



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:

Flora Gladue was born and raised on Flying Dust First Nation and Gladue Lake during the Frog Moon, April 26, 1909. She married William Gladue when she was twenty years of age. He passed away in 1965. Although Cree custom of the time specified arranged marriages, she was attracted to her husband and they were allowed to marry on that basis. A big feast and dance was organized in their honour.

Flora had six children with William (five sons and one daughter). She was raised by her grandparents Madeline and Gilbert Matchee. Flora's grandparents prepared her well by educating her through Cree traditions and a way of life dependent on the land. During summers, Flora attended various ceremonies such as the Sun Dance and the Memorial Feast. In the fall she would go with her grandparents on trapping, hunting and gathering expeditions.

Very few people inhabited the Flying Dust area around the time when Flora was born. Houses were made from various kinds of trees and spruce boughs served as flooring. Thick canvas from the local trading store was used as floor carpeting. Duck feathers sewn into light canvas material was used for the bedding. Rabbit skin blankets were also made.

For the past twenty years Flora has been travelling throughout Saskatchewan as an Elder representing Flying Dust, attending meetings and talking about child care, health and cultural issues. She also continues to be active as an Elder and participant at various cultural and spiritual events held at Flying Dust or neighbouring communities. She is an amazing storyteller. She is also an excellent beader and maker of moccasins.



nanahihtamowin

(Obedience)

Elder's Name:

Mrs. Flora Gladue

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1. My grandfather was traveling with one of his grandsons one winter. It was just before spring breakup and he wanted to trap for muskrats. My grandfather had asked his grandson to go with him for one final muskrat trapping expedition, and he consented.



1. ê-piponiyik êsa pâyakwâw nimosôm pimâcihowak pâyak ôsisima asici. pwâmayî sîkwaniyik ê-nohtë-wanihikamawât wacaskwa. nimosôm êsa kakwêcimêw ôsisima ta-wîcihikot pâyakwâw iskwayâc ta-nitaw-nôcihcikêcik êkosi tâpwê ê-tâpwêhtahk.

2. His grandson was in his twenties and although he enjoyed travelling with his grandfather there was a side to him that could be considered arrogant and fool hardy at times. Grandfather knew he had to watch his grandson very closely. They hitched the dogs up to the sled and off they went.

2. nânitaw nîstanaw itahtopiponêyiwa ôhi ôsisima. êkwa âta awa oskinîkiw ê-miywêhtahk ê-papâmi-wîcêwât omosôma, namôya tâpwê miywêyihtamawêw omosôma ê-ka-kî-cimoskêyit êkwa ê-nanoyâcisiskit. kisêyiniw awa kiskêyihtam piko mitoni kwayask ta-nâkatohkêt ôhi ôsisima. wiyahpitêwak otâpâhastimwa êkosi ê-sipwêhtâpâsocik.

3. Arriving at Gladue Lake they began setting up their camp. In the distance, dark clouds began to gather. The Thunder Spirits could be heard as clouds moved in to where they were camped. That night it rained and it continued to rain till morning.

3. ê-takohtêcik Gladue Lake, mâci-manokêwak. wâpahtamwak ôma ê-pê-yîkwaskwaniyik mîna piyêsiwa ê-pê-kâh-kitoyit, ati piyisk êkwa ita kâ-kapêsicik. êyako ê-tipiskâk kimiwan; kimiwaniyiw iskohk ê-wâpahk.



4. Upon rising the next morning, my grandfather and his grandson woke up to wet grass. All the snow from the day before had melted. It was quite an awakening, especially considering the fact that just the day before a blanket of heavy snow had completely covered the land. This was a very unusual occurrence. It was no use to set the muskrat traps now. My grandfather and grandson packed up their gear and headed for home.

4. kíkisêpâ êkwa ê-waniskâcik nimosôm asici ôsisima pot ôma, mitoni kî-sâpopêhcâw êsa misiwê. kahkiyaw kôna ê-tihkâpâwêt. mitoni koskwêyih tamwak asonê mistahi ê-kî- apiyit kôna kwayask mâmaskâtamwak. namôya nânitaw itâpatan êkwa ta-wanihikêcik. êkosi kiyâm kâwi mâci-wawêyîwak ê-wî-kîwêcik.

5. The Cipayak (northern lights) were unusually bright on the evening they were making their way home. Looking up at the Cipayak my grandfather said to his grandson, Nosim, when the northern lights dance at night it is said that one must not to whistle at them.

The northern lights were unusually bright on the evening they were making their way home.

“mitoni cîpaya nîmihitoyiwa êyikohk ê-wâsê-nîmihitoyit ôma ê-tipiskâyik âsay kâ-pimikîwêcik.”

5. mitoni cîpaya nîmihitoyiwa êyikohk ê-wâsê-nîmihitoyit ôma ê-tipiskâyik âsay kâ-pimikîwêcik. tastasâpiw nimosôm ê-kanawâpamât ôhi cîpaya, kisik ê-itât ôsisima, “nôsisim, ê-itwêhk ôma mâna cîpayak kâ-nîmihitocik, namôya ta-kîskosîmât awiyak.”

6. Phweeet! Grandfather had no sooner made his statement when his grandson whistled. Kawiya nosisim! blurted my grandfather, his eyes opened wide. He was completely taken off guard by his grandson's action. Continuing to look up, my grandfather observed the Cipayak dancing towards them. Their blurred, fiery form came within hearing distance and they made a snake-like rattling sound as they neared.

6. namôya ôma kinwês êkosi ê-pîkiskwêt nimosôm, âsay ôsisima kâ-kîskosîyit, Phweeet! “kâwiya nôsisim!” itêw nimosôm ê-misi-tohkâpit, êyikohk ê-koskohikot ka-tôtamiyit ôhi ôsisima. ê-kâh-kanawâpamât cîpaya, nimosôm kâ-moyêyimât ôhi cîki ê-pê-nîmihitoyit; kisik ê-pêhtâkoscik ispî cîki ê-pê-ayâyit.



7. Phweet! Again, the young man whistled. Grandfather did not respond this time. Instead he lowered his head and curled into a half fetal position where he stood. What was going to happen next, he must have been thinking. The Cipayak were now just above their heads. From his position, grandfather glanced up and could see the color of red; it looked like blood. A hissing sound like wind blowing through dried leaves on trees resounded all around them.

8. Lowering his hand to the ground, grandfather reached for his leather bag where he carried his drum and sweetgrass. Unraveling the lacing of his bag he pushed his hand inside and pulled out a braid of sweetgrass and a box of matches. Striking the match on the edge the match box, grandfather lit the sweetgrass. He then pulled out the drum from the bag and waving it in a circular motion smudged it thoroughly with sweetgrass.

9. While beating on the drum like a woodpecker my grandfather lifted his head slightly and said a prayer. Once the prayer was done he began to sing one honor song after another. His singing went on for quite some time. Gradually, as my grandfather sang, the Cipayak faded off into the distance. They then packed up camp and started for home.

10. My grandfather and his grandson were quiet for the entire journey home. Not long after this trip they had made, the grandson became very ill. In the fall, exactly three months later, he passed on to the spirit world.

7. Phweet! âsay mîna ka-kîskosît awa oskinîkiw. namôya nânitaw êkwa itwêw nimosôm mâka nawakiskwêyiw kisik mitoni ê-nawakît ita kâ-nîpawit ôma. tânsi êkwa kê-ispayik itêyhtam ôma. mitoni êkwa cîki nayiwac ostikwâniwâhk ôhi cîpaya. ohpiskwêyiw nimosôm, kâ-wâpahtahk ê-mihkonâkwaniyik kîkway, tâskôc pâyakwan mihko. kîkway kisik ê-pêhtâkwahk, tâskôc yôtin, ê-pimiyowêk misiwê wâsakâm êkota k-âyâcîk.

8. otinam omaskimot mohcihk ohci êkota nimosôm ê-asowâtêyik wîhkask êkwa omistikwaskihkwa. âpaham omaskimot ê-otinahk anima wîhkask êkwa kocawâkanisa. nimosôm êkwa saskaham kocawâkanis mîna anima wîhkask. mistikwaskihkwa êkwa otinêw ê-wâh-wâskânât ê-miyahkaswât kwayask.

9. pâh-pakamahwêw mistikwaskihkwa tâskôc kîsâstaw pâh-pascîs. êkosi nimosôm tastakiskwêyiw kisik ê-kâkîsimot. ê-kî-kâkîsimot êkwa mâci-nikamow. kâh-kihtwâm kotaka nikamona sipwêham kinwêsîs piyisk ati. kâ-nikamot ôma, ati pônî-nôkosiyiwa piyisk ôhi cîpaya. êkosi êkwa wawêyîwak, êkota ohci kîwêyâcihowak âsay mîna.

10. nimosôm mîna ôsisima êkwa mitoni kiyâmêwisiwak misâkami k-âti-ka-kîwêcîk. namôya kinwês êkota ohci kâh-kî-nitaw-nôcihcikêcîk anima, êsa ôsisima mitoni kî-ati-misi-ahkosiyiwa. ê-takwâkîniyik, nânitaw nisto pîsim êkota ohci kâ-kî-ati-nakataskît ana oskinîkiw esa.