



CENTRAL COUNCIL

Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 13, 2014

Tribe Welcomes the Return of a *Khaach.ádi* Clan Hat



Xhixhch'i S'aaxhw (Frog Hat)

On November 9, 2014, during the San Francisco Tlingit & Haida Community Council's Bi-Annual Culture Fair, the Oakland Museum of California returned a repatriated clan hat, *Xhixhch'i S'aaxhw* (Frog Hat). The clan hat is a sacred object and object of cultural patrimony of the *Khaach.ádi* clan of Wrangell. It is painted, overlaid with copper and abalone shell, and decorated on top with small woven rings and ermine skins.

As a sacred object, the clan hat is a treasured object necessary for ongoing clan ceremonies. It is also an object of cultural patrimony, owned by a group and not an individual, which means *Xhixhch'i S'aaxhw* is inalienable by an individual without proven group consent.

The documented history of *Xhixhch'i S'aaxhw* indicates it was "collected" in Wrangell by a local shop owner named Fred Carlyon and his sister Anna Vaughn. The clan hat was later donated to the Oakland Museum of California by the daughter of Mrs. Vaughn's daughter in 1959.

Historical photographs of *Xhixhch'i S'aaxhw* in use as well as the clan's oral history on the clan hat, provided the evidence necessary to petition for its return. Tlingit Haida Central Council submitted a repatriation claim on behalf of the *Khaach.ádi* clan in 2008. The hat was approved for repatriation in 2013 and is the first repatriation from the Oakland Museum of California. Although the *Xhixhch'i S'aaxhw* had been turned over to Tlingit Haida Central Council, it had been on loan to the museum until arrangements could be made to retrieve it and has been displayed at the museum as part of an exhibit that explains the repatriation process.

Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska's 1st Vice President William Micklin accepted *Xhixhch'i S'aaxhw* from the Oakland Museum of California. The *Yaaw Tei Yi* dance group welcomed the hat's return with song and dance wearing repatriated Chilkat blankets of Chief Shakes of the *Naanya.aayí*, Herring Rock Robe of the *Kiks.ádi*, and the *Dakhl'aweidí* Killerwhale Hat.

The frog hat was wrapped in the Chief Shakes blanket for its journey home as well as the *Yanyeidí* Wolf Tunic with the repatriated *Dakhl'aweidí* hat alongside it. The *Khaach.ádi* clan will announce at a later date when the hat will be brought out in Wrangell.

*"Yeedát sá yéi át yatee, oo awdudlixhaaji xhooni kháa, heinaxh kháa géidei yaxh ghaagoot...*Life should be this way that a relative you've given up hope of ever seeing again and suddenly they come around the corner," said Cultural Resource Specialist Harold Jacobs during the repatriation ceremony.

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