NISHGA PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR FIRST RESIDENT MISSIONARY, THE REVEREND R.R.A. DOOLAN (1864-1867)

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Abstract: This essay examines the Nishga view of their first resident missionary, the Reverend R.R.A. Doolan, whom they had taken the initiative in inviting to their villages. Through Doolan's letters and journals, over a three year period, a picture emerges of Nishga responses and attitudes to him. The comments and conversations of many individuals have been preserved. Most of the people regarded him as a useful adjunct to their community, although their views of his value to them did not correspond in every particular to his own notions of his purposes among them.

Résumé: Cette étude examine l'opinion qu'ont les Nishgas du Révérend R.R.A. Doolan, leur premier missionaire, qu'ils avaient invité à résider parmi eux. La lecture des lettres et journaux de M. Doolan durant une période de trois ans représente un tableau dont émergent les attitudes et sentiments de la population envers lui. Les conversations et commentaires d'un grand nombre des villageois ont été preservés. La plupart des gens voyaient en lui un adjoint utile à leur communauté bien que leur appréciation de sa valeur ne corresponde pas exactement à sa propre idée de ses intentions et buts.

The Reverend R.R.A. Doolan, agent of the Anglican Church Missionary Society, arrived on the Nass River, in northwest British Columbia, in early November, 1864 to evangelize the Nishga Indians. His presence and his activities touched on many of the people. This essay will attempt, first, to describe a variety of responses to him. It presents a general picture of the Nishga. Part Two attempts to explain the reactions of specific individuals. It is drawn entirely from examples of responses by people of chiefly rank. Doolan was more likely to identify people by name if they had sustained contact with him and those whom he repeatedly mentioned were almost all of chiefly status.

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This essay postulates a willingness on the part of the Nishga, i.e., the chiefly people reported on, to change. Their long tradition of commerce, war and diplomacy, of travel and hosting visitors precluded a static view of themselves. At the same time, the Nishga exhibited a confidence in the strength, stability and continuity of their culture. Change with continuity had been their history and they responded to Doolan in that context.

The Nishga Indians of the Nass River, British Columbia, had been in contact with Europeans for three-quarters of a century or more when the missionary came to live among them. The Whites they met were mostly fur traders and crews of trading ships. Two missionaries had briefly visited some of their villages (1829 and 1860) and left accounts of their hosts (Patterson 1983).

In that time two images of the Nishga were gained by the visitors. Fur traders and missionaries gave the same two pictures of these people. The Nishga were, according to one version, arrogant, aggressive, and hostile. They were sharp traders and hard bargainers, always looking for and insisting upon their own advantage. They were as aloof from Hudson's Bay Company monopoly and domination as good business allowed them to be. They traded to Fort Simpson with an air of independence and self-reliance, withholding some pelts to trade to Hudson's Bay Company rivals, the American ships which came to their waters at the Nass Mouth. The Nishga went armed and were jealous of any insult or presumed insult or coercion. They would be hard ground on which to sow the Good News of Christianity.

The other image was of a friendly people who warmly greeted visitors. They were generous and hospitable hosts, eager to please and to trade and not what the visitors had been led to expect. They were at the heart of a considerable trading network and their territory would be well-suited to the trading purposes of the Whites. They were intelligent, responsive, and would make suitable candidates for evangelization.

The harsher view can be seen in the account of Dr. William Fraser Tolmie, Hudson's Bay Company officer and physician, who had contact with them in the early 1830's. A similar response was that of the Reverend Jonathan Green, a missionary visitor to the Nass Mouth (1829).

The contrasting view was acquired by Donald Manson, also a Hudson's Bay Company officer, when he travelled up and down the Nass in 1832. He met chiefs and others of several villages and was impressed by their friendliness and cordiality. One village was so hospitable that he named it the "friendly village." Twenty-eight years later (1860) William Duncan received the same friendly reception when he responded to Nishga invitations to come to the Nass. His enthusiastic welcome there, and Nishga requests for a resident missionary, led Duncan to urge his employers, the Church Missionary Society, to answer these requests and send a missionary to be stationed on

the Nass.

The man chosen was the Reverend Robert Richard Arthur Doolan, a Cambridge University graduate, and deacon of the Church of England. A man in his early thirties, Doolan had been a member of the Jesus Lane Sunday School movement while at Cambridge, and was thus part of the evangelical tradition of the Rev. Charles Simeon. Answering the "Macedonian call" of the Nishga, he arrived on the Nass in Autumn, 1864, after a brief period under Duncan's tutelage at the Christian colony of Metlakatla.

Arthur Doolan gives us the earliest extended and intensive look at the Nishga. Although his understanding of their culture was limited, through his accounts of their reactions to him we get our first sustained sequence of impressions of them and a picture of the kinds of responses they made.

Doolan was on the north coast of British Columbia approximately three years from mid-1864 to mid-1867. He resided on the Nass River from early November, 1864 to mid-April 1865; from early May, 1865 to the end of July, 1865; from early October, 1865 to the end of June, 1866 (with a two week trip to Metlakatla in May), from early April, 1867 to mid-May 1867, and from early June to early July, 1867. He was on the Nass a little less than twenty months. His six journals and diaries cover his time on the Nass as well as that at Metlakatla and travelling.[1]

Doolan recognized that the "call" may have been made from motives different from the intentions of the missionary. Nevertheless he saw the opening, and accepted it as a beginning opportunity to make converts. He recorded the reactions of the Nishga to his presence and his work in his journals, reports and letters to Church Missionary Society headquarters, London, England. Although replete with the ethnocentrism characteristic of so much missionary writing, his journals show that he came to know many of the Nishga as individuals. They reacted to him in different ways.

While the responses he received embrace both of the earlier characterizations of the Nishga, Doolan found them "usually light-hearted." He entered a vital culture, a culture that was adapting and adjusting. The Nishga were deeply involved in culture contact based primarily on fur trading, with its ramifications—firearms, alcohol, epidemics, venereal diseases and population decline. It is also likely that internal rivalries were heightened by the competition for the new forms of wealth—food, blankets, guns and cloth. Doolan's invited presence was probably part of the Nishga effort to better understand, control, and channel the varied effects of the increasing presence of Europeans. Direct contact with the Whites occurred not only at home on the Nass, but at places as far away as Victoria, where Indians regularly visited. Many of Doolan's contacts visited or had visited Fort Simpson and Metlakatla. They knew of Duncan's work, and some remembered Duncan's visit in 1860 when he made several stops along the Nass.

Missionaries saw particularly the destructive side of these many new influences, but did not recognize the conflicts and tensions they themselves introduced. They became a part of the threat to the traditional culture. Doolan's Nishga hosts were obliged to cope with mission influences in an effort to maintain the integrity of their customs, to adapt and adjust to the new, deriving whatever benefits they could. A missionary could be useful, as Duncan had been to their cultural cousins the Coast Tsimshian, but how exactly was he to be fitted in in a positive way? Whether friendly, hostile or indifferent, all were faced with the wealth and power of the Whites (the "English" as the Nishga called them). Overt opposition had to be tempered with expediency. Most Nishga responded by attempting to make Doolan a useful adjunct of their life. Some accepted his version of the new life of the Christian convert. He was not adopted into any family or clan; indeed he tried, with mixed success to remain aloof from most traditional ceremonies.

Doolan was in the village by invitation of the chiefs. His house was loaned by a chief. Chiefs were the main conduits for Nishga contact with the outside world. They controlled the fur trade. They were the social, religious, economic, political, and artistic leaders of the community. They would thus be the people most interested in understanding the impact of the world Doolan represented. He wanted them as converts and was intent upon drawing them into his purposes. By the nature of their role they were most likely to have the most intensive contact with him. Given that they were the leaders of the society, opposition from them would present a serious impediment to Doolan's success. Several chiefs put pressure on younger men to prevent them from coming under Doolan's influence, or to check his influence on youths and draw them into the traditional ceremonial life. Young men were told to meet their obligations and conform to traditional expectations of the youths of chiefly families. Doolan was vague on specifics.

While Doolan did not discern the variations of ceremonial life with clarity, he did record feasts for the giving away of property, whiskey feasts, and ceremonies held in the winter months. Doolan was ignorant of the significance of these activities within Nishga community life and thought of them generally as part of the "heathen" religion and customs. Furthermore, he saw them as displays of pride and vanity and therefore contrary to the intentions of his mission. He was aware that chiefs dominated this ceremonial activity, as the ceremonies were always the affairs of chiefs.

Doolan resided in the village of Quinwoch, one of three villages within a short distance of each other (the other two were Ankida [Lakunkedah] and Gitiks). After little more than a year, Doolan took a census of the three villages (December, 1865). Their population was a little over 400 persons. Doolan's special status in Quinwoch is illustrated by several incidents of individuals coming to his residence for refuge from threats of assault or from

conflict with their families. In one case, Chief Kinzarda (Kinsada), of the nearby village of Lakunkedah (Ankida), feared for his life as a result of his rivalry with another chief. Doolan's house also became a focus for several young men, usually identified as of chiefly families, who sought to learn English, Christianity, and more of the ways and things of the white world. One young man, Wechlee, built a house near Doolan to have his protection from repeated incidents of violence in the villages, and to show his interest in Doolan's teachings.

Doolan's home and school became a kind of drop-in centre for those curious about him and his purposes. Although he was thought to have links to the fur trade through Duncan and Cunningham, this aspect of his presence was only a part of Nishga interest in him. Two or three times he was blamed for a decline in pelt prices and denounced as part of the undesired English intrusion upon the Nishga. These associations were made by Claytha, a prominent Wolf clan chief.

Those who feared and grew tired of the violence of daily life in the villages expressed their concerns to the missionary. Those who favoured more adaptation to the new ways—schools, clothes, European customs, Christianity—associated with him, even to the point of being ridiculed as his slaves.

Doolan sometimes elicited personal remarks from those who were distressed by aspects of their community life and were willing to countenance greater cultural change or tolerate more cultural variety in the community. Even some of those most strongly opposed to his influences adapted and sought him out to explain their conduct and justify it to him (e.g. Claytha). He seems to have represented changes, wanted and unwanted. He was permitted to function in a way parallel to the Nishga, so that they could selectively avail themselves of his services. He was accepted (or perhaps tolerated) as a dynamic and socially useful (or potentially useful) factor. The pragmatic side of the Nishga predominated.

Nevertheless Doolan was occasionally confronted with threats of physical violence and accused of bringing harm. Generally he did not take the threats seriously where the opposition was verbal. He vigorously argued back and, to his own satisfaction, triumphed in argument with his opponent. On one or two occasions he was told to leave the village (and by implication the Nass Valley). These confrontations do not seem to have been related to any specific incidents other than the presence in the village of his main antagonist, Claytha.

At other times he was defended by Nishga and given a response ranging from a cautious "wait and see what he does and can do" approach to a grateful appreciation for his medical help. Full acceptance of his evangelizing and his call for a change of lifestyle was given by two persons almost from the

beginning of his mission on the Nass, Cowcaelth and Tacomash.

His medical work was an important contribution to his acceptance. He gave medical treatment to the son and nephew, respectively, of two prominent chiefs and received the gratitude of both families. He treated many others, going to their houses, sometimes before or after the patient had been attended by a native practitioner. Successful medical help usually won appreciation; this Doolan took and used as an opportunity to evangelize. He usually accompanied his medical aid with Christian instruction.

Doolan's opposition to native healers drew resentment and suspicion from them. He believed that his opposition stimulated a more sceptical attitude toward them by other Nishga and among the native healers themselves. Franz Boas (1895:581) reports that his informant, Chief Mountain, who was at one time a native healer, believed some of them were in fact charlatans (this interview took place in 1894 at Kincolith).)

Recovered patients and their families continued to be friendly to Doolan even when they did not convert. In one case Doolan amputated the frostbitten toes of a young man, Cowdaeg, and cared for his wounds until he recovered. Cowdaeg's father defended Doolan at the village council when no other spoke for him. Cowdaeg's uncle was Kadounaha, one of the chiefs who invited Duncan to the Nass and hosted him at Lakunkedah.

Another young man, Tacomash from an upriver village, was a resident pupil with Doolan. He had heard Duncan in September, 1860, when the missionary visited his uncle's village (possibly Gitwinsilth). Tacomash contracted tuberculosis, partly, he believed, from exposure during his initiation ceremony into a native society. As his condition worsened he asked and was allowed to return to live with Doolan. He died there after having been the first Nishga to be baptized by Doolan. His mother and other female relatives also lived there in his last days, nursing the dying man under Doolan's direction. This family, including the prestigious uncle from upriver, Agweelakkah, who had hosted Duncan, remained friendly to Doolan for the remainder of his time on the Nass.

Doolan was never able to speak Nishga with ease and clarity. He was better at Coast Tsimshian, the dialect spoken at Metlakatla, which he learned with Duncan's help. Nishga, he thought, was harsh and guttural, while Coast Tsimshian was soft and mellifluous. Most of the adults on the Nass, he found, could speak this dialect, but the children could not.

Two incidents illustrate the range of Nishga response to Doolan's difficulties with the language. On one occasion, at least, someone—a young man (?)—gave him the wrong word to use in a sermon or address, an indecent word. One of Doolan's household pupils rebuked the prankster and corrected Doolan before he used the word publicly. In another instance, an old woman, recognizing Doolan's trouble with the language, recommended that a

magical potion, containing Doolan's spittle, be applied to his ears to correct his problem.

A number of young men were drawn to Doolan. In most cases, excepting Cowcaelth/Philip Latimer, they intermittently returned to some traditional activity, such as potlatching or participating in other ceremonies. Other breaches of the new teaching, regarded by Doolan as sinful and backsliding, included alcohol consumption, working and travelling on Sundays, putting away one's wife, failure to attend church, gambling and not wearing enough clothes to suit Victorian English standards. By the end of his tour on the Nass most of these young men had been restored to Doolan's approval and were his followers. Cowcaelth was the staunchest and one of the earliest to align himself with Doolan: he was one of those who had heard Duncan at Metlakatla.

One chief who had shown an interest in Christianity as early as 1860 was Kadounaha of Lakunkedah. A chief of the Wolf clan and a prominent trader, Kadounaha questioned Robert Cunningham, Doolan's lay assistant in Lakunkedah, about consequences for his chiefly rank if he converted. He was unwilling to forego his traditional status. Cunningham told him that some accommodation could probably be made as Duncan, at Metlakatla, was experimenting with incorporating chiefs into the political structure there. Duncan, however, abandoned the idea after a few years when two chiefs did not meet his expectations of suitable behaviour.

Other forms of adaptation by the Nishga included requests for interment of the dead, rather than cremation or use of the mortuary pole. Selling of personal ceremonial paraphernalia, refusing to make such material, and refusal to participate in traditional ceremonies and potlatches were other responses interpreted by Doolan as acceptance of his instruction. He regarded this behaviour, and native denunciation of traditional practices condemned by himself, as signs of movement toward the alternate way of life he taught. This was perceived by Doolan as qualified acceptance, a step in the right direction.

At other times when accordance with his teachings was forthcoming he stressed the distance still to be spanned. Some chiefs told him they were happy to have their children instructed and learn the new way, but that they were too old and set in the traditional ways to change. Doolan replied that the souls of adults were equally as important as those of the children. He repeatedly presented the position of these interlocutors, usually chiefs, as that of thoughtful and rational, but conservative persons. There was no bitterness and resentment in their remarks. They had weighed the evidence and observed the conditions. The adaptations they made were satisfactory for the culture contact situation in which they lived and would live for the rest of their public lives. However, they were anticipating accelerating change. Their

children would live in a different world and would need to know much more of white people's culture. Theirs was a planned response to this likelihood: let the children be prepared for the new world. The chiefs had been prepared for the world in which they had lived in the same pragmatic spirit and in continuity with their past. As the process of change unfolded it would be made orderly by their ordered behaviour. The result of change would be change with continuity.

The chiefs with whom Doolan spoke raised questions and presented points of view, while examining the beliefs and customs urged on them by Doolan in the light of their own analysis of conditions. Even from the bias of Doolan's account they appear as neither down-trodden escapees to a new religion nor closed-minded adherents of an outmoded way of life. They recognize that change is taking place and will continue to do so. From within their own framework they contemplate the value of new ideas and customs, picking and choosing. The chiefs were the most sophisticated and cosmopolitan element of the Nishga society and their status is reflected in their response to the missionary.

Consonant with this situation was their accommodation of Doolan to aspects of their village life. He became part of their adaptation. An example of this is seen in the expectation that he would pay compensation when one of his young students was injured while working for him. Doolan gradually came to conform and accept this obligation.

During his intermittent residence on the Nass over a three year period, Doolan resided at Quinwoch, but visited the adjacent villages. He frequently conducted a Sunday evening service in Lakunkedah. Most of his later converts and settlers at the Christian colony of Kincolith were drawn from Quinwoch and Lakunkedah, the two largest villages of the lower Nass Nishga. In addition to gaining new adherents over the three years, he instructed and tried to tie more closely to his mission some of those who were his earliest converts. These young men became lay leaders of the Christian Nishga and informal missionaries to other Nishga. They were, with Doolan, the founders of the Christian village of Kincolith, June 1867. They, their families, and their belongings were floated down the Nass on two rafts to the site already chosen, with their help, to become the pioneer settlers.

As was his practice with most non-chiefly men, Doolan generally does not give the names of women to whom he refers. The male-centered orientation of the European skewed his perception of the nature of Nishga society, giving less prominence to women than they had in the traditional culture. Several of the women he mentions were undoubtedly of the chiefly status, such as the mother of Cowdaeg (a sister of Kadounaha), and the mother of Tacomash (a sister of Agweelakkah?). The two women specifically named in Doolan's account were "Mrs. [Robert] Cunningham," the Nishga wife of his

lay assistant, and Mrs. [W.H.] McNeill. In his journal for November 12, 1865 he recorded that Martha McNeill was supplying alcohol to a young man who had been "a bright prospect" for conversion. Mrs. McNeill [Neshaki] was a prominent fur trader, of a high Nishga family, very wealthy and the wife of the former commander at Fort Simpson. As a result of her trading activities between the Nass and Fort Simpson, a small trading post, with one European employee (a Mr. Hankins), was erected in Lakunkedah by 1866. Cunningham replaced Hankins as Hudson's Bay Company agent there when he resigned from the employ of the Church Missionary Society.

A dramatic contact was with an injured young woman. She was struck by her intoxicated father and fell into a container of cooking fish oil, burning her arms and other parts of her body. Doolan treated her burns, arranged refuge for her and later saw her married to a young man he thought suitable. Her earlier betrothal to an older man was thereby cancelled. The rejected man complained to Doolan about his interference, but the missionary, thinking his actions in the best interest of the girl, dismissed the objections. Here we see Doolan interrupting the operation of traditions to "improve" the condition of individual members of the society in a state of change.

Doolan's contact with high-born women was through the contacts with their husbands or sons. In two cases he mentions, though not by name, the mothers. In the first case, Cowdaeg's mother thanked Doolan for his help to her son's frostbitten feet and later told him that her husband had defended him in the village council. Some female members of Cowdaeg's family insisted on having the amputated toes placed in a box, wrapped, and put away until they could be buried with him at his death. In the second case, Tacomash's mother and other female relatives moved into Doolan's house when the young man, dying of tuberculosis, was moved from his village (Gitwinsilth?) back to Quinwoch. These ladies tried to get the dying Tacomash to name whoever was causing his death by bewitchment. Doolan told them that this was not the explanation of Tacomash's illness and that God was calling the young man to Himself. After several hours of traditional mourning when Tacomash died, Doolan found the women's wailing overwhelming.

In both of these cases, Doolan's contact with women of the nobility was the result of his ties to the young man he was attempting to convert. The women accepted his aid, were appreciative of it, but continued to function in the context of their culture. Once again theirs was the pragmatic response of people who were willing to accept useful and helpful change. As a healer and friend Doolan could be of service to the community. For Doolan this was an opening to greater change.

Most, though not all of the evidence of Nishga response referred to so far is that of chiefs and members of chiefly families. These latter were mostly young men who would become chiefs if not diverted into the new religion. The second part of this essay will examine the response of ten individuals from among the chiefs and young men most often mentioned by Doolan.

Doolan viewed the Nishga response to his evangelization as a spectrum running from the most resistant and hostile to the staunchest adherent, the convert who totally accepted the missionary's teachings and practised them with greatest consistency. It has been shown already that this interpretation is inadequate if we are to speak of adaptation and selective borrowing, responses which Doolan fully documents and describes for even his staunchest opponent.

The strongest opposition to Doolan came from Chief Claytha, a high-ranking Wolf clan chief of an upriver village. He was often mentioned by Doolan and was compared, in rank and "wickedness" (as Doolan expressed it), to Chief Legaic, of the Eagle clan, the senior chief of the Coast Tsimshian. Claytha was the brother of Chief Kadounaha of Lakunkedah. After Kadounaha's death by drowning, Claytha accused Doolan of not dealing properly with the corpse. On another occasion he denounced Doolan as one of the English who brought disease, bad weather, and declining pelt prices to the Nishga. Claytha attempted to draw away those young men who were coming under Doolan's influence. He urged them to fulfill their traditional obligations, by taking their part in the ceremonial life of the community. One of these was his kinsman, Cowdaeg (nephew and heir of Kadounaha). On the other hand he sometimes explained his actions to Doolan, such as the right to claim certain of his wife's property after her death. At least once he requested that Doolan pray for him. He offended Doolan by coming to discuss religion while drunk. Claytha's blatant opposition to Doolan led one of his (Claytha's) enemies to reveal to Doolan his plot to murder the high-ranking chief. The man had received some insult at an earlier time. Presumably the man expected that Doolan would approve of the plan to remove their common enemy, but Doolan dissuaded this would-be executioner.

Once Claytha threatened violence against "the English," but, as Doolan observed, later retracted his remarks when, Doolan observed, he learned that a British man-of-war was in nearby waters. In May, 1866, Claytha proposed a boycott of Doolan and accused "the English" of siding with medicine men, to the detriment of the general populace. Although the context of the remark is not clear, it suggests that Claytha understood the new influences, however undesirable and worthy of being expunged, within terms of the traditional culture. He may have intended to separate Doolan from his chiefly hosts at

Quinwoch-Lakunkedah by linking Doolan to shamans who were rivals to chiefs. Claytha was from another village and himself a rival of the host chiefs. Alternatively, he may have been attempting to undermine Doolan and thereby reduce or end his usefulness to his rival Wolf clan chiefs and others. The presence of a small Hudson's Bay Company trading post at Lakunkedah gave a trading advantage to the chiefs there. Prominent Wolf chiefs and traders of Lakunkedah were Kinzarda and Qwockshow.

Claytha was the only speaker who refused to be satisfied with the distribution of property after the death of Tacomash, a disciple of Doolan's and Doolan's first convert (May 1866). Doolan perceived Claytha's dissatisfaction as a further resistance to the mission, and interpreted his response as fear of loss of power. He probably voiced the view of some local chiefs when he wrote, "This man, since his brother's death, and our arrival feels his power to be waning. Long he has been a scourge and terror to the three villages."[2]

Perhaps Claytha's aggressive career impelled him to have more contact with Doolan than did others. Claytha may have seen Doolan as another rival or challenger, both directly and insofar as he aided the chiefs of the three-village area. Doolan could be understood as a person of wealth and prestige, supported by trading and the Whites. He was drawing supporters to himself and was aggressively pursuing his purposes in the community. From Claytha's point of view, Doolan's aggressive behaviour caused him to clash with others.

Claytha was credited with having ordered the death of opponents and with having threatened others. Nevertheless he is not portrayed as unbending or rigidly conservative, like Okonkwo of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. Rather, he was adaptive, and was incorporating selectively from the new influences, even while in opposition to many of them and to the person of the missionary. He may have envied Quinwoch-Lakunkedah for having two white men (Doolan and Cunningham) in their community to aid them in trade and diplomacy. His comments on "the English" and fur trade indicate this was the context in which he viewed Doolan.

In March, 1878, more than a decade after Doolan had returned to England, Claytha was baptized and settled at Kincolith as Paul Klaydach (Kledak). He was about fifty-five years old. He died a few months later. Although it is possible, it is not known whether Doolan received news of Claytha's conversion.

Nishga response, generally, led Doolan to comment that the Nishga understood talk of trade, but not of "spiritual matters." This view was echoed many years later by J.B. McCullagh, longtime missionary on the Upper Nass (at Aiyansh-Gitlakdamiks). The Nishga are portrayed as eager and aggressive traders. McCullagh asserted that the trader-chiefs were the first to be interested in Christianity. One of the earliest converts from Gitlak-

damiks was the prominent trader chief Gieksqu[3] (McCullagh, n.d.).

Another response to the mission was that of several chiefs: Kinzarda, Thratcouquats, and Cockshoo (Qwockshow). They were members of the Wolf clan and residents of Lakunkedah. Kinzarda and Kadounaha (deceased, December 26, 1865) had been responsible for Duncan's visits on 1860. They asked that a missionary come and help them as Duncan was doing for the Coast Tsimshian then gathered around Fort Simpson. Nishga and Coast Tsimshian were culturally close and were major trading partners. Nishga of the lower Nass River were especially active traders to Fort Simpson, which was located in Coast Tsimshian territory. Trade goods brought to the lower Nass by Coast Tsimshian, Haida and Tlingit traders, would then be passed up by the Nass and on to the interior and upper Skeena peoples.

Kinzarda, Thratcouquats, and Cockshoo had a special interest in Doolan. They had acted as his hosts or sponsors. Early in Doolan's presence at Quinwoch, Kinzarda had sought refuge from assault by coming to hide at Doolan's house. Some obligation had been created. At least two of these men had known Duncan at Fort Simpson and/or Metlakatla and knew Doolan in that trading and mission context. Doolan had met Thratcouquats when he first arrived at Metlakatla. All of these men were probably traders and in regular contact with the outside world through trade. The Hudson's Bay Company post at Lakunkedah was located in their home village. Cunningham resided in that village also, and continued to do so when he left the employment of the Church Missionary Society and took work with the Hudson's Bay Company at its Lakunkedah trading post. Although Doolan's accounts do not indicate a change in Nishga attitudes towards him, it may be that the creation of a permanent Hudson's Bay Company sub-station modified the Nishga perception of him in his role as a significant part of the fur trade.

On May 13, 1866, Doolan wrote a letter to "Mr. Hankins," the agent in charge of the store at Lakunkedah. Hankins was told he set a "bad example" for the Nishga by duck shooting on "The Sabbath," that is, on a Sunday. Doolan hoped that it was not too late for Hankins to see the error of his ways. Later (May 23) Doolan learned that Hankins had taken the rebuke with good grace. This incident illustrates the other side of the role Doolan tried to play. He attempted to ward off the undesirable influences which he saw penetrating the Indian communities from the White sources.

The chiefs were not ready to convert to Christianity but likely saw Doolan as aiding them in dealing with the accelerating influences of the European presence. Thratcouquats told Doolan, in mid-June, 1866, that he had never spoken ill of him when all the others had. This may mean he remained silent, however. It shows his desire to remain on good terms with Doolan. His was an accommodation to Doolan's presence. He expressed to the missionary a wish to have an "English village," probably influenced by

what he saw at Metlakatla, and to have the people become like "the English." That wish is in sharp contrast to Claytha's very negative opinion of "the English."

Thratcouquats, when planning a trip to Victoria, asked Doolan for a letter of introduction and recommendation. Doolan obliged by writing the letter. The previous April, Thratcouquats had visited Doolan after school hours. He was pleased that a teacher had come and he gave Doolan advice about disciplining the children. Punishing them, he told Doolan, would drive them away. Doolan concluded that the chief was "hard-hearted," but Thratcouquats may have been telling him that punishments would be regarded as insulting and demeaning and as disparaging by the Nishga. They would then avoid him and his school. Thratcouquats seems to have seen potential in Doolan. He could play a useful role in the community if he was educated to the social conventions and stayed within the acceptable boundaries.

Kinzarda's attitude seems to have been much like that of Thratcouquats. He probably concurred with the view of a friend who said, in Kinzarda's presence, that they were too old to change, but wanted the children to learn. Kinzarda and other chiefs requested Doolan to issue them a document permitting them to seize ships selling liquor. They wanted to prevent such ships from coming into their area. Contradictorily, Doolan regarded Kinzarda as a drunkard. Indian attempts to police their waters had proven to be mortally dangerous. Three native constables at Metlakatla were killed trying to restrain the crew of a whiskey trading ship. Doolan's remarks about Kinzarda and Thratcouquats seem to reflect his sensitivity to the pragmatic and utilitarian approach they had taken toward his presence in the community.

Kinzarda and Cockshoo were baptized on the same day as Claytha, March 24, 1878, by Bishop William E. Bompas, as George Kinsada and Robert Qwokshow respectively. They continued to be active leaders in the new Christian colony, Kincolith. George Kinsada was later elected Chief Counsellor at Kincolith under the Indian Advancement Act (1884).

The death of Kadounaha may have had a delaying effect on the conversion of chiefs. Kadounaha (a Tongass Tlingit name of a great chief of an earlier era) had shown interest in becoming a Christian in the months before his death. His untimely death poses one of the "might have beens" of Nishga history.

A third category of persons referred to by Doolan is that of several men, all chiefs, who had come to him for physical and/or emotional support. The first of these was Nuckedzay, who was grieving for the recent death of his two children. He found no comfort from traditional sources, he told Doolan. He decided to attach himself to the new religion offered by the missionary.

Old chief Neitsaul came regularly to visit Doolan at school. Sometimes they talked, sometimes the old man just listened to the lessons Doolan taught his pupils. Other adults also came occasionally. Neitsaul's frequent visits were taken by Doolan as a sign of his increasing interest in and sympathy for Doolan's mission. Neitsaul resisted giving "a feast," and this brought him under pressure from other chiefs. He was accused of using the new religion as an excuse for not meeting his obligations in the traditional culture. He relented, gave "a feast," and several persons, while drunk, were injured at the event. After this he avoided Doolan for a period. When he resumed his visits, he determined to participate no more in the traditional ceremonies. Claytha then accused him of witchcraft against school children. He was said to be taking pieces of string from the school slates that hung around the children's necks. The body oil and dirt adhering to them were used, Claytha charged, to make sympathetic magic against the children. Neitsaul needed Doolan's support in this assault on his reputation. Some time later he asked Doolan to make a placard for his house which would declare him to be a friend of the English. Rumors had spread that a man-of war was coming in response to talk of violence against the "English." Doolan's portrayal of Neitsaul depicts him as an older chief withdrawing from public life and as a likely prospect for conversion.

Another chief, Neishushlix, relied on Doolan's backing when he decided to cease participating in potlatches. He asked that he no longer be invited. A fourth man, Ndah, had at one time proposed violence against "the English," but later became a friend of Doolan's. In this case Doolan had nursed a wound suffered by Ndah. The attitudes expressed towards "the English" suggest that some Nishga thought they could live comfortably without English trade. Others were happy or at least satisfied with the English connection. Doolan's accounts do not reveal whether those who opposed the English had alternative trading contracts, or were engaged largely in trade with other Indians, or were not engaged in trade. Perhaps they thought the English could be made more amenable by being given a good drubbing.

In all these cases Doolan has a role something like that of a chief. He is protector and patron; he dispenses physical aid, in the form of medicine, refuge and shelter. This is an exchange of obligation. His clients adhere to Doolan and he aids them. Doolan interpreted their behaviour primarily in terms of their gravitation to Christianity. They, within a traditional framework, likely saw him giving his wealth (including songs, traditions, stories), goods, and prestige as a chief might. They accepted his implied chiefly role and status. Doolan took advantage of their response and tried to build on it in terms of his expectations. When the Nishga fell short of these expectations he saw them as backsliding, falling back into sin, but he persevered. By the end of his tour on the Nass (June, 1867) he was satisfied that some of them were

genuine converts and that others were soon to follow under the influence of the Reverend Robert Tomlinson, at Kincolith.

A fourth category of those often mentioned by Doolan included several young men who were close to him physically and in their apparent interest in his teachings. These were nearly all of chiefly families. Some—Tacomash, Takithl and Sashnats—were sometimes residents in his house. Aksheelan and Lochpawn may also have lived with him. In addition, Cowcaelth, Cowdaeg, Cowaikik, and Wechlee showed varying degrees of interest in his teachings and conformity to the new way of life he taught. For these actions, Cowcaelth, Cowdaeg, Cowaikik, and others were ridiculed, and pressured to leave Doolan and pursue their traditional obligations as potential chiefs and ranking men.

Cowcaelth was one of Doolan's earliest and most consistent disciples. Baptized by Doolan as Philip Latimer (1867), he became a leading layman and eventually Captain in the Church Army (in the 1890's) at Kincolith. This most enthusiastic follower, Cowcaelth, illustrates the Nishga initiative in spreading their new religion. He engaged in evangelism among the villages, encouraging and haranguing them. He interpreted the missionaries' actions to others and was a voluntary and informal missionary. He was one of the pioneer settlers at Kincolith. A skilled carpenter and maker of ceremonial paraphernalia, he put those skills to work for Doolan. One of his first projects was the construction of school desks.

Cowdaeg, the nephew and heir of Kadounaha, was medically treated by Doolan for his injured foot. Doolan had amputated the young man's frostbitten toes after the boating accident in which Kadounaha and members of his family and household drowned. Cowdaeg was the only survivor. After this, the young man's father and mother were friendly to Doolan. As we have seen, the father defended Doolan in a council debate in the missionary's presence in the village, being the only chief to do so.

Tacomash, baptized on his deathbed as Samuel Walker, became the "first fruits" of Doolan's Nishga mission. He died in Doolan's house of "consumption." Doolan regarded Tacomash as a son, and the young man called him father. Tacomash was the nephew (and heir?) of a leading Eagle clan chief, Agweelakkah, of an upper Nass village, Gitwinsilth. Uncle and nephew had heard Duncan speak in September, 1860, when Duncan went upriver as far as their village. Agweelakkah and the parents of Tacomash became friends of Doolan.

Cowaikik was also of chiefly family. Like Cowdaeg, Doolan reports, he was pressured by Claytha to forsake the missionary. He had been training as a native healer. After some wavering, he sold his ceremonial equipment to Cunningham, thereby publicly indicating his intention to reject the traditional culture. Cowaikik was later baptized at Kincolith as William Smith. He and

his family were among the first to move to the new Christian village.

Most of these young men were from Quinwoch and Lakunkedah, and of the Wolf or Eagle clans. Others, such as Tacomash and Lochpawn, were drawn from other villages to Quinwoch to associate themselves with the new cultural, social, religious, and economic forces represented by Doolan. For all of these, Doolan served in a manner congruent with the role of a chief. He was their patron and protector. They were his heirs and successors in the changing society. He was their liaison to the outside world. He was a religious, economic and social leader as were the chiefs in Nishga society. He could help his clients to secure the supernatural aid which he possessed and which gave him power. He would pass this power on to them. All these activities were consonant with the roles carried out by the chiefs in traditional Nishga life.

The participation of these client-adherents was interpreted by Doolan primarily in terms of coming to Christianity. To him, they included the disinterested, the disappointed, the doubters, and those exploring the parameters of change. They were not, however, marginal members of their society. They were the chiefs and the sons and nephews (heirs) of chiefs. They were the people who traditionally mediated innovation.

Doolan's conversations with chiefs, individually and in groups, may have implied to them his own chiefly role. An indication of a way in which these chiefs and potential chiefs may have been incorporating Doolan into their culture while accepting change is illustrated by a remark which he attributed to them. They were willing to hear Doolan on the subject of Christianity, he was told, but not in the presence of the common people. What Doolan taught, especially in his own house to those resident with him, may have been perceived as privileged knowledge, congruent with the training of the Nishga youths for leadership (Miller 1984:138). Miller finds that contemporary Christian Tsimshian [1984] regarded the "pagan beliefs" of their ancestors as "low class." This may give a hint of the pattern of acceptance of Christianity by Nishga and Tsimshian.

Chiefs, as conduits for outside contacts, were the first to know or know best the new ideas, ceremonies, and technology, encountered in contact with other cultural groups. Songs and traditions were passed orally and became part of the chiefly property that was inherited and which set apart the chiefs who possessed them from the common people who did not. Doolan's teachings may have been interpreted as fitting this Nishga custom. The chiefs had received ceremonial knowledge from the outside before, such as secret societies from the Northern Kwakiutl. Boas has derived the Tsimshian cannibal dance from the Heilsuq, circa 1825 (Halpin 1973:85). The Pene (or Bini) religion spread to the Nishga and Tsimshian from the interior in the 1840s. Tradition says that Bini visited the mouth of the Skeena and Metlakatla. The

Coast Tsimshian are said to have evangelized the Nishga, Tlingits, Haidas and others (including those to the South) as they carried on their traditional activities (Miller 1984:143).

Doolan intended that Nishga friendship and sympathy, from whatever motive, would become the first step toward more sweeping changes in their beliefs and customs. In all likelihood he misunderstood their intention. They had been experiencing change for many decades and had managed to control and channel it. Their continuity and cultural cohesion had not been lost. They anticipated further change and the survival of the Nishga. This appproach, far from precluding innovation, allowed them to accept Doolan and to learn and profit from his sojourn among them. In this way they showed themselves to be the intelligent, vigorous, receptive, and independent people they had been portrayed as being in previous decades of Nishga-White contact.

Notes

1. Church Missionary Society Records, Microfilm Reel A 105. For a narrative survey of Anglican and Methodist missions to the Nishga, 1864-1890, see Patterson (1982), and Raunet (1984).
2. Doolan's journal for May 10, 1866. Church Missionary Society Records, Microfilm Reel A 105.
3. See McCullagh (n.d.) for sketches of the lives and/or characters of several of his earliest converts.

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