

## Kung Jaadee Study Guide



### Biography

Kung Jaadee (sounds like Judday) means 'Moon Woman.' This is Roberta Kennedy's Haida name. She lives on Haida Gwaii. She has traveled across Canada performing Haida Raven legends to audiences of all ages for 24 years. These stories tell of a time when the animals taught us how to become k'onjee onгаа, dear people. Kung Jaadee performs these stories while accompanying herself on her drum. Her songs are traditional Haida songs, composed during her ancestors' time.

Kung Jaadee learned to tell stories from listening to her Gaagii (uncle) Terry and her cousin Frank.

Kung Jaadee is teaching Haida language at the Chief Matthews School in her village of Old Masset, on Haida Gwaii. She is also apprenticing to learn as much of her language as possible. She has traveled to nearly every province and territory in Canada telling her stories at schools, conferences, and festivals.



## Study Guide

At the beginning of my presentation I introduce myself in my language; I translate as I continue my presentation. I speak briefly of the clan I belong to, and that my Haida Nation is matrilineal in our tradition.

I wear my button robe, made by my great grandmother, dii naan k'aayaas.

I tell my first story, of Raven creating our world. When I am finished, I acknowledge the territory I am visiting.

I perform many Raven stories: How Raven Brought the Light; Raven Steals the Water; Raven and the First People; Raven Brings Salmon; Raven Steals the Fire; Raven and Salmon Woman; Raven's Feast/ Potlatch; Raven and the Giant Fisherman.

I also perform other stories: Kung Jaadee; Moon Woman; The Berry Picker and the Bears, also know as: The Haida Princess and the Bears.

When I am finished telling a story, I sing a song, and I use my drum, or guujaaw to accompany me. Photos are welcome while I am performing stories and drumming songs.

During my presentation, I will stop to teach some of my Haida language, asking the class and staff to repeat the words along with me. I will provide a small list of words I will use for advance practice if you choose.

When I am finished sharing a story, I invite students and staff to ask questions. I do not accept questions while I perform, this interrupts the flow of the stories. Instead I ask students to hold onto their questions until I am finished.

For primary students I share the location of my home territory, and I perform stories and I sing and I drum songs. I do not share the history of my Nation. They are too young.

For elementary, middle school and high school students I share as much history as I can, if appropriate. I let them know of smallpox, which devastated our population from thousands to a few hundred people.

I share about the missionaries moved into our territory soon after and converted us to Christianity. How the missionaries forced us to give up our traditional names, our traditional homes, our traditional clothing.

I share about the Indian Day school in our village, and then I speak about the residential schools.

I share my own personal story of becoming a storyteller, how storytelling chose me, I did not choose it. I share the shame I felt (due to racism I experienced while I was growing up) being a Haida aboriginal person. And how I unlearned my shame.

For older students, if time permits, I teach how our clan system and how our potlatch system works. We follow our mother's lines. The woman is the centre of our homes and of our societies, she is the giver of life. She brings the children into the world and therefore the backbone of our families. The eldest woman of each clan is the true leader of all in our clans- the matriarch (though we're not a matriarchy). She made our clan what it is. The hereditary chiefs are men, but they act in deference to their Naanalang, their grandmothers.

For younger students, if I sense they are getting very wiggly, I get them up, we all stretch (and I use my language to conduct a few exercises) then I teach them a song and a dance. The song is very simple, it is only made up of vocables, sounds that mean nothing at all. And it is then repeated over and over again. I explain this is called a chant, there is no translation, it is simply sung to connect our bodies with our minds with our spirits. The dance is also very simple, with a slight bend of the knees, hands facing forward and a gentle swaying from side to side.

The song and dance honours the Shark Mother, or Dogfish Mother. She is a crest, a symbol my clan uses on our button robes, drums, totem poles to announce to the world which clan we belong to-the Raven clan, or the Yagulaanaas/Yagujahnaas clan.

Her story is very old, it has been forgotten by our nation. But she is of the nobility, or is high ranking, and powerful, some describe her as being beautiful and ugly at the same time. Part of the story is, an elderly person went down to the beach one day, and while walking there, heard a singing voice, upon coming towards it, he saw a Shark breathing its last breaths, and it was singing its final song. The person, one of my ancestors listened to it and learned the song, and brought the song back to our clan.

I usually perform a shorter story at the end, or if we are out of time, then I sing and drum one final song.



Haida – the People

K'ongee onгаа – dear people

Yaahl - Raven

Haida Gwaa – the Land of the People, formerly the Queen  
Charlotte Islands

Yakjanaas – the name of my Raven clan, feminine Yahgulaa-naas-  
the name of my Raven clan, masculine

Kung Jaadee – Moon Woman, my Haida name, given to me by my  
cousin, also the name of my favourite Haida story.

Naanii – grandmother Tsinni/Chinni – grandfather

Potlatch – a huge feast hosted by one of the two clans. Potlatches  
honour the memory of someone who has died, often to honour a  
chief who has passed on. They are also done to bring in the new  
chief of the clan.

Cheen/Cheena – salmon; Haaw'a – thank you<sup>[SEP]</sup>; Eh – yes

Lately wedding potlatches have come back into being. Traditionally puberty potlatches were conducted to announce a young woman is ready to be married.

Recently amongst the Tlingit, the first puberty potlatch was conducted in the Yukon Territory. At potlatches children and adults can receive their Haida names, adults and children can be adopted into the clan hosting the potlatch.

At all potlatches gifts are given to everyone to 'pay' the audience for witnessing the events that occurred during the potlatch.

The word 'potlatch' means to 'give away,' it is not a Haida word, it is what is called a Chinook jargon word. It was used during the fur trade with Europeans and different aboriginal groups.

Potlatch is not to be confused with potluck. A potluck is where everyone makes a dish and brings it to share. Potlatch is where one clan hosts the feast, they gather, hunt, fish, go shopping, then cook and prepare all the food themselves. They set up the hall, with decorations, set the tables for several hundred, sometimes two thousand people. They serve their guests, they invite the dancing and singing groups to perform.

There was a time when our Canadian government created an anti-potlatch law. Those hosting potlatches were arrested; the gifts, which might be masks, totem poles, canoes, drums, jewelry, blankets, were confiscated. These items were not returned. If there is an interest, I might speak on this topic; in connection with this, I will speak on the first totem pole raised in my village in 80 years, in 1969. It was a huge celebration, which drew people from far away.

