



# Kisiyiniw Pîkiskwêwin Pîyêsiw Iskotêw Elder's Voices Carried by Thunderbird Spirit's Fire

## **Preface:**

This web site is a collection of 16 stories from the Dene (Dene Suline) & Cree (Nêhiyawak) communities in Northwest Saskatchewan . Joseph Naytowhow (Sturgeon Lake, SK), a Cree speaker, has been gathering these stories from Dene and Cree Elders since October of 1995. Saskatchewan Elders say each of the poles of the tipi represent a moral value. Represented in this collection of stories are values borrowed from this model - reflective of both Cree and Dene worldviews. This site has four titles: Cree and Dene with English translations for each. The stories are also in both Dene and Cree with English. Welcome!

## **Elder's Biography:**

Mrs. Glecia Bear was born on April 29, 1912 at Green Lake, Saskatchewan. She came from a family of twelve. She was the third oldest. When she married, Glecia moved to Flying Dust First Nation, where she resided until she passed away (September, 1998). Her recent passing away left a community of friends and relatives and friends with a legacy not to be forgotten for a long time.

Glecia served in many capacities within the community of Flying Dust and surrounding area. She was the first woman Chief at Flying Dust and was the Health Representative for many years. She also sat on the Flying Dust Housing Committee and was the Elder advisor to the Meadow Lake Tribal Council (MLTC) and Saskatchewan Writers Guild partnership project, the Storyteller In Residence. She has authored a children's story book "Wansinawak Iskwehisak" (Lost Little Girls), has stories published by her niece Freda Ahenakew and is one of the Elders featured in "The Elders Speak: of the Past, of Children and of Families" published by MLTC Health.

Mrs. Bear was often called upon to speak with children from the surrounding northwest communities on traditional lifestyle, the importance of getting an education and cultural values. She was also an excellent moccasin, moosehide jacket, vest and gauntlet maker having begun sewing at the age of 12.

Those who had the good fortune of getting to know her and her large family (11 children, 52 grandchildren, 101 great-grandchildren, 14 great-great-grandchildren) learned quickly to develop an appreciation for the simple, practical and valuable teachings of days when power and computer technology were non-existent.

We love you Glecia and look forward to seeing you again someday!



# Manâcihitowin

## (Compassion)

**Elder's Name:**

**Mrs. Glecia Bear**

**Edited by:**

**Joseph Naytowhow & Cheryl L'Hirondelle**

**Translation by:**

**Mary Anne Martell**

1. On my travels through Loon Lake as CHR for Medical Services I used to pass a small house with smoke coming from out of its chimney. Curious as to who lived there, I walked over to it one day and knocked on the door. There I discovered Mr. Roundsky who was blind and lived all alone.



1. kâ-kî-pâh-pimohtâyân mâna Loon Lake Community Health Representative (CHR) ê-itatoskâyân mêkwâc, nikî-wâh-wâpahtên mâna pâyak wâskahikan ê-pâh-pihkitêk. ninohtê-kiskêyihitên ôma awîna êkota ê-wîkit. êkosi nititohtân êkota pâyakwâw. nipakamahikân iskwâhtêmihk. kâ-wâpamak êkota Mr. Roundsky, namôya ê-wâpit êkwa mîna ê-pâh-pâyako-wîkit.

2. Grandfather! I said to him. Now that I know you are here all alone I will stop to visit you. Before I leave home next time, I will cook a meal and bring it to eat with you because I come to Loon Lake regularly as part of my job.

2. "nimosôm," nititâw, "pakâci êkwa ê-kiskêyihitamân ôta ê-wîkiyan ka-pimi-kâh-kiyokâtin êkwa. Pwâmwayi sipwêhtâyân êkwa kihtwâm nika-paminawason êkwa nika-pêtân ka-pê-wîci-mîcisonîtin, wâh-wîpac ayisk nipê-itohtân ôta Loon Lake, êkosi ê-itatoskâyân, ta-papâmi-nitawâpênikâyân askîhkâna."

3. I would cook all kinds of food and take it out to Mr. Roundsky and we enjoyed many meals together. Sometimes, I'd take a whole roast out to him when I knew I'd be busy working with some other community. I made sure my grandfather was well looked after.

3. nikîsisên mâna êkwa kahkiyaw kîkway mîciwin êkwa mâna ê-itohtatamawak Mr. Roundsky, mihcêtwâw nikî-mîcisonân mâna. âskaw wiyâs ê-nawaciâyân, ê-itohtatamawak, ôma kîspin kâ-kiskêyihitamân ohpimê kâ-wî-itohtâyân. mêtoni kwayask ninâkatohkân nimosôm.



4. Then, one day when I went to see him he was nowhere to be found. Going to the nearby neighbours I asked, Where is my grandfather? He is not home today. George has gone to Waterhen, said the lady who answered the door. He has a sister with whom he goes and stays with at different times of the year.

5. I continued on with my other visits and by-passed my grandfather's house. A few days later when I was in Waterhen again, I decided to look for his sister's house. Finally finding her house, I went to the door and asked as to the whereabouts of my grandfather as I'd heard he was coming to live with her for a while.

6. He's on the other side of this wall. Your grandfather is very ill. He's had diarrhoea for nearly two weeks. she said. She allowed me to approach him, and I said, Grandfather, why didn't you go to see the doctor? Grandchild, grandfather's voice was weak, there was no one to call upon who I could depend on. Why not? I replied, there's a Chief in this community who they could have informed of your illness. Just wait, I will be back soon. I will go and talk to Fred Martell, (the Chief at the time).

4. kêtahawê pêyakwâw ê-nitawâpênikêyân mâka mîna, namôya nânitaw kâ-miskawak. êkota cîki ê-wîkicik pêyakwâyi kâ-nitawi-kakwêcimakik, "tâniwâ nimosôm." "namôya apiw, aspin Waterhen ê-itohtêt George," itwêw ana iskwêw kâ-pê-yohtênahk iskwâhtêm, "omisa pêyak êkotê ê-ayâyit, êkotê mâna ê-nitawi-âh-ayât âskaw."

5. êkosi nipapâmi-kiyokân êkwa nimâh-miyâskên nimosôm wîki. namôya kinwêsk âti, Waterhen kâ-itohtêyân, sêmâk ninitonawâwak, omisa wîkiyihk nititohtân, ê-kakwêcimak, "tâniwâ nimosôm? ê-kî-pêhtamân ôma aspin ôta ê-pê-ayât."

6. "awasâyihk ana ayâw, ê-ahkosit ana, kimosôm, ê-sâposohpinêt. kêtâc êkwa nîso ayamihêwi-kîsikâw," itwêyiwa ôhi omisa. nikiskinohtahik itê kâ-ayâyit, êkosi nititâw, "nimosôm, tânhêki mâka êkâ maskihkîwiyiniw kâ-nitawi-wâpamat." "nôsisim," itwêw nimosôm, mêtoni ê-nêsowihtâkosit. "namôya awiyak nikî-mamisîn." "tânhêki," nititâw, "okimâhkân nama cî ôta ayâw, êkoni ta-kî-wihtamawêwak ê-ahkosiyân. cêskwa, kâwi nika-pê-takohtân, nika-nitawi-wâpamâw Fred Martell (ê-okimâhkâniwit êkospî mêkwâc)."



7. Upon hearing of my grandfather's situation Chief Martell took action immediately and went to find someone to take George to the hospital. Meanwhile, I went to visit another home. On my way home, I decided to see if my grandfather had gone to the hospital yet. I was happy to hear he had already been taken in.

8. At the hospital I would often go to visit him. I would do as I did before when I had first met him on the Loon Lake Indian Reserve; taking him wild animal meals I had prepared myself. Grandfather would be very pleased because he quickly grew tired of hospital food. He would say, I really don't care for the food European people eat, grandchild.

9. After some time of not seeing grandfather George, I went to Loon Lake to see if he'd been released. I was told that he had and was waiting for someone from Waterhen Lake to give him a ride home. I went to see for myself.

10. Grandfather, I came to check up on you, wondering if you were released and would need a ride back to Loon Lake. I'm going there today, I told him. I am released grandchild, grandfather replied. Wahwa, I am so thankful. But I don't want to go to Loon Lake. There is to be a Treaty payout at Waterhen Lake and that is where I'd like to go. Okay, grandfather. If that's where you want to go, that's where I'll take you. I'll go to Loon Lake tomorrow instead, I said. I could see Grandfather was now very happy.

7. mayaw ê-pêhtahk nimosôma ê-ahkosiyit, sêmâk okimâhkân nitawiwâpamêw awiya ta-itohtahâyit ahkosiwikamikohk. nimirwêyihên anima ispî ê-pêhtamân âsay êsa ê-kî-itohtahiht.

Upon hearing of my grandfather's situation Chief Martell took action immediately and went to find someone to take George to the hospital.

"mayaw ê-pêhtahk nimosôma ê-ahkosiyit, sêmâk okimâhkân nitawiwâpamêw awiya ta-itohtahâyit ahkosiwikamikohk."

8. ahkosiwikamikohk êkwa mîna nikâh-kiyokawâw. âsay mîna êkotê nititohtatamawâw kîkway ta-mîcit tâskôc oskâc kâ-kî-nakiskawak, ayi mîna Loon Lake. miywêyiham ani mîna nimosôm osâm êyikohk ê-kihtimêyihahk mîciwin ahkosiwikamikohk. "namôya nicihkêyihên ôma mônîyâwi-mîciwin, nôsisim," itwêw.

9. mwêstas êkwa namôya ê-ohci-wâh-wâpamak nimosôm, kâ-itohtâyân Loon Lake, ninitawâpênikân mahti kî-takohtêt âsay. êkosi nipêhtên ê-kî-pakitiniht êsa êkwa ê-pa-pêhât awiya Waterhen ohci, ta-kîwêhtahikot.

10. "nimosôm, ê-pê-nitawâpênêtân ôma, mahti kî-pakitinikawiyân êkwa mahti ê-kî-nohtê-kîwêyan Loon Lake isi. êkotê ôma ê-wî-itohtâyân anohc," nititâw. "nipakitinikawin mâka nôsisim," itwêw, "wahwâ! tâpwê ninanâskomon, mâka namôya Loon Lake ninohtê-itohtân, ê-wî-tipahamâtohk ôma Waterhen, êkotê ôma ê-nohtê-itohtâyân." "êkosi nimosôm, kîspin êkotê kînohtê-itohtân, ka-itohtahitin. misawâc wâpahki Loon Lake nika-kî-itohtân," nititâw. mitoni nikiskêyihên nimosôm ê-cihkêyihahk.



11. As we were leaving the hospital, grandfather said, Grandchild, it would give me great pleasure if we could stop by a store so I could buy myself a cowboy hat. When I was a young man I once owned a cowboy hat. Then one day some drunken characters came to my house and stole my hat. I have not had one since then.

12. Okay, I said, we'll stop in at (what was then) Fred Clark's store. We'll find you a cowboy hat there. And we did find a hat that fit my grandfather just right. Grandfather then asked, What is the colour of this hat anyway? Black, I told him. No, not that colour grandchild, he exclaimed, Brown. As a young man I always wore a brown cowboy hat.

13. So we went on to Bruce Campbell's who also had a store selling cowboy outfits. It was there we found a brown cowboy hat for my grandfather. And it fit just right! This is exactly the hat you want, grandfather, I told him, as I watched him shaping the hat and feeling its fine texture. He looked mighty handsome.

14. Twenty dollars is all I have, grandchild. What is the price? grandfather asked. Forty five dollars is the full price. I told him. Knowing my grandfather's situation I said to him, It's okay, I have credit here and I'll pay for your hat. I was just as glad as my grandfather as he placed the brand new cowboy hat on his head.

11. ê-ati-sipwêhtâyâhk êkwa ahkosiwikamikohk ohci nimosôm kê-kî-itwêt, "nôsisim mitoni ka-atamihin kîspin ta-nakîyan nânitaw atâwêwikamikohk kâwpwây-astotin ê-wî-atâwêstamâsoyân. mêkwâc ê-oskinîkêyân mâna ê-kî-ayâyân kâwpwây-astotin. mâka pêyakwâw okîskwêpêsak nîkîhk ê-pê-itohtêcik kê-ati-kimotamawicik nitastotin. êkosi namôya kihtwâm wiwkâc nitohci-ayân aspin êkospî."

12. "âha," nititâw. "ka-ati-nakîyaw Fred Clark otatâwêwikamikohk, mêkwâc êkospî kêyâpic ê-ayât, ka-miskênaw kâwpwây-astotin. tâpwê nimiskênân pêyak astotin mêtoni ê-nahiskahk nimosôm. nimosôm kê-kakwêcimit, "tânisi ê-isinâkwahk ôma astotin," "kaskitêwâw," nititâw. "namôya! namôya êkosi ê-isinâkwahk nôsisim," itwêw. "ê-kaskitêwosâwâk," itwêw, "ê-oskinîkêyân kâkîkê mâna êkosi ê-isinâkwahk kâwpwây-astotin nikî-ayân.

13. êkosi Bruce Campbell's êkwa atâwêwikamikohk nititohtânân êwako mâna mâna kâwpwây-ayiwînisâ ê-kî-atâwâkêt. êkota êkwa nimiskênân ê-kaskitêwosâwâk kâwpwây-astotin, nimosôm ohci. mêtoni nahiskam! "êkwatowahk ôma kê-nitawêyîhtamân," itwêw nimosôm, nikanawâpamâw kwayask ê-ay-ispitahk êkwa ê-mâh-mîskonahk mêtoni ê-nahiskahk, ê-takahkâpêwit mâna.

14. "nîsitanaw tahtwâpisk piko nitayâwâw nôsisim," itwêw nimosôm, "tânîyîkohk ê-itakihtêk?" "nêmitanaw tahtwâpisk ayiwâk niyânan itakihtêw," nititâw. nikiskêyîhtên nimosôm êkâ ta-kî-tipahahk êkwa anima astotin. ayîhk, nititâw nimasinahikân ôma mâna ôta, nika-tipahên niya kitastotin. mêtoni êkwa nîsta nimiywêyîhtên tâskôc pêyakwan nimosôm, ispî asoni ê-postiskahk otastotin.



15. On the way to the Treaty Days I stopped to pick up a friend to come with us. Once at Waterhen we enjoyed the buffalo venison prepared for the special occasion. After we finished eating I asked my grandfather if he had someone to take care of him since I would soon be on my way home. Grandchild, grandfather said, do not burden yourself any longer with me. I will be fine. There are many people here who will take good care of me.

16. As I was about to leave my grandfather called out to me. Wait grandchild. Come here. That was when he directed me to go to a house somewhere in the Waterhen Lake area. From there I and my travelling companion were to go north on a path and find a tree with a pole tied to it. We proceeded to the exact spot. Once we found the tree I lowered the pole tied to it and found a canvas bag wrapped around it. The bag was tattered with holes all over it from many years of weathering. I opened one of the two inner bags made from burlap and removed a velvet covered steel box. Very little of the velvet remained, worn out over the years it was hung up on a tree. I opened the box to find a Treaty Six medallion my grandfather had received at the Treaty Six signing.

15. ê-ati-sipwêhtâyâhk êkwa Waterhen isi kâ-tipahamâtohk, nitati-naskwênâw pâyak niwîcêwâkan ta-pê-wîcêwit. ispî êkwa Waterhen ê-takohtâyâhk nimîcinân paskwâw-mostoso-wiyâs kwayask ê-kî-nawacîhk. ê-kîsi-mîcisoyâhk êkwa nikakwêcimâw nimosôm mahti kîspin awiya ka-kî-kanawêyimikot, piko ayisk êkosi wîpac ta-ati-kîwêyân. “nôsisim,” nititik, “kâya ka-otamihitin, misawâc namôya nânitaw, mihcêtiwak ôma ayisiyiniwak ta-kanawêyimicik.”

16. ê-wî-ati-sipwêhtâyân ôma nimosôm kâ-têpwâsit, “cêskwa, nôsisim, âstam ôta.” êkota êkwa kâ-itisahot nânitaw wâskahikanihk. êkwa êkota ohci anima mêskanâs ê-pimohtâyâhk niwîcêwâkan. namôya wâhyaw mîtos ta-nitonawâyâhk nîpîsis ê-tahkopîtêk. tâpwê mwêhci êkota nimiskênân mîtosihk anima nîpîsiy kâ-tahkopîtêk nitotinên anima kâ-tahkopîtêk nîpîsiy, kâ-miskamân êkota apahkwâsonêkin ê-akwahpîtêk, ê-sikopayik êkwa ê-pâh-pôskwâsik, kinwêsk êsa ê-kî-ohtastêk. nitotinên anima pâyak maskimocis pôti ôma êkota, kî-astêw miscikowacis ê-miywâsik sôskwêkinohk ê-ohci-wêwêkinikâtêk. pâh-pôskwêkipayin mâka osâm kinwêsk ê-kî-ohtastêk êsa. niyohtênên ôma miscikowacis êkota kî-apiw tipahamâtowi-pîwâpisk, tâpiskâkan, nimosôm êsa ê-kî-miyiht êkospî kâ-kî-masinahamihk kayâs tipahamâtowin.



17. Recalling his last words, I repeated them in my mind, Grandchild, I am unable to pay you for the kindness and love you gave freely. In return I want you to have this medal. It was given to me when I was a Chief a long time ago. This is how I wish to repay you for your good heart. Sometime in the future this medal will be of great value. Hai, hai.

17. kâ-kâh-kiskisiyân tânisi iskwayâc nimosôm ê-kî-isit kâh-kihtwâm nikiskisin ôma nôsisim, "namôya ka-kî-tipahamâtin kâ-isi-miyo-itôtawiyân êyikohk mîna ê-isi-kisêwâtisiyan; mîskoc awa ê-nitawêyimitân ta-ayâwat tâpiskâkan. ê-kî-miyikawiyân kayâs ê-okimâhkâniwiyân. êkosi ôma ê-wî-isi-tipahamâtân êyikohk kâ-miyo-pamihyan ê-miyotêhêyan. ôtê nîkân ati mêtoni ta-mistakisiw awa tâpiskâkan," itwêw, "hay hay!"