

Texts in Chinook Jargon collected by Melville Jacobs:

7. “A Couple Kill All Their Relatives”

Told by John “Mose” Hudson/Hutchins, a Santiam K'alapuya

Translated into “northern” dialect by David Douglas Robertson, PhD¹

1. Alta naika syatsum tenas ya'yim. An \underline{k} ati naika kumtuks² tlaska
Now I'll tell a little story. Long ago I heard them

syatsum okok ya'yim.³
tell this story.

2. Tlaska wawa⁴ mokst tilikam tlaska tiki⁵ kanamokst.⁶ Okok
They say that two people wanted each other. That

tenas-tloochman yaka tilikam⁷ weik tlaska tiki⁸ okok man kopa⁹
girl's family didn't like that man for

1 See end of story for a guide to “Spelling rules”.

2 **Kumtuks** here means 'hear' (a synonym of **k'wolaan**); you can see that its other meaning of 'know' wouldn't really work here.

3 **...naika kumtuks tlaska syatsum okok ya'yim** 'I heard them tell this story.' Another, equally good, way to translate this sentence is 'I heard this story being told' – because when **tlaska** is used as a vague subject 'they', the focus is really more on the object of the verb (here 'this story'). Chinook Wawa doesn't truly have passive verbs (like English 'it's known', 'I got run over', and 'you're signed up now'), but the **tlaska** trick is used a lot.

4 **Tlaska wawa** is another example of the **tlaska** trick. You can understand these two words either as 'they say/they said', or as 'it's said/it was said'.

5 **Tlaska wawa mokst tilikam tlaska tiki...** 'They say (that) two people wanted...' -- you can see how there's no Chinook Wawa word for 'that', in the case of someone saying 'that' something is a fact.

6 **Tiki kanamokst** 'wanted each other'. *The other meaning of **kanamokst** is 'together', but that doesn't work so well here. It would force you to read this sentence as '...they wanted to be together', and then a more grammatical Chinook Wawa way to say that would be to add the physical location 'be'-word **mitlait**, so you'd expect ***...tlaska tiki mitlait kanamokst**.*

7 **Yaka tilikam** 'her people' = 'her family'.

8 **Tiki** can mean 'want' or 'like' or 'love'; try reading the sentence with each of those choices, and see which makes sense for you.

9 **...kopa yaka man** 'for her husband', that is, 'as her husband' / 'to be her husband'. Whichever way you might say it in English, the idea is of a purpose, and in Chinook Wawa, noun purposes are introduced by the preposition **kopa**. (Verb purposes such as 'for eating' are introduced by **spos** 'in order to'.)

yaka man, okok tenas-tloochman.¹⁰ Pi tlaska heilo k'wolaan,¹¹ tlaska
that girl's husband. But they (two) didn't listen, they

mitlait¹² kanamokst.¹³ (ii) Alta okok tenas-tloochman yaka
stayed together. Then that girl, she

mamook-mimaloos okok yaka papa pi yaka mama,¹⁴ pi kanawei¹⁵ okok
killed that father and mother of hers, and all of that

yaka tilikam. Alta kopit tlaska, tlaska mitlait.¹⁶ Alta okok tenas-man
*family of hers. Then it was just them, they were left. Then that young
man*

kwanisum¹⁷ yaka tlatawa nanich¹⁸ okok yaka tilikam. Alta okok
kept visiting that family of his. Then that

yaka tloochman yaka wawa, “Kata¹⁹ alta maika tlatawa nanich maika
wife of his said, “How is it now you're visiting your

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- 10 **Yaka man, okok tenas-tloochman** 'that girl's husband' – this means exactly the same thing as **okok tenas-tloochman yaka man**, which is a somewhat more common word-order in Chinook Wawa. The thing is, if the narrator had said ***kopa okok tenas-tloochman yaka man**, it might be a little harder to understand. Because the idea being highlighted is of the young man 'for her husband', it's easier to understand if you put **yaka man** 'her husband' up front, right next to **kopa**.
- 11 **Tlaska heilo k'wolaan** can be understood a couple of ways: 'they didn't listen' or 'they (had) no ears' (for what the girl's family said). 'No ears' is an old Indigenous metaphor for 'deaf' in Chinook Wawa. If the storyteller preferred for us to get the image of deafness, he probably would've said ***heilo-k'wolaan, tlaska**, using the subject-last word order that's distinctive of adjective/descriptive expressions. PS: notice how the teller uses **k'wolaan** for 'listen' versus **kumtuks** (just above) for 'hear'.
- 12 **Mitlait** means 'stayed', not so much its other meaning of 'were', here; the whole idea of the story so far is of the girl and boy ignoring family advice to split up.
- 13 **Kanamokst** here means 'together', unlike its use above as 'each other'.
- 14 **Okok yaka papa pi yaka mama** 'that father and mother of hers'.
- 15 **Kanawei** 'all (of)' – even though you can translate this sentence like 'she killed them all', Chinook Wawa really prefers to put quantity-words up front, so we have **kanawei okok yaka tilikam**.
- 16 **Mitlait** 'to remain, to be left', similar to how this word can be used as 'stay'.
- 17 **Kwanisum** 'always' or 'kept on'.
- 18 **Tlatawa nanich** 'to see', 'visit'.
- 19 **Kata...** 'how (in the world) is it...', or 'why...!'

tilikam? (iii) Naika tilikam alta kanawei heilo,²⁰ pi spos-kwanisum²¹
family? My family is all gone now, and all the time

alta maika tlatawa nanich maika tilikam. Atlki kanawei naika
now you're visiting your family. I'll

mamook-mimaloos tlaska; alta naika heilo-tilikam,²² tloosh spos²³ maika
kill all of them; I'm without a family now; you should

wuht heilo-tilikam, kakwa naika.” (iv) Kakwa²⁴ yaka wawa, okok
also be familyless, like me.” That's what she said, that

tloochman, kopa okok yaka man. Alta nawiiitka yaka mamook kakwa.
wife, to that husband of hers. Then in fact she did that.

Yaka kakshit,²⁵ yaka mamook-mimaloos kanawei okok yaka tilikam.
She attacked, and killed, all of that family of his.

3. Alta kopit mokst tlaska mitlait. Alta okok man,
Then just the two of them remained. Then that husband,

chako-weik-tloosh²⁶ yaka tumtum. Alta yaka tumtum, “Tloosh naika
his heart became upset. Now he thought, “I should

mash²⁷ okok tloochman. Naika tlatawa sayaa-ilihi.”²⁸ Alta nawiiitka yaka
leave this woman. I'll go somewhere far away.” Then indeed he

20 **Heilo** 'gone' (as in 'no longer existing').

21 **Spos-kwanisum** 'forever', as if to emphasize 'all the time'.

22 **Heilo-tilikam** 'without-relatives', 'family-less', even 'orphan(ed)'.

23 **Tloosh spos** (literally 'good if'), or just **tloosh**, is a normal way of expressing 'should'.

24 **Kakwa** means 'in that way', 'like that / like this'. With **wawa** ('to speak / say'), we usually translate it into English as 'that's what' the person said.

25 **Kakshit** 'beat up, attack' – another meaning of this word is 'break' or 'broken'; would that make sense here?

26 **Chako-weik-tloosh** (literally 'became-un-good') 'got upset', 'got disturbed / out-of-sorts'.

tlatawa. (ii) Alta okok tloochman yaka wawa, “Pi ka okok
went. *Then that woman said, “And where is that*

naika tilikam?²⁹ Kanawei naika mamook-mimaloos naika tilikam kopa
family of mine? I've completely killed off my family for

maika. Alta atlki³⁰ naika mamook-mimaloos maika, spos³¹ naika tl'ap
you. Now some day I'm going to kill you, when I find

maika.”³²
you.”

WE GOT THIS FAR ON 5.23.2020 (session recorded on Zoom)

4. Kakwa kwanisum tlaska wawa, okok tilikam ankati.³³ Spos mokst
This is what they always said, those people long ago. If two

tilikam tlaska tiki iskam kanamokst, spos iht³⁴ yaka
people wanted to take each other (as partners), if the one person's

27 **Mash** (literally 'throw (away)') here means 'leave' or 'get rid of'. This same word can also be used for 'leaving' a place.

28 **Naika tlatawa sayaa-ilihi** (literally 'I'm going far-place') – notice that the storyteller doesn't use a preposition here (he doesn't say ***naika tlatawa kopa sayaa-ilihi**). When you talk about going somewhere unspecified, or the going is more important than the destination, in Chinook Wawa you use this trick.

29 You can understand that the young woman isn't literally asking where her family is. She knows what happened to them!

30 **Atlki** is the indefinite or remote future, so here you can take it as 'some day'.

31 **Spos** means 'when' or 'if'. Which makes more sense to you here?

32 You can also understand that she's not literally talking to her husband here...

33 In this sentence, and throughout this last paragraph, Mose Hudson is emphasizing that he's just told you some important traditional knowledge.

34 **Iht** 'the one' / 'a certain one'.

tilikam weik yaka³⁵ tiki,³⁶ weik-kata³⁷ tlaska mitlait floosh;³⁸ kwanimsum
family didn't like it, they couldn't have a good life; always

kakwa tlaska wawa. Okok ya'yim, naika kumtuks iht³⁹ man
like this they'd say. This story, I heard a certain man

yaka syatsum.⁴⁰ **(ii)** Tl'onas-ka⁴¹ yaka kumtuks,⁴² naika weik
tell it. Gosh knows where he heard it, I don't

kumtuks.⁴³ Kopit-kakwa⁴⁴ kwanimsum tlaska wawa ankati. Tlaska wawa
know. Just like this is how they used to tell it. They said

spos okok mokst tilikam, spos tlaska tiki kanamokst, spos tlaska tilikam
that if the two people, if they wanted each other, if their families

weik tlaska tiki,⁴⁵ weik-kata tlaska mitlait floosh. **(iii)** Kwanimsum
didn't want it, they couldn't have a good life. Always

kakwa tlaska wawa. Pi spos tlaska tilikam kanamokst tlaska tiki,⁴⁶
like this they'd say. And if their families wanted them to be together,

35 **Yaka** 'she/he' here characterizes the one person's family as a single thing, so you can understand this word as 'it' here.

36 **Weik yaka tiki** 'doesn't want/like it', with a SILENT IT.

37 **Weik-kata** (literally 'not-how') = 'impossible' or 'can't'.

38 **Mitlait floosh** (literally 'exist well') = 'have a good life'.

39 **Iht** is again 'a certain' man, 'this one' man.

40 There's another SILENT IT at the end of this sentence.

41 **Tl'onas-ka** (literally 'maybe-where') = 'who knows where', 'God knows where'.

42 **Yaka kumtuks**, with a SILENT IT, = 'he heard it'.

43 You can see the two main meanings of **kumtuks** here, 'to hear' and 'to know'.

44 **Kopit-kakwa** 'just-so', 'just like that', 'exactly (like) this'. (See its use below as 'that's all'.)

45 Do you hear a SILENT IT here?

46 **Kanamokst tlaska tiki** ('together they want') = 'they want (them) to be together'. You can contrast this with the earlier **tlaska tiki kanamokst** 'they want each other'. The position of **kanamokst** makes it mean different things. Another, longer way to say 'they want them to be together' might be **tlaska tiki spos kanamokst tlaska mitlait** (literally 'they want that together they exist').

alta tlaska mitlait dlet;⁴⁷ tlaska tloosh mitlait. **(iv)** Kakwa
then they were living right; they had a good life. That's how

kwanisum tlaska wawa, okok ol-man-tilikam,⁴⁸ kopa okok
they'd always talk, those elders, to the

chhi-tilikam.⁴⁹ Kopit-kakwa⁵⁰ alta naika wawa. Okok kwaaaanisum
teenagers. That's all I'm saying now. This aaaalways

chako⁵¹ dlet.⁵²
came true.

47 **Mitlait dlet** 'live right'.

48 **Ol-man-tilikam** (literally 'old-man-people') = elders'.

49 **Chhi-tilikam** (literally 'new-people') = 'teenagers', 'young adults', that is, the **chhi-tloochman** ('young women') and **chhi-man** ('young men') who are becoming old enough to think about having a partner and getting married.

50 **Kopit-kakwa** means something more like 'that's all' here. (See its use above as 'just like that'.)

51 **Chako** (literally 'come') also = 'to happen'.

52 **Dlet** 'real', 'really', 'true'.

Spelling rules:

Stress:

- Assumed to be almost always on the first syllable.
- Any stress coming later in a word is indicated by a 2-vowel spelling (examples *tanaas*, *sayaa*, *la-miyai*).

Words from Canadian/Métis French: Spelled as close to the French original as possible without deviating from common Chinook Jargon pronunciations. You may be surprised how much certain words differ from their Canadian French source! (Examples *lamiyai* 'old lady' from French 'la vieille', *ninamoo* 'turnip' from French 'le navot'.)

Indigenous sounds: most Chinuk Wawa words are from Pacific NW Native languages, so you'll need to know their proper pronunciations.

- The “slurpy L” is spelled *tl* (examples *tlaska*, *patlach*). NOTE: Many BC Indigenous/elder speakers vary here between saying a simple slurpy-L & having a slight “t” (or even “k”) sound before it.
- Apostrophe ('):
 - After a vowel = glottal stop [ʔ] (examples *tiyaa'wit*, *k'o'*).
 - With a consonant, forms a “popping” sound (examples *k'ow*, *tl'onas*).
- Underlined consonants are made in the back of the mouth (examples *kata*, *tlahani*).
- The combination *wh* is like the careful/older pronunciation “HW” at the start of English “what”, “why”, “which”, etc. -- not a plain “W” sound (examples *mitwhit*, *tlwhap*).

Vowels:

- Single vowels *a*, *e*, *i*, *o* are said generally as in French / English (examples *aha*, *dlet*, *hihi*, *O!*), but *u* is reserved for the schwa sound as in English “sun” and “chuck”. NOTE: In BC Indigenous/elders' speech, stressed *a* is frequently /æ/ as in English “ash” (examples: *yaka*, *hayaas*).
- Two-vowel spellings (diphthongs) are *ai* as in English “eye” / French “taille”, *ei* as in English “hey” / French “vieille”, *oo* as in English “boo”, *ou* or *ow* as in English “house”, “how”. NOTE: In BC Indigenous/elders' speech, *e* & *ei* are often said as *i* (examples: *dlet* ~ *dliit*, *leili* ~ *lili*), and *o* is often pronounced as *oo* (examples: *spos* ~ *spoos* ~ *poos*, *tl'onas* ~ *tl'oonas*).
- Wherever you see a *y* or a *w*, those are not vowels but consonants, as in English “yes”, French “yeux”, and English “we”.
- *Don't read this :*) I try to avoid most 3-vowel & 4-vowel sequences (thus **haiioo*, **mouich*, etc.), as they are confusing to English-readers & would lead French-readers to strange pronunciations.

Consonants: generally said as in English, except for the rules above.

Hyphens are used when two or more words combine to form an idiomatic meaning (examples *kakwa-pos*, *tanaas-yaka-tanaas*).

Traditional Chinook Jargon spellings have influenced my choices. Many learners are familiar with these, from the classic dictionaries, from **BC** place names, and from BC English words like *skookum* & *saltchuck*. I'm trying to write CJ that's both recognizable (which traditional spellings should be honoured for), and easy to pronounce well (which they're not wonderful at). Part of my strategy is to change similar-looking traditional spellings, so they're more distinct from each other. Examples –

- Traditional <*nesika*> 'we, us, our' **versus** <*mesika*> 'you (plural), your' have been confusing English-readers for 150 years. So I spell these *nesaika* & *masaika*.
- The traditional <*wake*> 'not; no!' **versus** <*weght*> 'also; again; some more' also have a long history of mix-ups, even though they've never sounded similar! So I spell these *weik* & *wuht*.