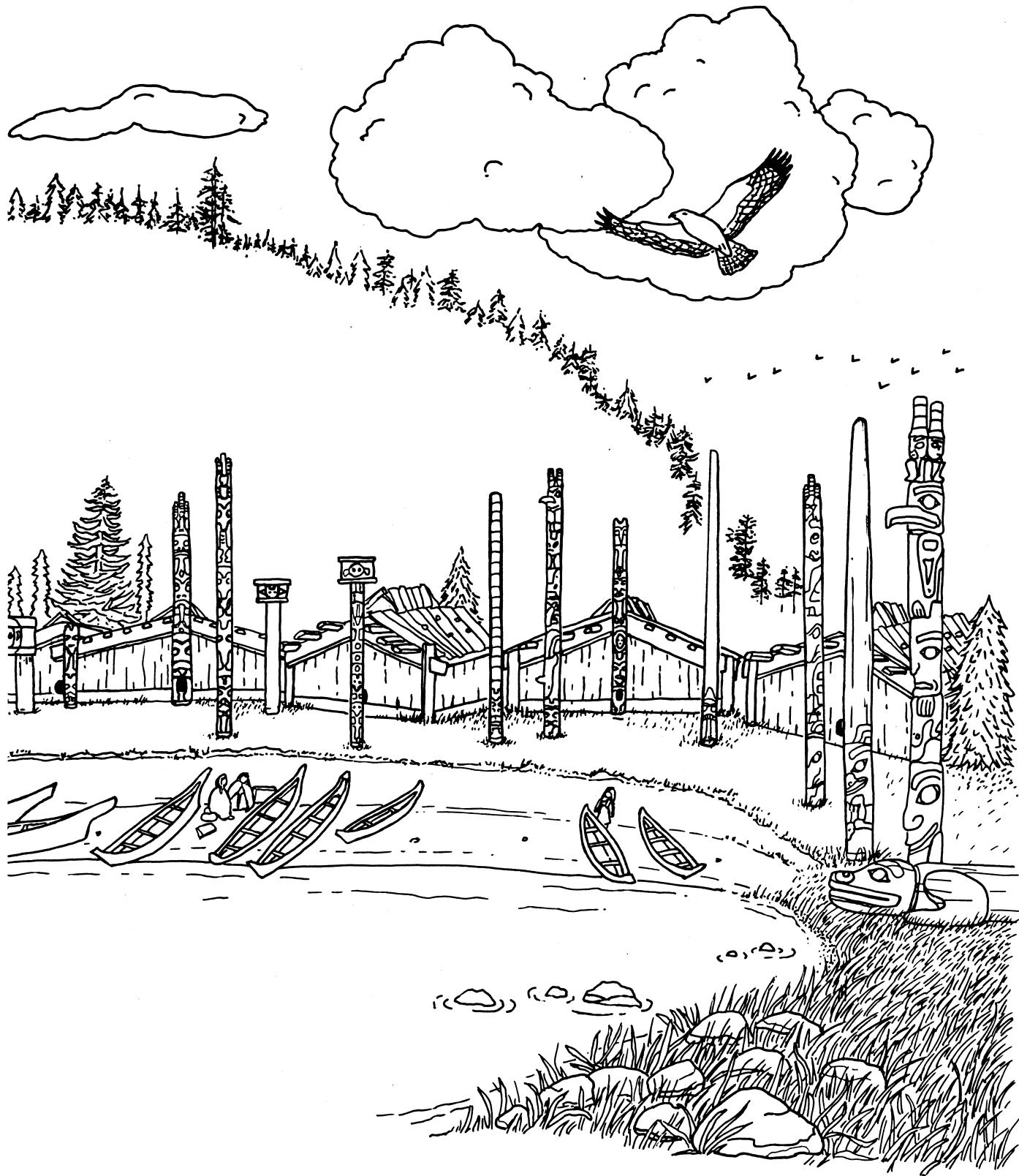
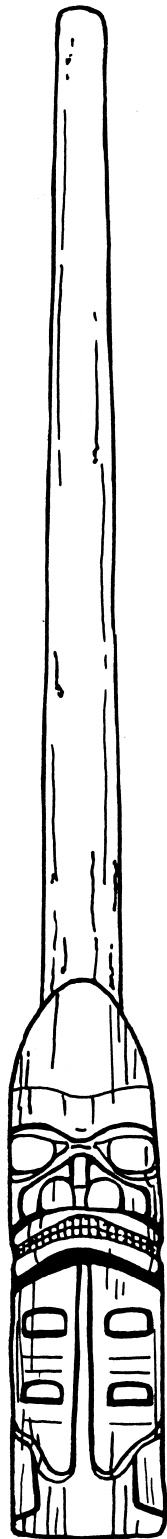


Totems Play a Big Role in Village Life



Totem poles were the Northwest Indian people's way of remembering.



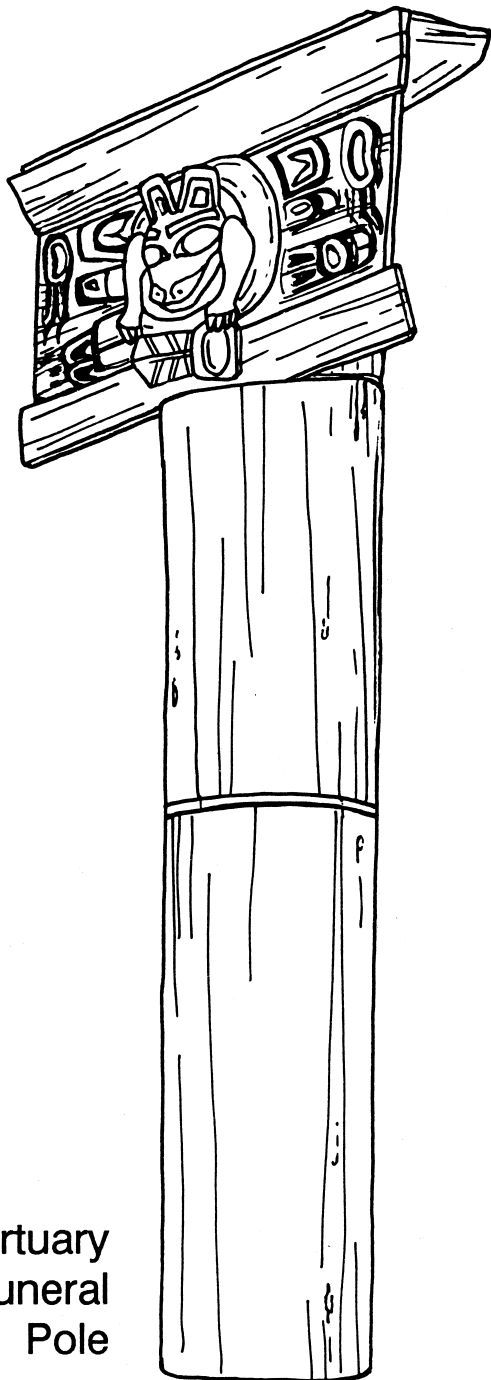
Memorial Pole



Story Pole

The hero of the story carved here is Kag'waa. His name means "Strong Man Killing Killer Whales and Sea Lions." He wore different animal skins and received the animal's power. He had many adventures.

Have you heard of totem poles? A true totem pole showed the symbols of the clan, or family, who lived in each house. The poles helped the people remember many things. Some poles remembered people — they were called memorial poles.



Mortuary
or Funeral
Pole



Inside
House
Post

Many totem poles were inside house posts. This post shows the eagle at the top and a whale on the bottom.

Some poles told legends—they were story poles. Other poles had a place at the top where a dead person was placed. These were mortuary or funeral poles.



The Indians believed that animals and fish and birds had special powers. These powers helped people. So the people made symbols of the animals who were important to them.



You can learn to read the poles when you recognize some of the animal symbols.