



UNIT 8

Ku.éex' (Ceremonies)



The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act: Relationship with the Environment

THERE ARE MANY REASONS for holding a ceremony. Approximately a year after a person dies, the clan of the deceased holds a ceremony. This ceremony is called a *ku.éex'* in Tlingit, *wáahlaal* in Haida and *loolgit* in Tsimshian. It is sometimes known as a pay-off party or potlatch, which is a word from the Chinook Jargon.

Today, Native Elders have asked the younger tribal members not to use the word potlatch. They have asked them to use their own tribal names for the ceremonies.

During a ceremony, the deceased and the ancestors of a clan are remembered. It is a time for the clan members to end a year of mourning. The ceremony is held to remove grief. The ceremony is a time for people to get

together with their kin. It is a time to honor the opposite moiety. The opposite moiety comforts the grieving clan. The clan of the deceased repays the opposite moiety.

Ceremonies used to last several days. Today, ceremonies are shorter. Today, cash and other western goods are used during the ceremony. The ceremony is not the same in all communities. There are steps that are followed during a ceremony.

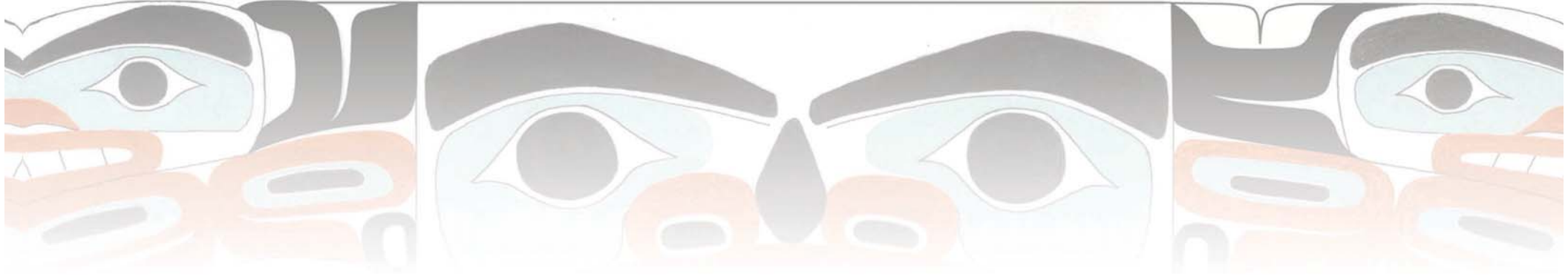
The *naa káani* is the moderator of the ceremony. The *naa káani* is from the guest clan. He is hired by the host clan. The host clan directs the *naa káani* through the ceremony.

At the beginning of a ceremony and during the ceremony, members of the guest clan give money to the host clan



and moiety. This is done unobtrusively. This part is done publicly.

The host clan's regalia are put on a



The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act: Relationship with the Environment

table at the front of the room. Pictures of the deceased clan member are put on the table.

The host clan welcomes the guests. The guests are from the opposite clan. Traditionally, the guest clan helps the host clan members to put on their regalia. They helped people put black marks on their faces. They helped the people to put on their black headbands. This would happen during the mourning ceremony.

Traditionally, members of the host clan would sing four grieving songs. They would sing two songs if the ceremony was for one person or a child.

If another clan member died, and another ceremony is planned for the same clan later in the same year, some mourning songs are left unfinished.

The songs are finished during the final ceremony of the year, for that clan. The guest clan listens during this part of the ceremony.

Next, the clan Elders of the guest clan offer words of support. They sing their songs to remove grief. They display their clan regalia.

The host clan asks the guest clan members to take off their black scarves and paint. This wipes away the grief and mourning.

When the mourning part of the ceremony is over, the ceremony becomes happier. The host clan prepares fire bowls. The fire bowls are filled with gifts. The names of the ancestors are called before the fire bowls are given out. The fire bowls are then given to selected guests from the guest clan who

supported the grieving family.

A member of the guest clan shows photographs of the deceased to each of the guests.

Next, the first meal is served. Younger members of the host clan and moiety serve the guests. Members of the guest clan may dance or sing to show their thanks. In Tlingit, they say “Gunalchéesh ho ho,” meaning “Thank you very much.” This means that the guests are totally satisfied.

The host clan then gives goods to the guests. The naa káani holds up bowls of fruit. He calls the names of guests who were chosen by the host clan. Each guest says, “Here!” A member of the host clan puts the bowl of fruit on the table in front of the guest called. The other guests grab for the fruit from the bowl.



The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act: Relationship with the Environment

This is a fun time during the ceremony.

Often a second meal is served after the fruit has been distributed. The guests may sing and dance during this time to show their thanks.

Next, men from the host clan enter, carrying a large container filled with berries. They sing a song as they enter. The women of the clan follow the men, singing the same song. The host clan serves the berries to the guests.

The host clan gives the guest moiety gifts of traditional Native foods. They may give jars of fish, seal, deer meat, berries, and jams. They may also give store-bought foods.

If another meal is to be served, it is served at this time. The guests may sing and dance at this time to show their thanks.

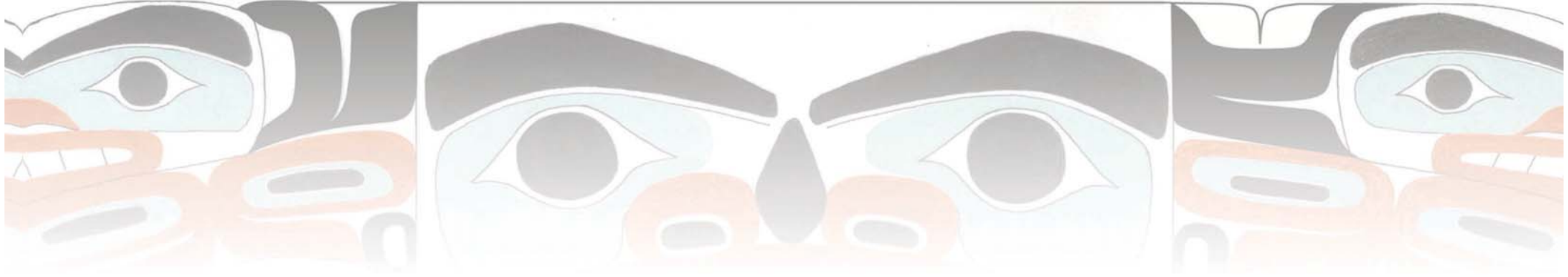
Next is the money bowl part of the ceremony. Members of the guest clan collect and count the money given to the host clan. They sit at a table at the front of the room. They have large money bowls in front of them. First, members of the same moiety but from different clans collect money from the members of the guest clan. The host moiety members acknowledge each person who contributed money.

Members of the host clan and the deceased family also acknowledge those who contributed money. Finally, they put their money into the bowls. The money counters add up the money. They give the total amount contributed to the naa káani. The naa káani calls out the total amount of money given by each moiety member. He also calls out the



total amount of money contributed.

At different times during a ceremony, dances are performed. For example, a grandchild of the same moiety as the host clan does a spirit



The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act: Relationship with the Environment

dance behind a blanket. The grandchild wears a special headdress representing the spirit. The dance tells a clan story. At this stage in the ceremony, the host clan ceremonially “kills the money.” The money is now dedicated to the deceased and to the ancestors.

After this, the money is distributed to all members of the guest moiety. All guest clan leaders get larger payments. Also, those who helped with special tasks get larger payments. This would include pall bearers, grave diggers, cooks, night watchers, hunters, fishermen, and singers.

After all of the food and goods have been distributed, the host clan leader may introduce individuals from his clan to all of the participants of the ceremony. Newborn children of the host clan may

also be introduced. The names of the newborn children are called out at this time. The names are chosen from clan ancestors.

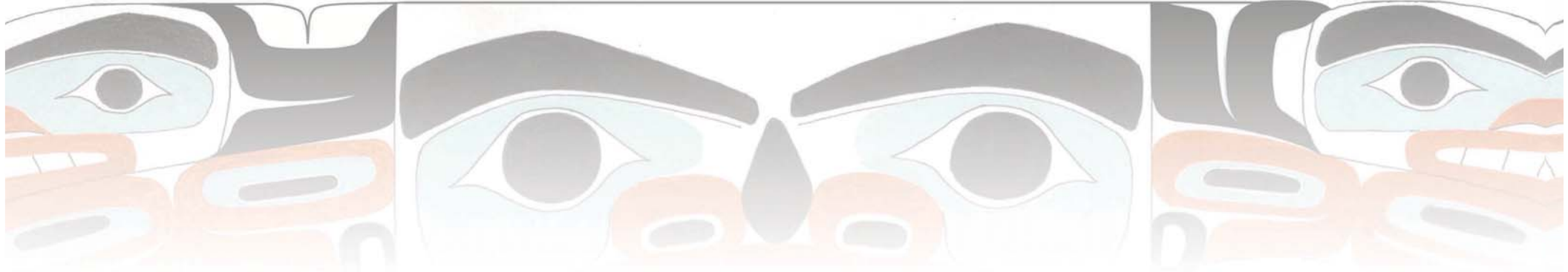
A clan name can only be given by the clan members of that clan. This may involve getting permission from the clan leader or grandparents. The naa káani holds the money on the children’s foreheads. He calls out the names of the children. The guests repeat the names. This is done three times for each child. The naa káani then gives the money to a person who witnessed the naming ceremony. The witness is responsible for remembering the name and the naming ceremony. Non-clan members are adopted at this time. They are adopted in the same way as the newborns are named.

The host clan may sing an exit song or make speeches. The guest moiety can also respond. This provides balance to the ceremony.

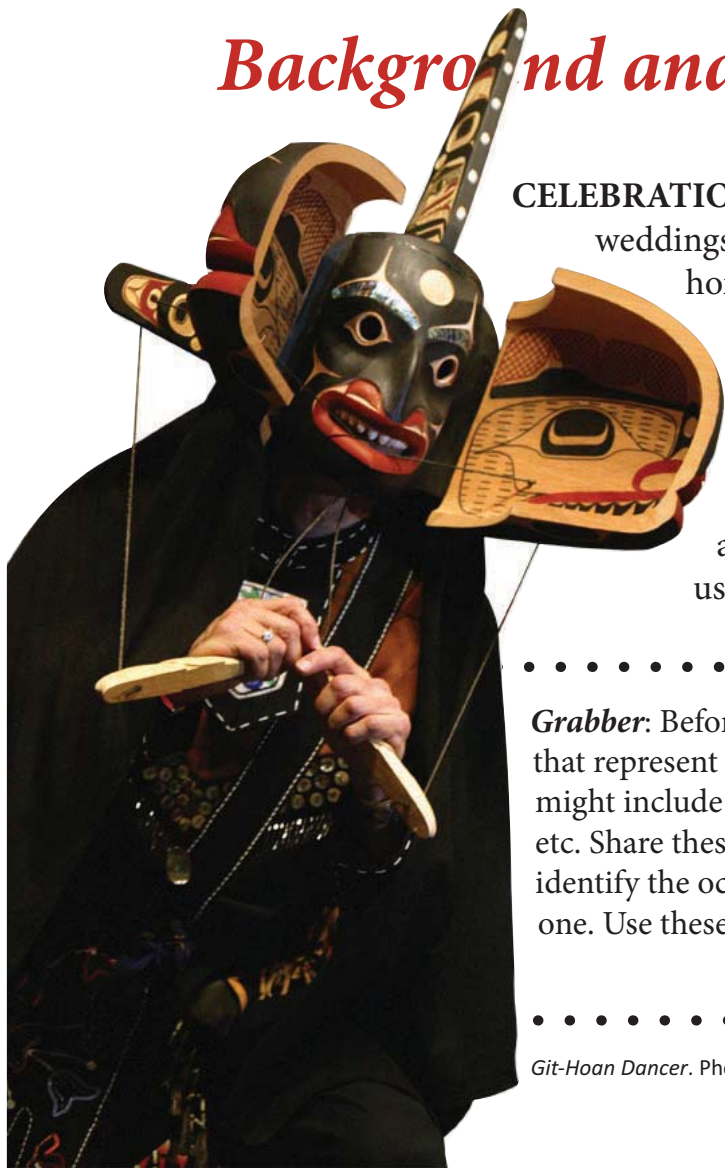
It is then time for the guests to leave. The ceremony is over.

In 1885, The Canadian government banned ceremonies. The U.S. government banned ceremonies soon after. They thought the ceremonies were a waste of time. They believed that too much currency and wealth was wasted during a ceremony.

The ban was stopped in 1934 in the U.S. and in 1951 in Canada.



The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act: Background and Place-Based Activities



CELEBRATION OF BIRTHS, rites of passages, weddings, funerals, naming ceremonies, and honoring of the deceased are some of the many reasons for which a ceremony may occur. Although protocol differs among the different groups of Native peoples, the ceremony will usually involve a feast with music, dance, and spiritual activities. The most sacred ceremonies are usually observed in the winter.

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Grabber: Before the lesson begins, obtain greeting cards that represent different occasions and ceremonies. This might include birthdays, anniversaries, funerals, births, etc. Share these with the students, calling upon them to identify the occasion or ceremony associated with each one. Use these to lead into the ku.éex' ceremony.
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Git-Hoan Dancer. Photo by Bill Hess.

Key Vocabulary

- deceased
- contribute
- mourning
- grief
- distribute
- support
- acknowledge
- final
- container
- headdress

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act: Background and Place-Based Activities

- If any ceremonial regalia are available, make arrangements for their owner(s) to present them to the students. Reinforce the value of the regalia to the owner and the clan.
- Read the text at the beginning of this unit with the students. Ask the students questions about the contents of the text, causing them to reflect on the customs associated with the different stages of the ceremony.
- If a DVD of Celebration is available, show portions of it to the students. Lead the students to understand that Celebration is held every two years to reaffirm the cultural ties and heritage of Native peoples.
- Discuss with the students the reaction of Western religions and ultimately the U.S. government to the Native ceremonies. Lead the students to suggest why the ceremonies were banned. It is important for the students to understand that the Western religious groups and the U.S. government had a policy of assimilation for Natives. They saw the ceremonies as a hindrance to the “Native heathens” becoming “civilized”. Have the students imagine how they would feel if their birthdays, Christmas, etc. were banned.
- Invite a resource person to make a presentation to the students about ceremonies. You may wish to video tape the session so that it can be reviewed later.





The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act: Background and Place-Based Activities

DECEASED



Show the students a card of sympathy or condolences. Use this to introduce the term “deceased”. You may wish to share an obituary column from a newspaper with the students.

HEADDRESS



Show the hats picture from the back of this unit to the students; have them identify each hat. Use this to introduce Native headdresses—show the headdress picture from this unit.

ACKNOWLEDGE



Show the picture of Elizabeth Peratrovich from this unit to the students. Lead the students to understand that she is acknowledged for her work in Native civil rights. February 16 is named in her honor.

DISTRIBUTE



Show the students a newspaper or magazine—use the material to introduce “distribute” to the students. Have the students suggest other things that can be distributed.



The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act: Background and Place-Based Activities

GRIEF



Show the students the picture from this unit for grief. Lead the students to understand that grief is a very strong emotion that can be caused by a variety of situations. Cite other contexts that may cause people grief.

FINAL



Show the students bread, butter, cheese, and ham. Have them suggest the steps necessary to make a ham and cheese sandwich, noting in particular the final step (for example, cutting the sandwich in half before eating it).

MOURNING



The period of mourning for Native peoples in Southeast Alaska is about one year. The mourning period ends with the payoff ceremony. Ceremonies are usually held in the fall so as not to interfere with the harvesting periods.

CONTAINER



Collect a number of different food containers. Have the students compare and contrast the containers in terms of their materials, contents, and uses.

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act: Background and Place-Based Activities

SUPPORT



Show the students an example of a fund-raising item (for example, Girl Scout cookies, sports tickets, etc.). Use this to introduce “support” to the students. Cite other examples of support for people and/or organizations.

CONTRIBUTE



Make a slit in the tin lid of a glass jar. Show the jar to the students, calling upon them to suggest why the slit is in the top of the jar. Lead them to understand that the jar is for people to contribute funds for a cause.



Sealaska Heritage Institute is a great resource for historical photos and documents related to Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian cultures. Go to www.sealaska-heritage.org/collections to search our archival catalog or to view photos in our “digital collections” section. Above: Photograph postcard inscribed “Potlatch Dancers, Alaska” by Winter & Pond. Image taken at Klinkwan circa 1890s.

Language and Skills Development

LISTENING

Change

Group the students in pairs. There should be one student without a partner to be “it” for the first round of the activity. Have the students in each pair stand back to back, with elbows interlocked. Tell the students to listen for a specific word, sequence of words, or sentence. When the students hear the word, sequence, or sentence you said at the beginning of the round, they should drop arms and quickly find new partners. However, “it” must also find a partner—thus producing a new “it” for the next round of the activity.



Half Match

Collect the picture halves from the previous activity. Mix all of the halves together and give them to the students. Say a sentence, leaving out the key word. The two students who have the illustration halves for the word that completes the sentence should show their halves. Continue in this way until all of the illustration halves have been presented.



Illustration Hold Up

Before the activity begins, prepare a page which contains small versions of the vocabulary illustrations. Provide each student with a copy of the page. The students should cut out the illustrations. Say a vocabulary word. Each student should then hold up the illustration for the vocabulary word that you said. Repeat this process until all of the illustrations/vocabulary words have been used in this way.

Join Those Halves

Make an extra set of vocabulary pictures. Cut each of the vocabulary illustrations in half. Spread the illustration halves on the floor in a scattered form. Group the students into two teams. Give the first two players in each team a long length of string or yarn. Say a vocabulary word. When you say “Go,” the first two players in each team must rush to the illustration halves. The object of the activity is for the players to use the string/yarn to join together the two halves which make up the illustration for the word you said. The first pair of players to do this successfully wins the round. Repeat until all players have participated.

Language and Skills Development

SPEAKING

Draw

Give all of the cards from a deck of playing cards to the students (preferably, all students should have the same number of cards). Have another deck of cards for yourself. Mount the vocabulary illustrations on the chalkboard. Hold one of your playing cards next to a vocabulary illustration. The student who has the matching playing card must then say the word for that picture. The student should then place that playing card to the side. The first student who has no playing cards left in his/her hands wins the game. This activity may be repeated more than once by collecting, mixing, and redistributing the playing cards to the students.

Calendar Bingo

Locate an old calendar. Provide each student with a calendar page (make copies if necessary). Also, provide each student with ten small markers. Each student should place the markers on different dates on his/her calendar page. Mount the vocabulary pictures on the board. Call a student's name and say a date in the month. If a marker is not on the date you named, he/she should say a complete sentence using a vocabulary word from this unit. However, if a marker is on the date you called, he/she may pass to the next player. Repeat.



Trapped

Have two students stand facing one another with hands clasped. The two students should raise their hands above their heads to resemble the arch of a bridge. Have the remaining students line up in a straight line. The students should walk under the bridge in single file. When you clap your hands, the two students should lower their hands, trapping one of the students between their arms. Show the trapped student a vocabulary illustration. The student should then say a complete sentence using the vocabulary word for the illustration. The bridge should then be raised for the next round of the activity. Repeat.

Hand Tag

Group the students in a circle on the floor. Have the students place their hands on the floor, palms down. Stand in the center of the circle with the vocabulary picture and a flashlight. The object of the activity is to attempt to tag a student's hand or hands with the light of the flashlight. The students must pull their hands from the circle when they think they are about to be tagged. When you eventually tag a student's hand or hands, he/she must then say a complete sentence using the word for a vocabulary picture that you show. Repeat this process until many students have responded.

The top of the page features a decorative border with stylized, colorful faces in shades of blue, orange, and grey. Below this, on the right side, is an image of an open book with yellowed pages.

Language and Skills Development

READING

Checkers in the Blind

Prepare a large outline on the chalkboard that contains twenty sections. Number each box in the outline. Have the students face the back of the classroom. Mount small sight words in selected boxes in the outline. Call a student's name. The student should say a number between 1 and 20. If the box with that number contains a sight word, say "Bingo!" The student should then turn around and read the sight word in the box. If the box named by the student does not contain a sight word, say "Pass." Continue until all of the sight words have been identified.

Find the Other Half

Group the students into two teams. Give the first player in each team a flashlight. Cut each of the sight words in half. Mix the word halves together and attach them to the chalkboard in a scattered form. Stand between the two teams with a flashlight. Shine the light of your flashlight on a word half. The first player in each team must turn on his/her flashlight and find the other half of the word for the word half your light is shining on. The first student to do this correctly wins the round. Repeat.

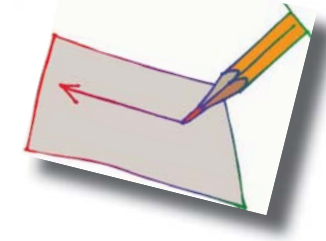
Sentence Completion

Provide each student with a copy of the sentence completion version of the story. The students should read the text and say the missing words. When finished, review the students' work.

Letter Encode

Prepare a page that contains large alphabet letters from A to Z. Make five copies for each student. The students should cut out their letters. When all of the letters have been cut out, show a vocabulary picture. The students should then use their letters to spell the word for that picture. Repeat, using the remaining pictures from this unit. Have the students store their cut out letters in individual envelopes.

Language and Skills Development



WRITING

Sentence Completion

Give each student a copy of the sentence completion version of the text from this unit. The students should write in the missing words. Afterward, review the students' work.

Back Writing

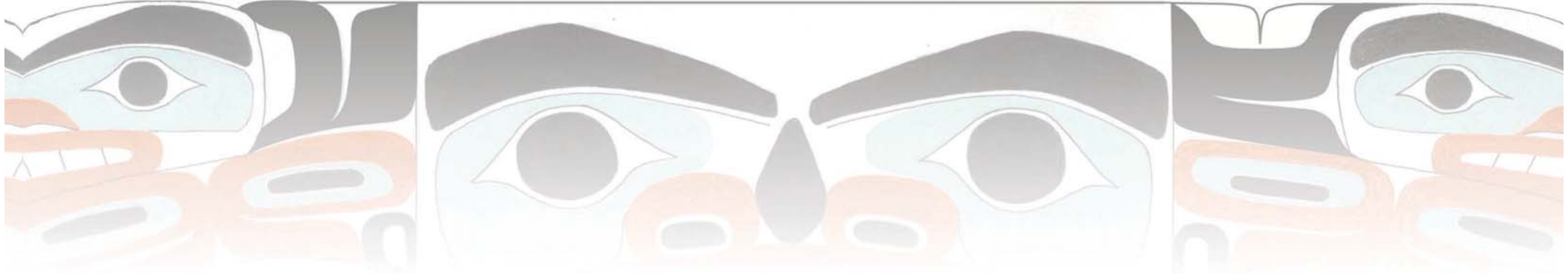
Group the students into two teams. Have the first player from each team stand in front of the board. Use the index finger of your writing hand to "write" the first letter of a sight word on the two players' backs. When you have done this, say "Go." Each of the players should then write a sight word on the board that begins with that letter. Repeat with other pairs of players until all players in each team have played and until all sight words have been written a number of times.

Numbered Pictures

Mount the vocabulary pictures on the chalkboard and number each one. Provide each student with writing paper and a pen. Call the number of a picture. Each student should write the vocabulary word for the picture represented by that number. Repeat until all vocabulary words have been written. Review the students' responses.

Silent Dictation

Provide each student with writing paper and a pen. The students should watch carefully as you move your lips as though you are saying one of the sight words (do not voice the word). After "lipping" the sight word, each student should write that word on his/her sheet of paper. Repeat this process with other sight words. Afterwards, review the students' responses.



Reading and Writing: Sentence Completion

THERE ARE MANY REASONS for holding a ceremony. Approximately a year after a person dies, the clan of the _____ holds a ceremony. This ceremony is called a *ku.éex'* in Tlingit, *wáahlaal* in Haida and *loolgit* in Tsimshian. It is sometimes known as a pay-off party or potlatch, which is a word from the Chinook Jargon.

Today, Native Elders have asked the younger tribal members not to use the word potlatch. They have asked them to use their own tribal names for the ceremonies.

During a ceremony, the _____ and the ancestors of a clan are remembered. It is a time for the clan members to end a year of _____.

The ceremony is held to remove _____. The ceremony is a time for people to get together with their kin. It is a time to honor the opposite moiety. The opposite moiety comforts the grieving clan. The clan of the _____ repays the opposite moiety.

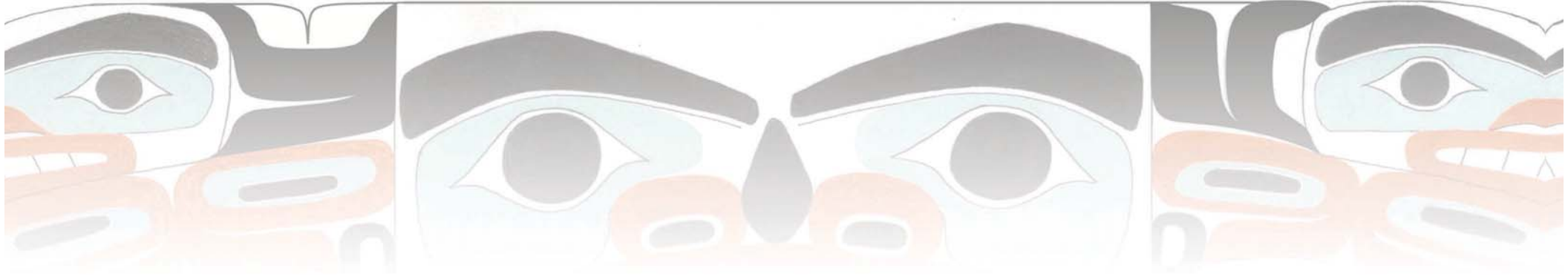
Ceremonies used to last several days. Today, ceremonies are shorter. Today, cash and other western goods are used during the ceremony. The ceremony is not the same in all communities. There are steps that are followed during a ceremony.

The *naa káani* is the moderator of the ceremony. The *naa káani* is from the guest clan. He is hired by the host clan. The host clan directs the *naa káani* through the ceremony.

At the beginning of a ceremony and during the ceremony, members of the guest clan give money to the host clan and moiety. This is done unobtrusively. This part is done publicly.

The host clan's regalia are put on a table at the front of the room. Pictures of the _____ clan member are put on the table.

The host clan welcomes the guests. The guests are from the opposite clan. Traditionally, the guest clan helps the host clan members to put on their regalia. They helped people put black marks on their faces. They helped the people to put on their black headbands. This would happen during the _____ ceremony.



Reading and Writing: Sentence Completion

Traditionally, members of the host clan would sing four grieving songs. They would sing two songs if the ceremony was for one person or a child.

If another clan member died, and another ceremony is planned for the same clan later in the same year, some _____ songs are left unfinished. The songs are finished during the _____ ceremony of the year, for that clan. The guest clan listens during this part of the ceremony.

Next, the clan Elders of the guest clan offer words of _____. They sing their songs to remove _____. They display

their clan regalia.

The host clan asks the guest clan members to take off their black scarves and paint. This wipes away the _____ and _____.

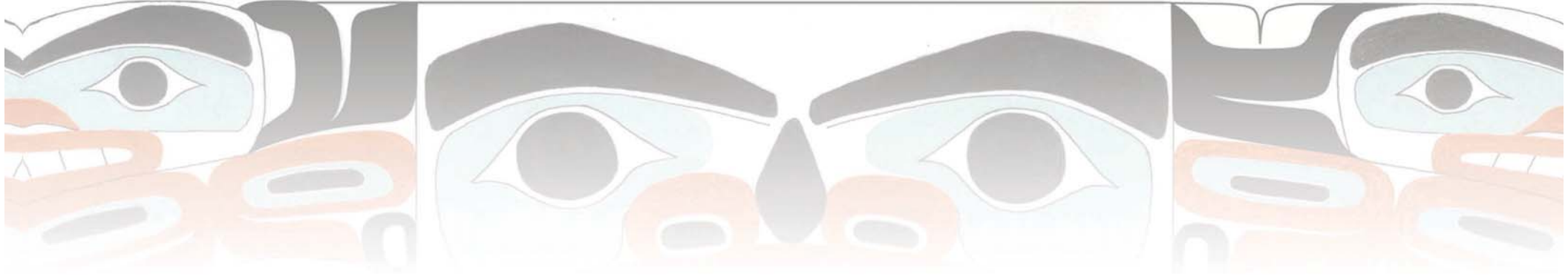
When the _____ part of the ceremony is over, the ceremony becomes happier. The host clan prepares fire bowls. The fire bowls are filled with gifts. The names of the ancestors are called before the fire bowls are given out. The fire bowls are then given to selected guests from the guest clan who _____ the grieving family.

A member of the guest clan shows photographs of the _____ to each of the

guests.

Next, the first meal is served. Younger members of the host clan and moiety serve the guests. Members of the guest clan may dance or sing to show their thanks. In Tlingit, they say “Gunalchéesh ho ho,” meaning “Thank you very much.” This means that the guests are totally satisfied.

The host clan then gives goods to the guests. The naa káani holds up bowls of fruit. He calls the names of guests who were chosen by the host clan. Each guest says, “Here!” A member of the host clan puts the bowl of fruit on the table in front of the guest called. The other guests grab for the fruit from the bowl. This is a fun time during the ceremony.



Reading and Writing: Sentence Completion

Often a second meal is served after the fruit has been _____. The guests may sing and dance during this time to show their thanks.

Next, men from the host clan enter, carrying a large _____ filled with berries. They sing a song as they enter. The women of the clan follow the men, singing the same song. The host clan serves the berries to the guests.

The host clan gives the guest moiety gifts of traditional Native foods. They may give jars of fish, seal, deer meat, berries, and jams. They may also give store-bought foods.

If another meal is to be served, it is served at this time. The guests may

sing and dance at this time to show their thanks.

Next is the money bowl part of the ceremony. Members of the guest clan collect and count the money given to the host clan. They sit at a table at the front of the room. They have large money bowls in front of them. First, members of the same moiety but from different clans collect money from the members of the guest clan. The host moiety members _____ each person who _____ money.

Members of the host clan and the _____ family also _____ those who _____ money. Finally, they put their money into

the bowls. The money counters add up the money. They give the total amount _____ to the naa káani. The naa káani calls out the total amount of money given by each moiety member. He also calls out the total amount of money _____.

At different times during a ceremony, dances are performed. For example, a grandchild of the same moiety as the host clan does a spirit dance behind a blanket. The grandchild wears a special _____ representing the spirit. The dance tells a clan story. At this stage in the ceremony, the host clan ceremonially “kills the money.” The money is now dedicated to the _____ and to



Reading and Writing: Sentence Completion

the ancestors.

After this, the money is _____ to all members of the guest moiety. All guest clan leaders get larger payments. Also, those who helped with special tasks get larger payments. This would include pall bearers, grave diggers, cooks, night watchers, hunters, fishermen, and singers.

After all of the food and goods have been _____, the host clan leader may introduce individuals from his clan to all of the participants of the ceremony. Newborn children of the host clan may also be introduced. The names of the newborn children are called out at this time. The names are chosen

from clan ancestors.

A clan name can only be given by the clan members of that clan. This may involve getting permission from the clan leader or grandparents. The naa káani holds the money on the children's foreheads. He calls out the names of the children. The guests repeat the names. This is done three times for each child. The naa káani then gives the money to a person who witnessed the naming ceremony. The witness is responsible for remembering the name and the naming ceremony. Non-clan members are adopted at this time. They are adopted in the same way as the newborns are named.

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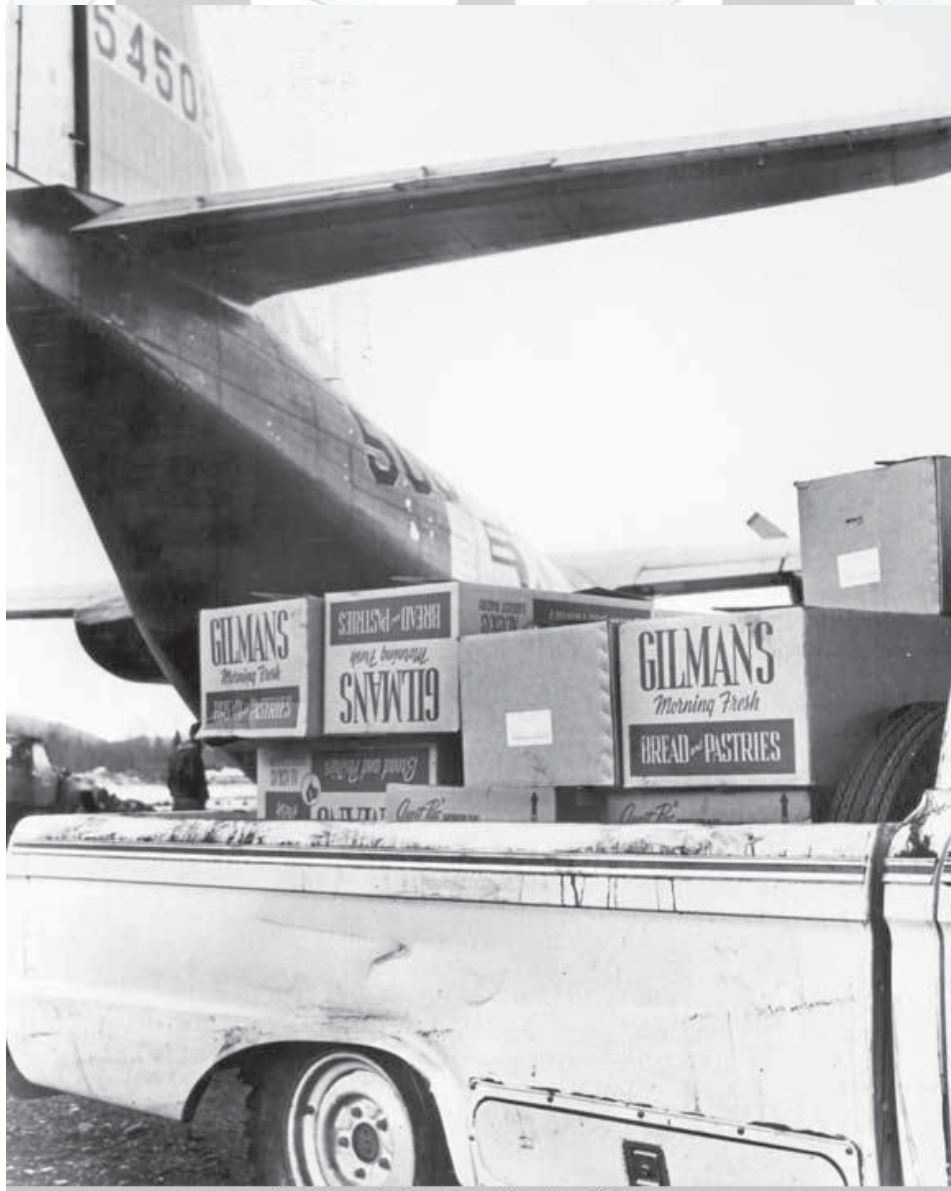
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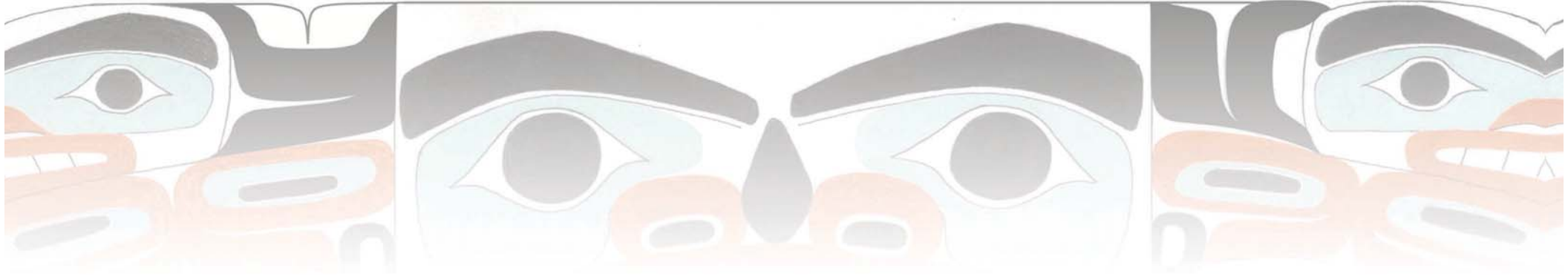
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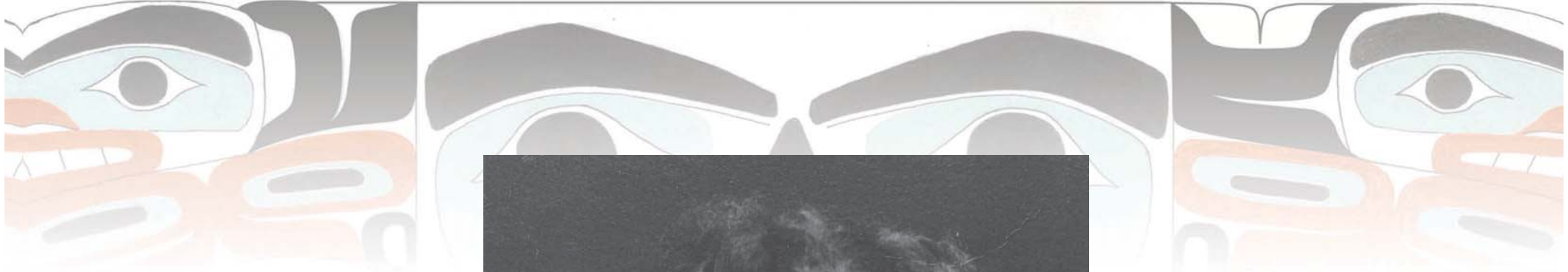
VOCABULARY PICTURES



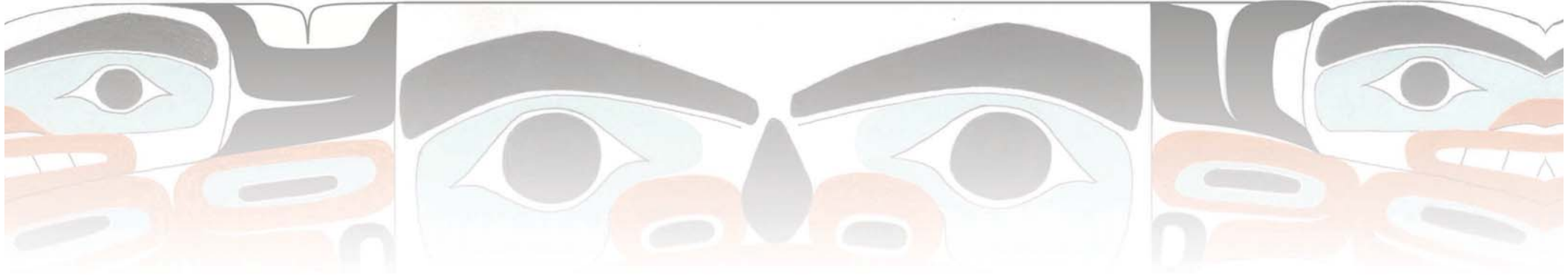
Archives, University of Alaska, Fairbanks



CONTRIBUTE

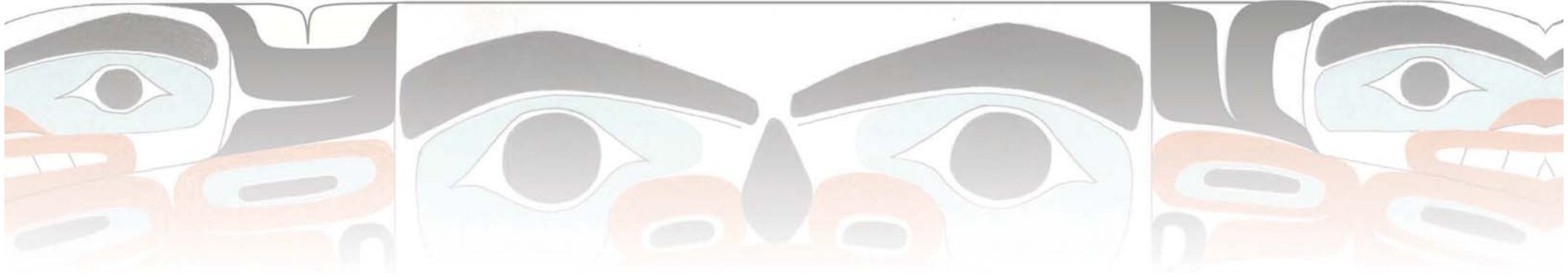


Alaska State Library - Historical Collections

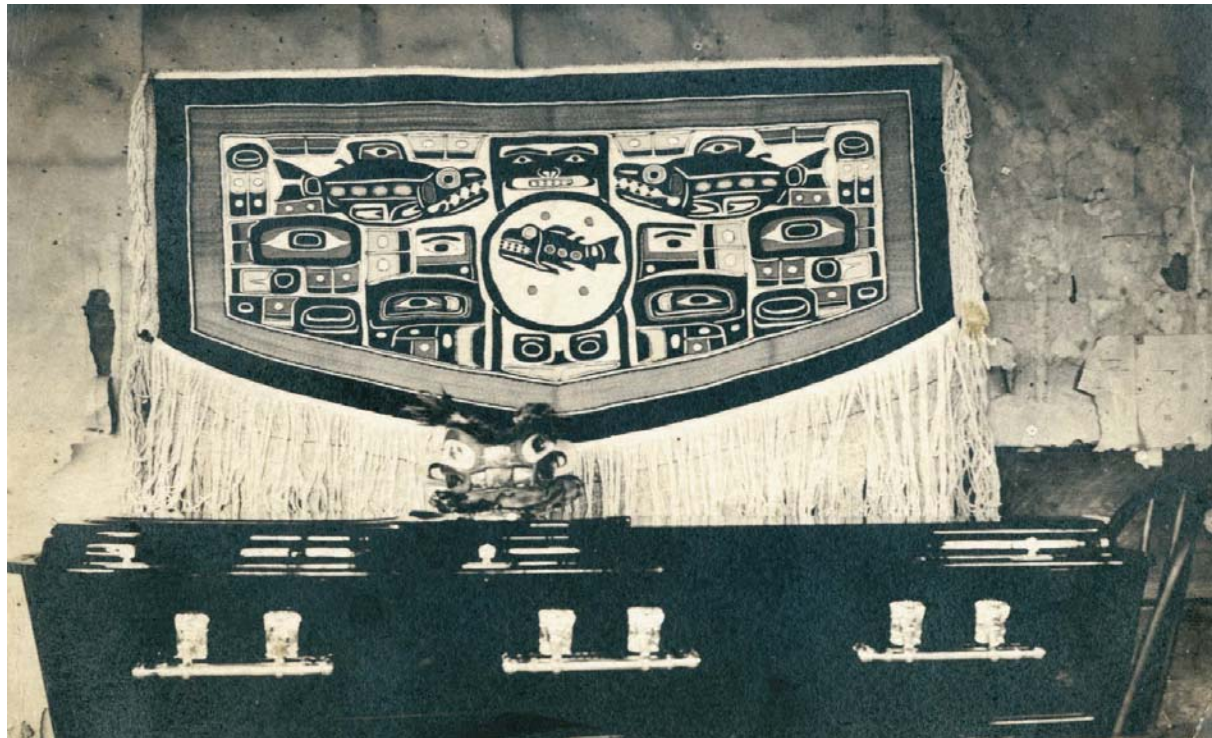
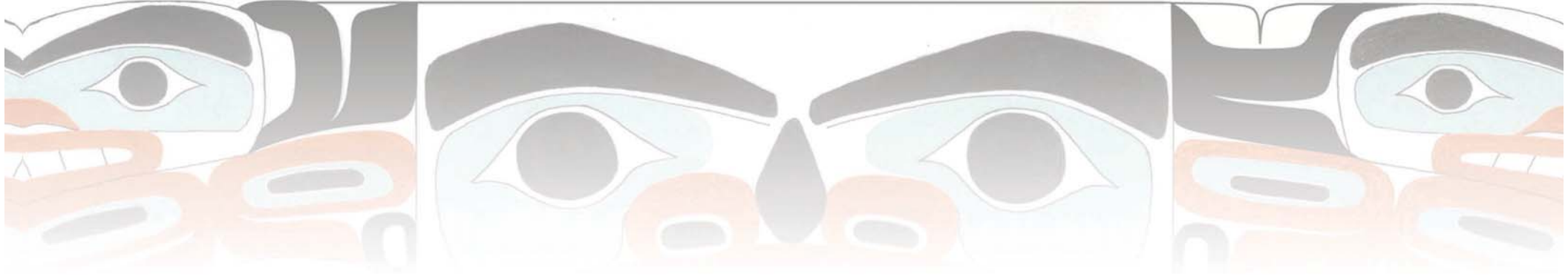


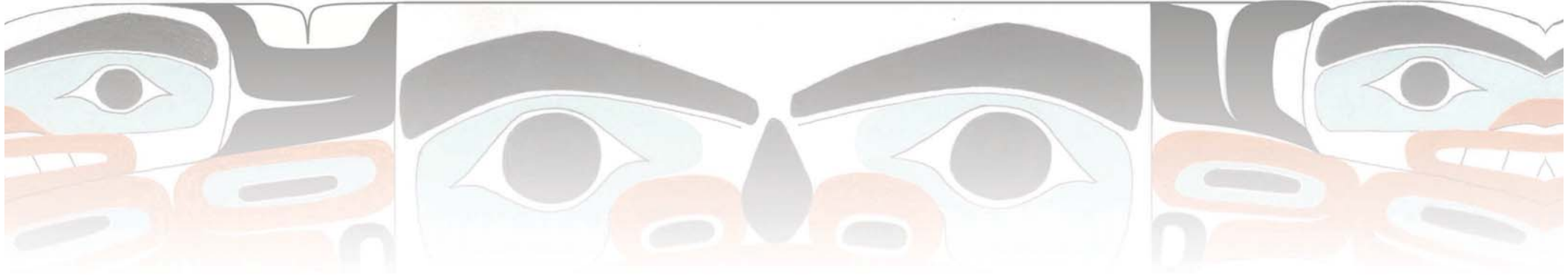
ACKNOWLEDGE





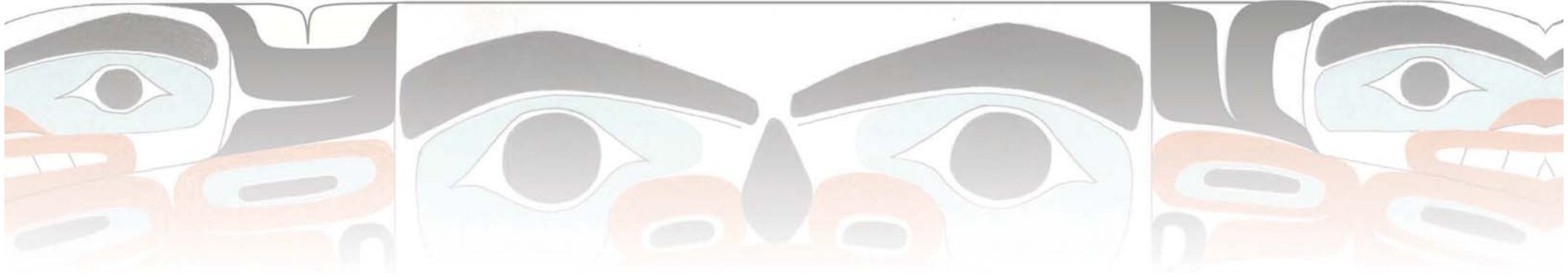
CONTAINER





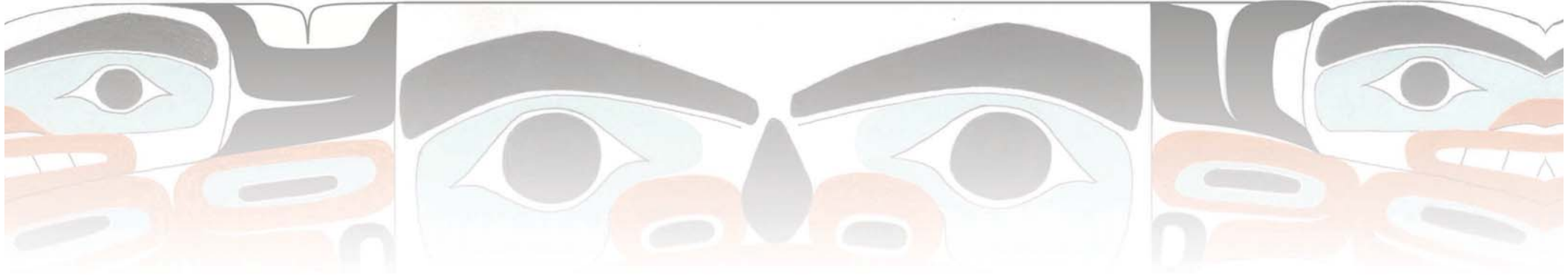
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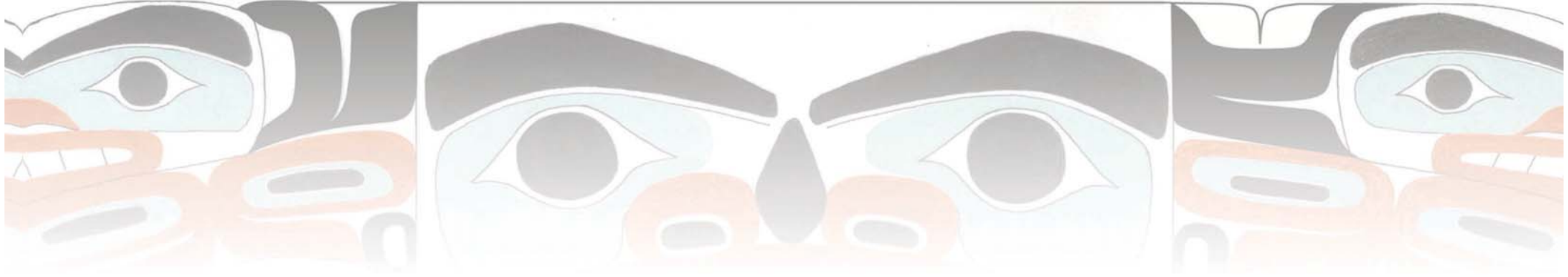


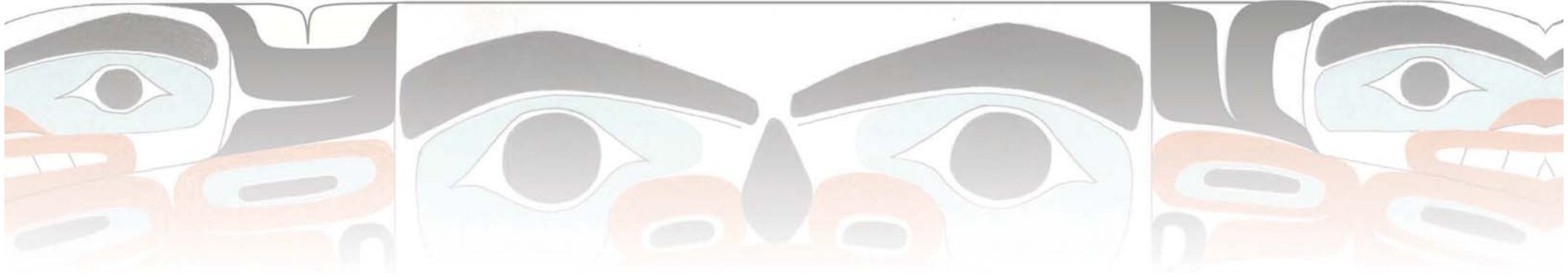
DISTRIBUTE





FINAL

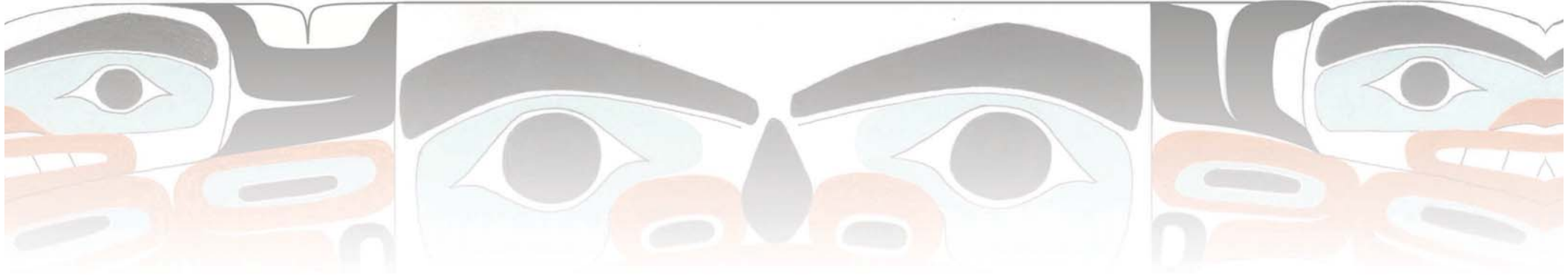




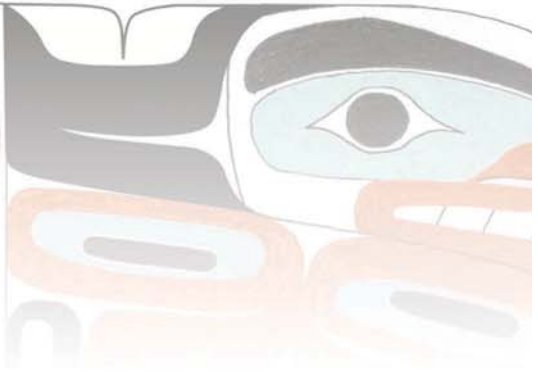
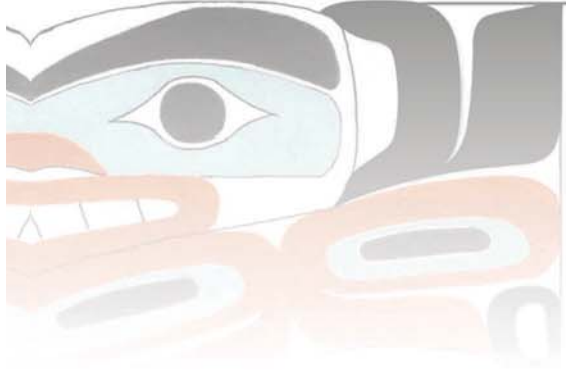
GRIEF

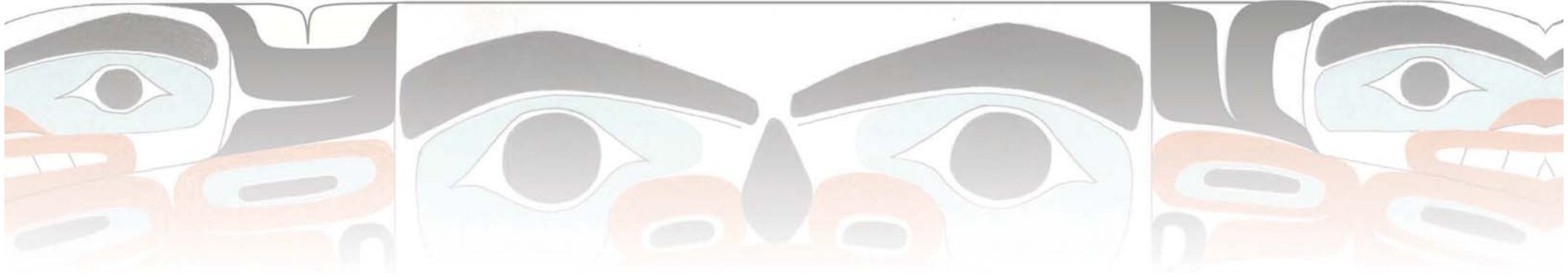


JAN CLET-JAH / VAKIAT MAIIVE
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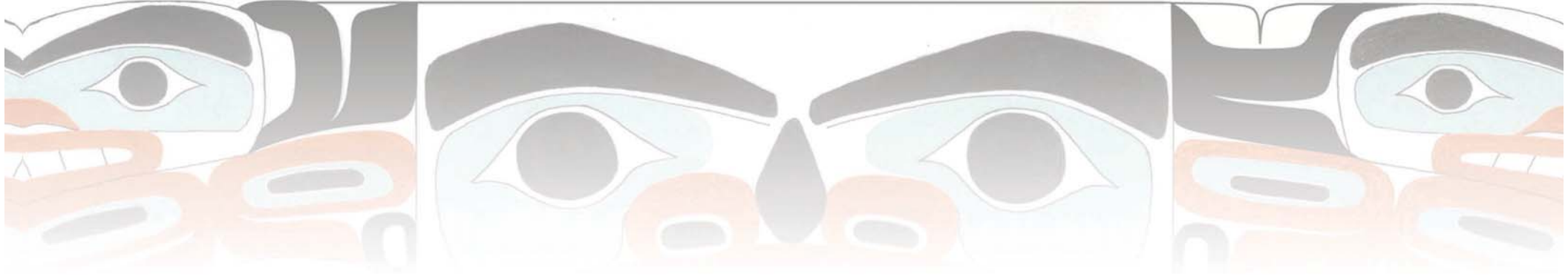


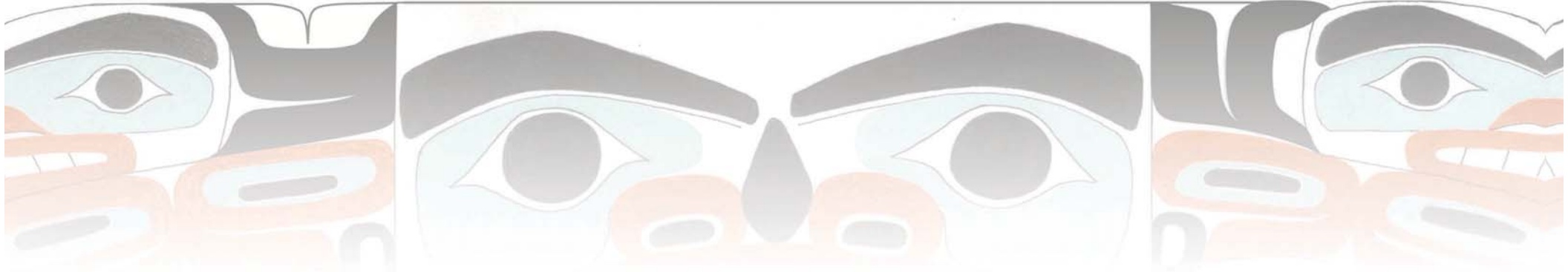
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