



# 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:**

Born at Clear Lake, Veronica quickly learned to live in the nomadic lifestyle her family had become accustomed to; travelling by boat throughout the northwest. Moving from place to place, the only opportunity for getting together during holidays was when friends and relatives would meet at La Loche or at Island Lake (now called Turnor Lake).

Veronica is fourth eldest in a family of 23. Both her parents and grandparents also came from Clear Lake. She is of Dene, Cree and French ancestry.

Married on June 9, 1955, Veronica was given away to her husband by her parents and grandfather. The custom of giving one's daughter away to a young man who took a liking to her was still practiced during Veronica's teenage years. From this marriage, she and her husband had eight children; three boys and five girls.

Similar to many Nations who experienced contact with Catholic missionaries, Veronica's whole community converted to Roman Catholicism as their spiritual belief.

Veronica has had many careers to date. She managed a cafe called the Fisherman's Inn, operated a grocery store at Turnor Lake, owned and operated a fishing company with her husband (and consequently cleaned a lot of fish), was a Security Guard at the Key Lake mine, was a truck driver, a Welfare Worker and still works today as a Community Health Representative (CHR) for her band.



# Edení?a

## (Self Reliance)

**Elder's Name:**

**Mrs. Veronica Tobac**

**Edited by:**

**Joseph Naytowhow & Cheryl L'Hirondelle**

**Translation by:**

**Jessie Sylvestre**

1. "My story goes back to a time when my friends, relatives and I lived at Clear Lake. I was just a teenager at the time and attended the Beauval Indian Residential School. We stayed at school for ten months and by spring time we were anxious to go home. Our parents would come to pick us up in Buffalo Narrows. We were waiting there for them. They would pick us up and take us home by boat. Then, when we got back to Clear Lake everybody was getting ready to go on a fishing trip that would last for the whole summer.



1. Sehoníé yanísı hogħa sı t'ahú sets'éni ú, selot'iné héli Eghézé Tónı?a nárághidé t'u. Et'ereke hesı nı t'ahú Beauh'al ts'en sekui hónelten kōę yodásıltı. Honéna sa hha naghíde nı eyer, tuk'é nónıdher dé, nuheyú?ú walıle nuhkōę ts'en naídéli hha. Hokochoęe ts'en nuhtihkui nuhkánadıf tıni, eyer hotsı tıestsı yé nuhkōę ts'en naídét tıni nuhtihkui hobehhét.

Eghézé Tónı?a nenıdeř dé, sine k'éřt'á tabıf k'enáts'edé tıni.

2. Everybody would be busy helping one another getting things ready, like making dry fish and smoked meat and in the evenings, mending tents. The teenaged girls would look after the children. We would take them all over with us, keeping them playing so we wouldn't be in the way of our parents. People would be rushing from one person's place to another lending each other stuff needed to prepare for the journey. If somebody was short of paint for their boat they would go and find somebody that had some, so their boat would be ready; because knew they needed it for the whole summer.

2. Hotárelyú dene etts'éradi tıni sine k'éřl'á asıe k'enáts'edé, etddháy hořé ú, egané tthı dářtsı ú, tthı náhé?a dé, nıbáli nádánaldá tıni. T'a ts'ékuaze et'ereke dálı sı, edıni sekuaze harótıni tıni ářnedhi eghádálagħena hoyágħe. Dene hotıé etts'éradi tıni, dene asıe hedináltı dé, asıe dene t'ónedıgh tıni. řřáta bet'á asıe héredleri betsı dé, bet'ónedıgh tıni bet'sıé héreřeri hha.



3. There was a big fishing boat that came from Buffalo Narrows. Once ready, everybody would tie their boats to this boat. There was a barge already tied to the fishing boat; with the Hudson's Bay store on it. They'd have supplies on board to sell. The old guy's name was Magloire Morin and his wife was Alexie Morin. They were the ones that used to look after the store.

3. Hokochohge hots'ı ts'ichogh nakúth ńıńı. Yadózéjá dé, deneyu bets'ıé ts'ichogh hérátcheth ńıńı. T'atthe ts'ichogh nánıķ'é, Hudson's Bay húlye, eyer hots'ı asıe yek'e theta ńıńı nánanıghı hha. T'ą enékui yek'e eghálaghenay Maglorie Morin húlye ńı, kú bets'ąkuié Alexie Morin húlye ńı. Edıńı náhılt'e nánıķ'é yehuweńı ńı.

4. Everybody would tie their boats behind the barge, one after another. It was like that for anyone who didn't have a motor. Anyone with boat motors would travel alongside the ones with their boats tied to the barge and fishing boat.

“It was like one big family travelling together.”

“Hotárelıyú dene ıřáh kóę láhút'e ńıńı.”

Then we'd get to the first camp where the men were going to start fishing. On the way people would get hungry. If we couldn't stop, people would share food and if somebody didn't have any, they'd just pass it from one boat to the other, sharing this food with the kids and everyone. It was like one big family travelling together. People enjoyed themselves. I remember it was a very good time because I was part of a big family. It made me feel good because I knew at the time, I had seen my future. I would never be alone. I had the feeling there would always be somebody there, whenever I needed help.

4. Hotárelıyú dene bets'ıe hérátcheth ńıńı ediri ts'ichogh t'azi. T'ą tıests'i bet'sıııle sı' ts'ichogh t'azi bets'ıe hérátcheth ńıńı. T'ahhúk'e tabıt darátı'ú hası, eyer ńıbáli nárátthı ú, deneyu tabıt darátı'ú k'idét ńıńı. Kozı ts'edét hoyághe dene ıřá bérbade ńıńı. Ts'ı yé ts'edél hoyághe dene etdhááredı

ńıńı, t'atı honení losı, hotárelıyú dene shétyı ńıńı. Hotárelıyú dene ıřáh kóę láhút'e ńıńı. Dene hedánelı ńıńı. Sıthıı henéstı ńıńı, yanadhé t'ahút'e hha k'óshya ıřát'e ńı. ıřáhkólı thene walıııle k'óshya. Asıe hedıńástı dé, k'óshya ıřáta sets'énı hha.



5. When we got to the fishing camp people helped, even if it was late at night. The young boys would help the elders pitch their tents. Then everything would settle down. The next day when we woke up it looked like a big fishing camp. There were tents all over. In the morning people would be laughing, chopping wood and getting breakfast ready. You could smell bacon, eggs, whatever people had to cook and you could hear the kids laughing and babies crying. It was a really good feeling and a good sound in the morning and was a good feeling I grew up with. This good feeling kept up from one place to another all summer long.

6. The first fishing camp was at a place we called Matsins Island. From there we'd go sometimes to Jackpine and then to a place with the flat stone, where we'd then end up at the rapids. We would go through the rapids to come to Turnor Lake and then from there people also used to fish at Wasakemew, Turnor and Little Turnor Lake. They used to take the fish down the rapids. There was lots of fish and they got a good price for it too.

7. All summer long people would hunt and fish. The women made dry fish. Kids did our own thing, like enjoying helping out with wood, hauling water and washing clothes. We made our own games. We made swings. We went swimming and played ball. We even made balls out of moose hide. We'd stuff the moose hide with rags and grass, pack it really good and sew it up. Then we made bats and played ball. We did everything. We also made tents. But the best part of it was everybody enjoyed themselves all summer long.

5. Tett'e néts'ideł dékólú, dene ts'édi t'ínj. T'ą chelekui dáłj sí ttheri dené hhét n'ibáli nárátthi t'ínj. Eyer hots'j ts'etés t'ínj. K'abj dé, dene ą t'ínj. Hotárelj k'e n'ibáli náráthe?a t'ínj. Dene hedánélj t'ínj kón nádárelzús ú, bérkádárelt éth t'ínj. Eghézé hhét guhgúsh het'edhi thetsen ú, sekui dlóghé dáríth'agh ú, tth'i t'ahhą ąt'isize hetsagh tth'i díth'agh t'ínj. Ekónt'i horestth'ą hhét niyą sí, seba horélya nj. Sine k'étt'á ekóhút'e t'ínj t'ahhúk'e tabít darát'ú sí.

6. T'atthé t'ahhúk'e tabít darát'ú hadé Matsín benuhé húlye nj. Eyer hots'j Jackpine (Ganj) ts'én ú, kótdj nade t'ahhúk'e tthekálé the?ą, eyer tthebayághe náráidé t'ínj. Tthebayághe hóhídél t'ínj K'it'ádhjka nídél ts'én t'ú. K'it'ádhjka ninídel dé, eyer hots'j dene tabít k'enárádé t'ínj Wasakemew chú Little Turnor Lake ts'én. ąe dánaheli t'ínj tthebayághe. ąe ą hhét tth'i tsába nezú t'ínj.

7. Sine k'étt'á dene tabít k'enárádé ú, tth'i denie ka nárálzé t'ínj. Ts'ékui ełddháye dáłtsi ú, sekui senárádé ú, t'ahhą sekui nuhts'áránj t'ínj tu taráthilyé húto, t'ahhą tth'i yú k'enáráıltsil á húto. Są dáiłtsi t'ínj. Húbili tth'i dáiłtsi t'ínj. Denie dhéth beyé yú ch'élé hhét t'ogh beyilye t'ínj. Kótdj bedáríłką t'ínj. Dzoł hhát tth'i thíłtsj dé, dzót á senáidé t'ínj. Hotárelj asie dáiłtsi t'ínj. N'ibáli tth'i dáiłtsi t'ínj. Sine k'étt'á dene hedánélj ú, nádé t'ínj.





11. People had a hard time making a living but nobody ever had hard feelings about it. Nobody took time to be miserable. They just did what they had to - to make the best of everything. If anything happened in those days, as kids we were never involved in it. Even when the older adults were telling stories they didn't want us to hear, they would tell us to go and play or do something.

12. Today, there are so many things said in front of kids and they take it all in. Kids get all that anger within themselves and that's what they grow up with. In those days we never grew up that way. The older people took care of things and kids weren't involved. That is why as young children we learned to have more fun. We enjoyed nature. I remember going out sometimes with just a blanket. I would go along the shore to find a good spot, a beautiful spot where I could lay back and listen to the birds or look at clouds. It was so amazing for me. I was only about ten or eleven years old at the time.

11. Yanísı́ dene estodánét'ı́le kólú dene hedánélı́ tını́. Dene ası́e għa ełts'órolch'oghı́ı́le tını́. áłnedhi ası́e għa dáyattı́ dé, sekui yadóretth'á hha hadórel'ı́ı́le dé, sekui dídel tını́.

12. Duhú sekui benabı́ tı́a asóhodi, eyı́ áł'e sı́ sekui dábetı́ı́le. Ası́e tı́a għa dólch'ogh. Yanısı́ ekónt'ú dánéthı́ı́ı́le nı́. áłnedhi dené hotı́e sekui harótnı́ tını́. Hedánı́dlı́ ú, dánéthı́ı́a, eyı́ áł'e sı́ dánuhetı́e. Yedáriye t'áł'i nuhónı́nı́gh sı́, bek'ésorı́dli sı́. T'ahħa taga ts'ére deschúth dé, nestı́ ú, eyer ı́yeze ú, tth'i k'oth nesı́ı́ għa thı́ı́ tını́. Begħanorésħa tını́. Eyer kú hoyágħe honéna húto ı́tágħe ch'adhel seghayé nı́.