Act* was established in Canada and commercial fisheries were developed. In 1871, First Nations people were prevented from commercially fishing, which impacted prehistoric treaties and trade with neighbouring nations.

Before the 1920s, First Nations people were not allowed to hire lawyers to protect any part of our life, such as lands, life ways, foods, or title to traditional lands and waters (*Indian Act*, 1985). Federal and provincial laws have had the effect of causing poverty, denying access to healthy foods, preventing us from readily caring for those who require help, and preventing the ways of upholding old laws.

Our ancient laws helped protect the waters, lands, and the creatures. Today, the laws that were created as a result of Terra Nullius and Doctrine of Discovery have resulted in catastrophic impacts related to climate change, such as people dying from starvation, natural foods being eliminated, melting icecaps, acidification, and rising waters. With the laws of capitalism, it appears that we will keep going toward higher sea levels, more drastic storms and weather events, and less food for everyone. We need to revisit and readopt how the kuuniisii of traditional people looked after their lands and waters.

As we review the history and the responses given by the participants in my study, it becomes obvious that these laws put in place by the Canadian government have impeded our ancient ways. Before Canadian “management” of resources, First Nations ensured resilience through care and control of individual finfish runs. We stewarded stocks by taking only what we needed and leaving the largest and healthiest to reproduce. The decision-makers of today lack the connection to coastal ecosystems and management practices needed to prevent the continuation of our fisheries sliding into oblivion.

In the survey, participants expressed concern for food security, but the issues go further than just the actions of individuals. The participants want the village and Nation's councils to provide governance, which helps all children, elders and those who are without family to assist life ways of gathering from the lands and waters, as well as caring for homes. In stories gathered by Swanton (1908, pp. 400–407) from the people in Gaw and included as part of Haida Texts Masset Dialect is a narrative about T!ē and how as a result of the children making fun of a sea otter they had captured, two large waves came ashore and flooded the area. The stories further relate that the sea otter prevented the tide from falling to punish the people who would not share the mussels they gathered with the “Fat-One.”

One of the laws of our Nation is the responsibility we have to care for all “creatures” existing in our world. All creatures need to be protected or cared for using old methods. When federal agencies reduce First Nations’ access to healthy foods through their laws, the result is to subsequently reduce our resilience to other disturbances, such as climate change, acidification of the oceans, and pollution of drinking water. It is working together on common issues and realizing how important it is to secure and protect the natural world, the values included in our laws, and all other parts of Haida Gwaii that causes us to rise with a determination and enforce our resilience. When we look at the commercialization of the natural world, and then look at what is important to us as Haidas, it is easy to see why we can say “no” when we must choose between dollars and values. It is about looking after each other, caring for our world, and thinking about the generations that are coming behind us because we are responsible.

Conclusion

In the past, during my kuuniisii lifetime, paying attention and tracking the changes in the world through physical indicators, such as kelp, berries, and cloud formations, along with discussion and storytelling, allowed life adjust to the natural changes, as these happened slowly. The kuuniisii had the opportunity to adapt by moving to higher land as the water came up. They eventually adapted their homes from a hole in the ground to tents that enabled them to move as needed (Fedje et al., 2005). Now everything is turned upside down because change is happening so quickly. With ocean acidification, sea level rise, and extraction of all things that have been commodified for profit, the destruction of our lands, oceans, and all companions on this canoe called Tllgaay is sped up.

The world would be much better off if we could return to the old values of my ancestors and revitalize and reconstruct laws that would help us use respect, responsibility, consultation, and consensus—in other words, that

would help us work together. Instead of having elected Indian Affairs Chief and Council, we need to be looking at how we can re-establish and recognize hereditary leaders and clans as part of our legal and day-to-day management and stewardship.

The rising winds and waters and the related question of how to make changes in a timely manner are all parts of the puzzle of proper governance. Houses need to be built to withstand the winds and be set up for long-term occupation. Alternatively, given the suddenness in which rising seas can happen, houses may need to be portable. My overall vision and hope is that this article can be used to assist the various nations and villages to see what they can do for their residents when thinking about climate change. Above all ad 'laa guu ga kanhlln, yaahguudang and isda ad diigii isda are what I feel need to be remembered (Figure 5).



About Respect and Responsibility

... for all living things.

Knowing our place in the web of life.

Our fate runs parallel with the fate of the ocean, sky and forest people.

- Haida Land Use Vision (2005)

Note. Photos with permission from Jean Louis Martin and Haida Forestry.

Figure 5. Our Responsibilities to All Parts of Our World, Depicted In Photos

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