



# 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:**

Across from Turnor Lake towards, the Sucker River where red suckers spawn in the springtime is Little Island Lake. This is where Eugene was born on March 25, 1928. Settling in Turnor Lake for a brief period, Eugene's parents then moved to Clear Lake where he spent his childhood days. It would not be until the 1960's when he returned to Turnor Lake to take up permanent residence.

Eugene's father, Jack Sylvestre lived off the land settling mainly in the north around Turnor Lake. His mother Marguerite Marie Bagg/Muskimut (Carrying Bag) came from northern Alberta. Eugene's great grandfather originated from the outskirts of Montreal, Quebec.

Of all the brothers and sisters born in his family, three are still living. The other siblings died after contracting small pox and influenza.

Today Eugene has his own family of 11; six daughters, four sons, one adopted son and numerous grandchildren and great grandchildren. He married his wife Catherine in August of 1951.

To make a living, Eugene has been a trapper, fisherman, guide and hunter. Today he works with Meadow Lake Tribal Council (MLTC) and Birch Narrows First Nation as an Elder and Advisor.



# Bek'ésoredli

(Respect)

**Elder's Name:**

**Mr. Eugene Sylvestre**

**Edited by:**

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1. Stories were passed on to me by the Elders. I listened to them talk by the fireplace when we went hunting together. I would always go along with them. Sometimes it was hard to listen to some of the stories because they used Cree words. They would mix up the words and I had to listen carefully to know what they meant.



1. Ałnedhi sét dólni hot'á honi sets'i si. Nádáhlzé dé kón bághe dáholni dóritth'á ni. Hok'étt'á behét dzírésa ni. Ałk'ú horétt'á hóreni híle ni, t'ahhə ené yatié tth'i t'ádóré?á hot'á. Yati etghádáré?á hot'á, hotié horitth'á dézá beniresni ni.

2. All during the time I was growing up, my dad told me I am not going to be with you all time. Go along with the Elders. They'll teach you how to live in the bush. So that's what I did. The Elders would tell me, Be careful with your rifle. Don't load it unless you see something. The same thing with axes. They showed me how to handle them properly because you can hurt yourself. When you start chopping, you've got to watch which direction you're going to work with one. Don't get it caught in the branches or you'll get hurt. Oh yes and knives: keep your hunting knife in a safe place. Secure it to your belt so it won't unlock or you could get hurt.

2. Dánuheniyé húk'e, setá anuhétni ?ú, hok'étt'á nét husná híle si sétni ni. Ałnedhe bet dzighugah, dechen yághe t'at'u eghena ghə hádánenułta. Eyi hot'á ałnedhe bet dzírésa ni. Ełk'idhe hotié boghųtni sits'edi. Ełkithchogh beyé hu?á sáná hotié ?asié hi?i híle losii. Tthet tth'i ghə sét kóhodi ni. T'at'u tthet bet'óre?á, eya harishe hoch'á tth'i sét kóhodi ni. T'asie nádáritthét híjá dé t'ok'e ts'en tthet ninari?a ha losii boghedi si. Dechen gháiges dé eya hanene hasi. Bes tth'i híla, nálzé bezé k'ója ghų?á. Hotié bes dhéth yé, nedhé k'e senú?á, neghə hhalłth'i ch'á, kút'e híle dé eya harilye haghoni.



3. I was taught that way by the Elders and by my dad and mom too. My mom showed me how to cook, wash my clothes, wash dishes and bake bannock; everything. I also learned to make a moose hide by helping my mother. My dad bought some horses and cows. We had a little bit of a farm to keep me busy working; cutting hay, milking cows and gardening too. I had to work all year 'round.

4. We used to do a lot of things. We canned berries and meat too and stored it in our cellar so there would be food for the whole year. Everything was kept in the food cellar and everything was made by hand; even the cellar. We dug it out by hand using a shovel and framed it up inside. When I was in Clear Lake that's what I did with my potatoes too. I was going to plant the seeds again in spring, so I'd make a fruit cellar in the bush and cover them up in there. In the spring time, I'd get the seed potatoes and plant them again. That's what we used to do. My dad learned all these things from my grandfather Paul. So what I learned to do through all of this was how to work hard.

3. T'asíe ą́nedhe ǂú, setá chu ęę tth'i hádasunéłta nı. ęę bér kát'éth ǂú, t'ą́t'ú yú heltsel ǂú, t'ą́t'ú tth'ái k'enálde ǂú, t'ą́t'ú łést'éth thet'éth ǂú, horelyú t'asíe hasunelta nı. ęę bét deníe dhéth tth'i hestsi gháré, deníe dhéth tth'i hestsi kóréshá nı. Setá ııchogh chu ejere nádághéłnı nı. Ejere chu ııchogh kőę nuhets'ı hot'á hok'etł'á eghálaghesna nı, tł'ogh chest'áth ǂú, ejere betth'úé hásjur ǂú, nóneshe tth'i ghą násther. ııáh néne hok'etł'á ǂeǂa sets'i hını.

4. T'ahhi losıı t'asíe hok'éch'a ııa dáıltsı nı. Jıe chu bér tutılı yé nıdághılya dé, t'ok'e nıh hoyághe T'asıe nék'áth k'onı kőę nılye ǂú, ııáh néne hots'én bér nuhets'ı nı. Horeyú t'asíe, t'asıe nék'áth k'onı kőę bek'ónı dene edını hháre bıłá t'á yettsı. T'asıe nék'áth k'onı kőę tth'i dene belá t'á yéłtsı nı. Nőgoł t'á nıyehádárlıye ǂú, dechen beyághe hıtsı fı. T'ahhı Clear Lake násther ǂú, sets'ı líbadá tth'i ekót'u bek'éšnı nı. łuk'é nadlı dé tth'i, t'ahhi bet'á nóneshe tth'i nıste ha hot'á, jıe k'onı kőę dechen yághe hestsi ǂú, béreste fı. łuk'é nőrelłth'er dé bet'á líbadá dánıyéı nánastı ǂú, nıste nadlı fı. Ekódághıl ııı nı. Setá tth'i edını setsıe Paul gháre ekót'i t'asıe henırenı nı. Eyi hogháre sıth'i eghálaghesna k'óreshá ǂú, tth'i bet'á hőtıe eghálaghesna nı.



5. Today I tell my grandchildren and my children to be polite to people. Not to say anything - like bad words. You will become a good person and others will remember who you are and where you are from. I tell them what my dad told me, Your family is a team and you're the headman of your family. I'll tell you something, he would say. When you raise a little pup to be a sleigh dog - for a good dog team - feed it good. When it's time to hitch him up, treat him good - treat them all good. Clean them, even if they don't pull hard enough. Lift up the pup and put the whole dog team ahead of him. Don't give them a whipping. Just holler! You'll break them into a good team this way. And you can use them as a good dog team the next year and they'll work hard for you. It's the same thing with your family.

You will become a good person and others will remember who you are and where you are from.

“Dene nezọ nethijı́ dé, dene nedánalı́ ʔú, t'ok'e hots'ı́ dene nelı́ tth'i nek'oją hası́.”

6. Now I have my family and I've taught them how to be polite and how to be good children. I think they've listened to me because I've never heard about any of them getting into trouble; going to court or jail. I thank the Creator for this.

5. Duhı́ dzı́né k'e setukée chu seskene dene hek'eshutı́ híesı́. Dene dúé haruhnı́ sáná hédálesı́. Dene nezọ nethijı́ dé, dene nedánalı́ ʔú, t'ok'e hots'ı́ dene nelı́ tth'i nek'oją hası́. Setá t'a sétnı́ nı́ nuhéł ekóresı́ hası́. Nekóę ts'ı́ horelyú dene ełah eghádálaghuhna ha hoʔa sı́. Nen k'oldher ʔú, ttheri nultá hası́. Néł ekórusı́, hénı́. ı́ ʔaze bek'ériłda ha nı́she dé, bethk'édáréłtth'i dánezọ ha dé hotié bedhádárı́. Bethk'énele hijá dé hotié hadághı́łtthı́, tth'i bek'édásı́dli. Hotié eghádálaghena híle súnı́ dekúlú besorułı́. ı́ ʔaze nı́rı́łtı́ ʔú, honezı́ ı́ yenatthe hełʔás hawı́le. Lı́ eltedhi t'á ghı́łtthath sáná, bet'sén huızı́ł hıt'a walé. Ts'éłthié ekónełtthen hıt'u ı́ nezọ haráné hası́. Yanadhi néné dé ı́ nezọ bethk'édáriłtth'i héł hotié neba eghádálaghena hası́. Nekóę tth'i ekot'e sı́.

6. Duhı́ sekene hułı́, t'at'u dene k'ésedli ha chu t'at'u dene nezọ dálı́ ha hadónı́łta sı́. Sedóı́łtth'á nesthen ełtth'i híle ghá beheghá dárı́stth'agh híle hot'á, begheghá tth'i nádáyaghı́tı híle ʔú, behedádárilá tth'i híle sı́. Yedáriye eyi hoha Marci benestthen sı́.