



Bek'ésoredlie Yati Kón Lát'e

Respecting Talk is Like the Sacred 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:

Armand Bekkattla was born in Dillon, SK on October 7, 1943. He is the oldest of seven children. At the time of his birth, Armand's parents moved about in the spring, summer and fall; fishing, trapping and berry picking around the area. They spent their winters sticking close to home. As a child, he remembers living at Dillon, which was at the time, only a small village of about 30 log houses constructed from local trees and mud plaster.

In the 1980's, a strong movement towards cultural & spiritual activities was sped up in Dene country in northwest Saskatchewan. Armand, recognized as an Elder by the local community, was also on a spiritual journey, which at the time, led him to study with Cree Elders in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. He was given the name Wapiskî Miskinâhk (White Turtle) by one of these Elders.

Armand has eight children (six daughters and two sons). He has been the mayor of St. George's Hill, SK. For the past six years, he has been working as the National Native Alcohol & Drug Abuse Program (NNADAP) worker with the Clearwater River Dene Nation and previous to this worked with Saskatchewan Alcohol & Drug Abuse Commission (SADAC) in La Loche, Saskatchewan for 18 years.



Benílʔa

(Hope)

Elder's Name:

Armand Bekkattla

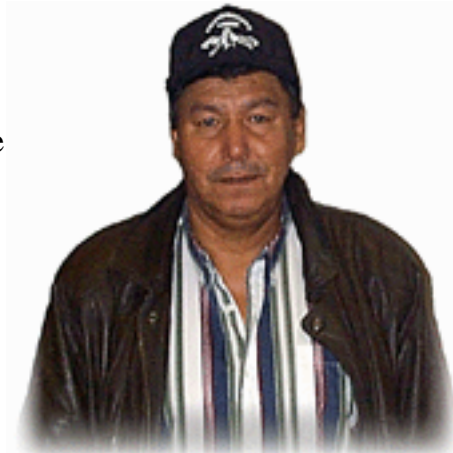
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1. I remember a lot of little things about long ago. My grandmother, who died ten years ago, told me many stories. She got married when she was about 13 years old. Back then, whatever your parents told you to do, you did it. You couldn't say no. So my grandmother respected her parents and got married, although she didn't want to. She started to have her own family a few years later but she was unhappy and lonely. She said her husband and mother-in-law treated her badly.



1. Yanísı ts'ı nahhi t'asíe yazi bedánsnı́. Hhamáyúné, honéna néné t'ahhú bestoŋı́ hots'ı honı́ ʔá t'á sét hoghelni nı́. Taghe ch'adheŋ beghayéʔú hhanı́ja nı́. Ekúhú netikwi t'anohéŋı́ losı́, dáhı́łtsı nı́. İle sıç hıle nı́. Hhamáyúné, betikwi k'esedlı hoŋ'á, hanı́da horéłʔı hıle kólú, hanı́ja nı́. Holá néné lát'e hıle ʔu, beskene hułı́ híjá nı́, kúlú beba horéyá hıle héŋ, ʔaneʔa nı́. Benekwié chu betsı́ dayı́ʔa nı́ héni.

2. One spring while trapping, they travelled from Barney Lake to the end of the Dillon River. The ice had melted and so her husband and mother-in-law returned home by canoe, but they left her there. They left her with no food - nothing - and they took her baby, my Uncle George Billette, with them. They left her there, all alone in the bush. Maybe she would make it back home; maybe not.

2. Kú ʔı́ʔáh ʔuk'é, İtzuuze ka nahedeŋ nı́ Barney Lake hots'ı Ejeresche dezé hots'én. Ten nágheté ekúhú, benekwié chu betsı́ yedı́ ts'i yé yech'azé nahet'as nı́, ekúhú seʔe George Billette t'atsıʔaze hhełı́, eyı edehéŋ naheyeŋı́ nı́. Bér hedı́, bér dódı́ ekót'u yech'azé nahet'as. Eyer ʔáheyenagh, nı́ja hıt'ı, nujá hıle húto ka.



3. She began to walk home by following the river back. It was a winding river and was many miles in length. She'd holler to see if anyone was around to help her. Her moccasins got soaking wet. Since it was spring, the bush was very wet and it got dark in the evening. She had to stay walking in the willows near the river, not on high ground in a kind of a muskeg base. She was scared, but she kept walking.

3.HHamáyuné bekóę nahéja, dés k'é naghedał hogháre. Dés dzidánegór hot'á nenéth nı. Heził hét naghedał, ıřághi ta yerıtt'h'agh de ęoha. Beké kekáléke dedlós hét. Ł uk'é hot'á, horelyú dechen yághe tu tth'i řa hét, ıghá tth'i náheřá nı. Ts'éli yághe taga ghegał, nițeli k'e híle húya nı. Neljer hét kúlú naghedał.

4. Sometimes she'd be so tired that she didn't know what to do. She'd pull up any dry grass and pile it up on willow branches and sleep there. Sometimes she'd come upon places where people had stopped for dinner or supper and they would have thrown away little bones from their meal. She would take those bones and suck on them for what little grease or gristle they still held.

“Sometimes she'd be so tired that she didn't know what to do.”

“řAřkú degháre nińıtsa hot'á tawane k'óreya híle nı.”

4. řAřkú degháre nińıtsa hot'á tawane k'óreya híle nı. Třogh déyai k'otřı řú, k'ái cheráiyıs ř, eyi k'e náti nı. řAřk'ú t'ok'e dene dórıřk'un ghıle sí eyer niřha řı, shıřs'elyi ts'ı tthe'en tsıřaze řárághıldeř thela řı. Eyi tth'en k'otřı řú, tth'en heřtt'h'úi chu t'ahřa bek'e bér tsıřaze kárelzáz nı.

5. Finally, she made it back to Barney Lake and walked out of the bush. Her husband and mother-in-law looked very shocked and the old lady said, “How come she's still alive?” She picked her little baby, George, out of the old woman's arms and immediately began to breast feed him. She did all this after about four or five days of walking all by herself and with no food.

5. T'ahřa deschię hřařa nıřú, Barney Lake niřa. Benekwi chu betsu yeghegha norıřhále, edlát'e hot'á ghena řát'e řá hedi. Betařtsié řaze, George ts'ákwi tř'aghé háyřti řú, edeyılchúřú, eřtt'h'úi háyřlá nı. Tthene řoláh dzıné húya hét tth'i shıghetı híle hét řat'ı nı.



6. Her husband and the old woman died a few years later, really poor and she eventually married another man who treated her good. So everything went well after that.

6. Benekwié chu betsu eyer hots'i tháhíle hots'i etohonét'ine behetsoŋi n̄. Hott'ághe hhamáyuné ʔaŋo it'ághe deneyu gánanéhda, eyi deneyu hotié ayíttthen n̄. Eyer hots'i beba asóhút'e híle n̄.