

Barry Ahenakew, Nêhiyawak Elder, Ahtahkakoop First Nation

Interviewer: What is your name?

kâ-kisêwâtsîwînt (The one who is a kind person) is what I am called in Cree, and in English I am called Barry Ahenakew, but I respect my Cree name more. also my Cree Spiritual name is askihtakwasiniy (Green Rock), that is what I am called.

Interviewer: Where you from?

Ahtahkakoop

Interviewer: Can you tell us how it was long ago, how the Chiefs made decisions before the time of the Treaties?

They were successful in living on the wild land. They went on behalf of their people, their tribesmen. They fed them - grub box, medicine chest - they put those for them. They helped them, they were helpful. They fought for their their tribesmen, their children, their grandchildren. These were the ones of long ago, Plains Chief, Prairie Chief - as they were called. And there was the Warrior Chief, as they were called. For sure they weren't only called Chief, those who I am talking about - Plains Chief, Prairie Chief, Warrior Chief, those ones - that is the way they were called. There was one, eventually there was one - they were busy at a place. He was called Earth Child. Earth Child was made busy, the people made him busy. When they were making Chiefs, the very first time the people made Chiefs in Cree country, Earth Child, he was called. He was the one who was chosen. He took up the role of Chief. He was the one the people - his people chose him. It was there the term "Chief" began. It was the only term - "Chief" - that a person was called. They left behind the terms, "Plains Chief," "Prairie Chief," and "Warrior Chief." But there was still the Warrior Chief. They were apart, these warriors. They were the ones who took care of things. Things were done properly. They worked for tribesmen and the Chief, as the Chief was created. They took care of all the things for them, for all things to be done right. No one can forestall things. No one can make fun of things (disrespect) as they go about in life. For instance, the hunting of buffalo, the warriors were there. The warriors were first to ride (in the lead). All the people rode away accordingly, properly, to hunt buffalo. They would take poles with them and they'd set poles down, saying "okay" when it was time to hunt the buffalo. In that way the hunters would head out at the same time, those who were hunting buffalo. The Warrior Chief was there, overseeing the warriors. There weren't that many warriors a long time ago. True, they put the Warrior Lodge in the centre when they set up the Warrior Lodge. One tent pole. These people who carried the tent poles, those who dragged the tent poles took from there one tent pole of the people. And with that they used to pitch a tipi in the center of their people's camp. It was there at the back that the Chief pitched his tipi. And there according to their Chieftainship, the others set their tipis around in a circle in the community (place of the people). And these warriors, man, they took care of things. They danced, they gave feasts. If a person was treated poorly, they called that person to come sit there. The Chief was there also to sit with them, the Warrior Chief. And they were asked to talk. At the door sat one warrior of long ago, as he was already finished his warrior duties. But he was still highly respected. For instance, he was respected because he fought for his people. He comes to watch that they do things properly (to act as security). It is these "police, security people"

that we have today. These people were the type of warriors we had long ago. They took care of things and were done properly. No one was treated badly. Not one person was treated badly. Everyone was to have an equal share, no one was left out. The warrior of long ago sat at the door. He sat on a mat and only him. He was the only one who had a mat at the warrior lodge. No other person had a mat, only him. He sat on a mat for he was very respected. From there, the young people sat according to how old they were. Those who were not yet warriors - they were the honourable young men as they were called. They were not yet warriors, but they were honourable young men. They, too, begin to show that they can take care of things, and take care of things, taking care of their tribesmen - in their raids and on the warpath, as it is called. And they stop things that give people trouble, they take care of them. They fight for them. These are the honourable young men, and they sat in this way according to their maturity and physical growth. And in this way, they were asked to speak. The youngest spoke first, followed by the next youngest, and another - until eventually the oldest, the ones who finished growing up. Then the warriors and the long ago warriors still, but they don't sit over by the door just yet, as they were men. And those ones, the oldest men spoke. He sat with the Chief, this old man, and when the speaking was done, they all tell of what they call the thing they are busy with, that they want to set right. This old man, the eldest, had already listened to these ones. The Chief also came to listen to these ones. They worked at it together, the talk that was undertaken. They smoked the Pipe, too. There were Elder's helpers there to assist, to pass the Pipe in a circle. There, the Chief was busy working at it, sitting with the Old Men. They were working at it together on how to decide on something the right way. Things went properly; there was no disharmony. There was obedience in the community. If something went wrong, if there was disharmony, they made it right. They did this in the Warrior Lodge. Maybe that was the place of law-making in the old days, this Warrior Lodge. This Chief, Earth Child, who had been chosen, there he sat with the others; he was Chief. He began to make things abundant, to make things go well, including for the Old Men. He came to listen to the people to hear what they had to say. It was the Warrior Lodge, the house of laws long ago. If something went wrong, they fixed it. If it was something the Warriors were to take care of, they fixed it. They gave cloth offerings, they made offerings on behalf of the people with things. They gave horses,. If they cut up a tipi, then they replaced it in four days, along with tools. They replaced those for the people. No, they never left anything behind that they were responsible for. But after four days they replaced things for the people, if they had to teach them a lesson about some misbehaviour. They would even cut up the tipis and even scatter or destroy the tools. But in four days they would replace them for the people. It was out of love for them, for the sake of their persons. It was to show love for them. But to do things right, not in anger, not out of the sake of destroying things, not a joke. All the people were regarded in the same way, not one is thought as being first. No one was thought of as being more important than others. All people were thought of as the same. That is what they were trying to teach, these Warriors. That was their work in the village with 200 tipis. If there were 100 tipis or more, more Warriors were there to take care of things. They were listened to because they were the bosses. There was one Warrior Chief, along with the warriors and the honourable young men, the young men training as warriors. They were called to become warriors. They would go on the warpath, they would gather in a group

as they ran off. The warriors, sometimes they went with them. The word itself, "okihcihtâw" (warrior) in the language - in the real meaning of the word, of their name, it shows in their work how they take care of people. That is what "okihcihtâw" (warrior) means. They were respected, they were thought to be strong, they were thought highly of, it was not for nothing they were Chiefs. The Chief, even where he spoke, from where he sat with the Old Men - even him, he was not exempt. These Warriors who took care of things - if even him (the Chief) is making light of life, maybe disrespecting it, even him, the warriors would be there to take care of things long ago. That is how powerful these warriors were. They were the law, they carried the law, the people's law. In that way not even the Chief can think more of himself than others. Even if one of his tribesmen, the warrior's people, no, the Warrior Chief, his tribesmen of the community - if they arrive from another community, another Cree community, and if one from there, when they hunt buffalo, if one man from there makes them wild, and begins to hunt first and raise a ruckus and maybe chase away the buffalo because of one individual's selfishness, causing the people as a whole to go hungry just because an individual wanted to go first - The Chief from the camp that arrived, if any of his people were responsible in chasing away buffalo, the Chief allowed the warriors to take down, cut up the individual's tipi as a consequence. This is how things happened in the past. The Chief came forward, filling his Pipe and offering it to the warriors. If that is what happened, they would smoke. When the Warriors were done smoking, the family of the individual who did wrong will leave the tipi, along with his wife, his children, his grandchildren. As they moved out, the warriors went to kick down the tipi. The warriors cut up the tipi and pulled down the poles. It was not just anybody who attained the warrior status. This is what he had to do on the warpath - cut up the enemy's tipi. Only the ones who were able to cut up the enemy's tipi had the right to be warriors. They were able to do things to their people - to take care of things, to be security, that was long ago. They stole horses from the enemy. That's how things were done. . . . The Old Men (who have passed) used to tell stories long ago. One was called, "nânâtêw-awâsis" (Heat Wave Child). They were warriors. The other was called, "wiyâtakwâpêw" (Happy Man) - the late Mistawâsis's son. these were the warriors. That is what one had to do. Some did this, they made brothers of each other. If anyone did not follow protocol when they went hunting buffalo, the warriors rode there to stop the individuals. If they wouldn't stop, they still intended on hunting buffalo, after being told to wait, but didn't wait - It was then a warrior went and shot Nânâtêw-awâsis for not waiting. He was wounded badly. To top it off, Wiyahkikwâpêw shot his horse. This caused a lot of anger, the Warriors were being challenged. But this was the only way to stop the ones who disobeyed, who were not allowed to hunt buffalo. The warriors started moving, they brought him home. Nânâhtêw-awâsis died later. Even though he was a warrior, but he disobeyed. They stopped him. They brought him home to the community, the Cree community, to the tipi village. Protocols were followed. On the fourth day, the Warriors replaced the belongings of the three men. The warriors had to discipline. The warriors swore an oath of brotherhood. In return, horses were given to them for presents. In this way, giving was a way to show the disobedient warriors were still loved. But now, it showed them that there are rules/laws and they must be followed, not to stray away from people's laws. It showed a person cannot think of himself, even though he has family. But to disobey protocols, it will not be allowed. One must think of the people as a whole, not himself,

their spouses, or their children to only feed. One must think of all the people.





This is old Cree, the word I say, "nânâhtêw," it's "heat wave." In summer, these heat waves are visible, this is what is "nânâhtêw." This one warrior was named, "Child of the Heat Wave," and another was, "Wiyahatakwâpwê." It translates to "Happy Man," it's old Cree.

It is from here we take a lot of Cree. The language is spiritual, it's considered spiritual. I will tell sacred stories during the summer even though it's taboo. I say this because we are losing so much. It doesn't matter if it gets cold. In the summer, no matter.



Once I tell a story - maybe you'll understand what this story is about - one called, "Warrior Woman." She is called a warrior, she leads Warrior Women. These Warrior Women were seated the same as the men. Chief of the Warrior Women, Chief of the Warriors. He is the head of the warriors. Chief of the Warrior Women, both the same status. Her role is to watch and take care of half of the dance lodge. She looks after the women's side of the lodge. It doesn't matter which lodges, it's her job. This then being the Sundance Lodge, Thunderbird Dance it's called. Today it's called a Prairie Chicken Dance, because the Thunderbirds come to bless the lodge. "Nihânîmis" was his name. He possessed supernatural powers. I was told he could fly; he flew everywhere. He had feathers. Anyway, he could fly. Long ago, this was a supernatural power. I think about 700 AD is when this story took place. He was alive about this time. He was still a growing child, more fully grown when his people were reached by the Whiteman - Wooden Boat People. These people used large wooden boats. Wooden Boat People landed on the eastern shores of the ocean. Strange looking people - white faces, big, wore metal helmets, horns stuck out on the top side, and wore steel breast plates. They carried huge metal knives. They arrived by sail. Our guess today was that they were Vikings. It was the Vikings who arrived by sail. This is where Nihânîmis's people lived, along the ocean. His people lived in birchbark tipis; there were no buffalo in the east. Nihânîmis was gifted by the Thunderbirds. I am not bragging when I tell this story, but he was blessed by the Thunderbirds - he was given a dance lodge. In the lodge, he told half the lodge as he was taught; he was gifted. In half the lodge, the Warrior Woman took lead of the women. In the dance lodge toward the east, if it is one day of dancing, the door was open to the east. If it was two days of dancing, the door was open to the south. That is where the Warrior Woman sat. The Warrior Woman sat with her Pipe; other Warrior Women sat with their Pipes. On one end the Old Men who conducted the ceremony sat with Pipes, too. To the north, a warrior man was seated. From there he watched over the dance. From the east sat the Warrior Woman - to watch over the women. Women could not cross over to the men's side of the lodge. The helpers would move around, working. They were copying the Creator's movements - when he first made the Fire Spirit. This Fire Spirit was half man and half woman, half of each. When the gift of life made its way to the people, when a child was going to be born, this is where the spirit of the child chose a spark from the Fire Spirit. As it arrived on Earth, is he going to be a man or is she going to be a woman? It's the Creator's fire, the Fire Spirit; the Creator chooses a spark; it becomes a spirit. When a child is seen and born, on top the child's head, it's called, "wâyipân." It's small, very soft. For as long as you live, as long as we live, even if it's 100 years or more, it's like there is a pin hole on top our head. It's small, this is where the spirit lives, the Fire Spirit. It's where it lives; your body is it's home, his/her home. You are the tipi. You have a mind/brain in your home; your body is the tipi, your brain is your home.

This is from where the Fire Spirit takes care/watches over you, me, and all the people. The Creator blessed the Fire Spirit to be a guardian. The spark that one takes determines your gender, to be a woman or to be a man. There is truth about two-spirited people - maybe they took a little bit of a woman's spark and a man's spark. These are the two-spirited people, but there weren't too many.

I was talking about Nihânîmis. He was highly regarded in the past, even today. He was blessed. Little children were disappearing when Nihânîmis was a child. He was wrapped in a cradle board, he was seen loosening the cradle board wraps, then flew up and out of the smoke hole, tipi flaps; this is where he flew out. He surprised his father and mother, "How is this child able to fly?" were their thoughts. He was totally amazing. Even when the parents gave chase, he couldn't be caught. Nihânîmis flew out behind the tipis, the birchbark tipis as they stood. Children were disappearing. By coincidence half of each gender, girls, little girls, babies, little children, boys, too. The father of Nihânîmis, one morning, filled his Pipe. He called all the old men and the men of the village to come smoke. The father announced, "Whoever takes this Pipe can do whatever he wants with my child. Last night we saw him flying up, and from there (points up), he flew out. Off he went into the dark. Here, I filled this Pipe I am holding. Anyone can take it. Whoever does, can do anything with this one." As the father of Nihânîmis was speaking, a voice could be heard from the back of the tipi. "Wait, wait awhile, listen to me. If you listen to me, something will be gifted to all you people. You're going to be blessed." The people looked to the back of the lodge. It was Nihânîmis, a week old, speaking to them. He was wrapped in a moss bag tied to the cradle board, with his head poking out. So they listened. "I want you to leave me here for ten days. You will build a lodge, with a view into the sky/heavens. The length of the lodge will run north/south. You will build a door to the lodge facing east. A sacred sapling will be erected in the center." The child continues, "You will leave me in the lodge. Place me on the west side facing to the east. You will prop me up; you will leave me for ten days. The people will move north where the people usually make camp, further north. You will stay for ten days. You will leave me alone," said the small child. The people were surprised but they agreed. "I guess we will do it. We have never had a child so young speak to us." The people who were of high standing and respected by the people, they listened to the Elders. So preparations were made to move camp, taking down birchbark dwellings. Soon as they were ready, they carried and packed on their backs going north. Eventually the Old Men directed the younger men to build the lodge for him. The parents were the last to leave. They propped him up in the cradle board. Everything he requested was left for him there. But he mentioned on the sixth day to send scouts. "But don't let them come close to the lodge. The scouts will stop at distance. From there they will watch and listen; but they can't come close." After six days had passed, scouts - two of them - went to come check on Nihânîmis. They stopped at a distance. He had a small hand drum. That is what the scouts heard, the beat of the drum. A song was heard. "Iyôhô, who is it then? Who is helping Nihânîmis? Wahwâ! He is only a child, a child in a moss bag, a child in a moss bag attached to a cradle board," said the scouts. The beat of the drum could be heard at the lodge. Someone was singing, and the songs sound extraordinary and powerful.

Sings:   As big as the sky I live in harmony, with you my namesake  

This is one song that originated from that time as told by the Elders.
There are other songs I know and remember. The word, "wânaskêskên" (in harmony with everything), that is old Cree. There is a place called, " Wanuskêwin" that comes from "wânaskêskên."
As big as the sky, circles easily and carefully, he goes around, blowing about.
He flies and circles the Earth, slowly and easily, he circles the earth.
That's how he sang the song as heard by the scouts. They were amazed.
Very true, very true. It was great. That is where the song comes from, they say, the Old Men have told, from a long time ago, when the Thunderbird Dance first started, the Thunderbird Dance, it was told what dance it was but much later.
Another song: ᑭᑭᑭ In another universe past the heavens, I will go dance ᑭᑭᑭ
This song sings of dancing past the heavens, far past over there, I will dance.
This was Nihânîmis, dancing back and forth for ten days. For ten days, he was left in the lodge as requested. He flew the universe, seeking vision, traveling even beyond our universe. There he went dancing. From that time there came another song, they say. But the scouts went back north to the camp, they stayed there. After ten days, the people were ready to go back south. The people traveled one behind the other.
They wanted to know what Nihânîmis had been doing, ha.
As they arrived, the people started putting up their tipis, birchbark tipis.
The ones who were not busy went over to the lodge. There stood a young handsome man.
People asked, "Ha, who are you?" The young person replied, "It is I, Nihânîmis."
Ten days have gone by. He was a child. Suddenly there stood a young man.
This is what happened, and it's true. There was a moss bag to the side, but no child.
"This is me," said Nihânîmis. He continues to say, "Who is the oldest man?"
"This one," said the people as they started arriving. "Bring a Pipe. Come," was his reply.
"Who is the second oldest? Bring a Pipe with you." He selected Elders, sat them appropriately.
He chose four Elders, four lead Elders. Nihânîmis said, "Elders' helpers, too." He picked helpers.
Nihânîmis pointed to the Chief Warrior saying, "Warrior, you will be seated on the northside. You will sit there, it's your home. Chief Warrior Woman, whoever is the Elder woman.
The Pipe, this one will bring her Pipe. You will sit here, you will face to the east."
The women sat east according to their rank as Warrior Women.
"No women will cross this middle marker, this middle line," Nihânîmis informed the people.
"The men will sit on the northside of the lodge, the women will sit on the southside," he said.
"The sacred tree and Grandfather Rock will be in the middle; no one crosses here." As he continued, the people saw small bones in a small pile. Nihânîmis called for feast food.
He addressed the helpers, told them they can walk anywhere in the lodge.
The Sun is one of most important Spiritual Helpers; that is what I said yesterday.
The Father of all, everything that was created, all our ways, all our ceremonies.
As best as we can we follow and practice his ways, our Father of all Things.
All his doings, the Sun. He is the Creator's Helper. But there is one main helper who works on behalf of the Sun, the Chief Helper. The ravens are Spiritual Helpers, too.
They are all helpers, each one of them. For the sponsor of the ceremonial dance lodge, the Elders who pray work for the Father of All. Like the Elders, same with the Creator.
Obviously our Father is older, his kindness is great. It's where the wisdom of the Elders comes.
He is kind and gentle. Birds, grouse, eagles, hawks, when they fly or hover in one spot, they are showing kindness to their young ones. That is the word of wisdom from an Elder.
So back to the story. Once all the Elders and Helpers were in place, the ceremonial food arrived.
Nihânîmis explained to the Elders which Spiritual Helpers to make food offerings to.

The Grandfather Spirit who is to the south, the Ghost Stone Spirit who is underground will open the door. Grandmother Spirit who is to the north, for the Feast Ceremony. To be kind and gentle to the relatives who are to be asked to come feast, loved ones. Man-in-the-Moon-Spirit, he has cold hands. That is why his name is "cahkâpêw." He then touches the people. Obviously they already had Ghost Dances, Jump Up Dances, Round Dances. They already had these ceremonies. First time there was death, way back in the past, the Ghost Dance started, Sacred Bundle. Nihânîmis told them to use those Pipe ways here. To our relatives who went before us, our loved ones, you will call their names. Once the Pipe ceremony was completed, the Elders prayed with food, the helpers went to work. All the food was served; people finished eating. The Pipes were filled with tobacco again. Nihânîmis spoke to everyone, "I am Nihânîmis. This dance, it is Thunderbird Dance. You Elders will pray and direct your Pipes to the Thunderbirds, you Elders conducting ceremony." He continued to say, "In the future when I am not living with you people anymore, you can think of me first, you will pray to me. In the future, not for now. Thunderbirds are first." The Thunderbirds are the ones who bring blessings to our People. So it was done. Also healing, if people want doctoring - a person is sick, they can rise from here to heal. The son of the Old Man Spirit sits with our Father. They discuss healing and wellness. From the whole world they decide which individual is going to heal and live. He is the Son of Old Man Spirit. Chief Warrior will protect and fight for the people. Plus the Chief Warrior Woman will be asked to watch over all the women, so the women do all the right things, so nobody thinks they come first or are better. That is the role of the Warrior Women. Their role is of prayer, too. She doesn't sit there for nothing. The Warrior Woman doesn't sit there for nothing. Chief of the Old Man Spirit, also son of Chief Old Man Spirit. I am not saying the son of God. That's Whiteman's belief. It is true what happened for them, too, the land across the water, the Europeans. Our story is Chief Old Man Spirit, sits with our Father, and Chief Old Man Spirit's son sits with him. There are the four-legged beings, the ones on the surface of the Earth. It's their Chief who helps with healing and doctoring. It's what they work on (topic is the Bear Spirit directions). To the south is the Black Bear. In between south and west is the Red Bear. To the west is the Grizzly, to the northwest is the Brown Bear, to the north is the White Bear, to the northeast is the Cinnamon Bear, to the east is the Yellow Bear, to the southeast is the Grayish Black Bear, and the Black Bear. That is full circle. So they work for him, Chief Old Man Spirit. He's the one who sits with our Father. That is what was told by the Old Men. Now the Pipe Ceremony, it's for the Thunderbirds. When the Pipe Ceremony was done, Nihânîmis went and sat down. He is going to sing now. The little bones that were piled around the Sacred Tree - each time he sang,  straight song - chant  Each time he sang, the small bones started to form around the tree where the men were seated in the lodge. North of the Sacred Tree, a young boy stood there. Soon the young boy grew into a young man. He stood naked. He sang again. Another pile of the bones rose to form from the southside. This time it was a young woman who started to appear as flesh grows onto the skeleton frame. He resurrected a total of ten young people from the southside of the Sacred Tree. Young women. From the north of the tree were young men. These were the children who had disappeared. These were the ones he raised to life; he resurrected them, made them human again. They had disappeared. The people were very surprised, extremely surprised. The people saw before their own eyes, the children were brought back to life. Their children, their grandchildren, they were young people, this really happened.

First time there was a Thunderbird Dance. Today it's called Thunder Dance.
Nihânîmis brought them back to life. When he finished singing, he took one of the young men outside the lodge where many people sat in a big circle.
Nihânîmis took the young man straight to his parents amongst the crowd.
"This is your child," he said. "But he is grown up." He went back inside the lodge.
He takes another young person from the crowd of people,
announcing to the parents, "This is your child, all grownup." He repeated his actions,
all of them. The little girls who were young women now, I shouldn't have said girls.
He took the young women to their mothers. People were overjoyed, they were crying,
being so thankful, yelling with joy. Chief Warrior Woman stood as she sang.
They were giving thanks, thanking the Thunderbirds, they gave thanks to our Father,
to the Thunderbirds. Thanks was given to everything, to Chief Old Man Spirit's Son,
being thankful as the people danced, hands in air. They were so overwhelmed.
Nihânîmis instructed them to close the eastern door, for this dance will last two days.
"I am going to teach you some songs. In the future if someone promises to sponsor a lodge,
the lodge door will face the east. If someone promises a ceremony for two days,
the lodge door will face to the south." So he opens the door to the south.
Nihânîmis promised two days, they feasted, they whooped. They were very thankful
as the visiting took place amongst themselves, for he raised the youth from bones.
It was for life the people were yelling thanks, kinship, love, everything.
Where the Chief Warrior Woman was seated, this was half the dancing lodge,
Chief Warrior Woman was responsible to take care of it, along with the women.
The way the women's conduct was in the lodge, it was like half of the village.
Chief Warrior Woman - where she sits along with other women, watches over properly
the conduct of the women. This is the role of Chief Warrior Woman.
A good lifestyle, good conduct, good thoughts, same as Warrior Chief.
That's the story, but I shortened it. I didn't give all the details, I told a sacred story.
The Thunderbird who flew by a moment ago, giving thanks about the dance,
it's really called a Thunderbird Dance, not a Prairie Chicken Dance.
That is where the dance came from (pointing east). Now so everyone understands,
the first human being who was made on the surface of this earth walked upon the land.
He looked about, was astonished by everything he saw with his eyes.
Everything had a mystery to it, just the way things were formed. The trees,
the sky/universe, it was blue in colour, the trees were green,
the grass, the rivers, little beings, the animals, he saw everything.
He saw animals walking in pairs of two, as they are together.
He saw everything, even the bigger creatures. He was so joyous to be alive.
He went from here to there and everywhere. Finally he noticed, after the fact,
some of the animals he had seen, trailing behind them were little ones.
He stared at them and asked himself, "Why am I alone, why am I alone?"
The animals have babies like them. He went to another place.
Again he saw animals that were walking with little ones.
He started to dislike his situation; he was lonely. "Why am I not with anyone?
I haven't found anyone like me, why?" He dropped to his knees raising his hands crying,
"I want someone to be my parter, to be my companion," he said as he cried.
He was very humble as he prayed. Someone ascended from above who glowed.
It was a person, it glowed like fire. The person radiated light.

The person spoke to him, "This is for a reason, this is for a reason.
I wanted you to know where to turn to. This is why you were created alone,
and by chance you figured out where to face and pray. I hear you, I watch you."
The person carries on saying, "I am going to give you, I am going to give you
what you asked, to have a partner." The person motioned to his ribs,
took a small part of his rib, right from his body, pulled it out.
From the ground he took dirt. Taking both the rib and dirt he blew on them.
This was our Father. There appeared a woman, he brought life to her.
He gave the man a woman to have as a wife.
"Aha, it's one year later that I created a woman for you, you figured it out.
That is what I wanted, so you know in the future where a person faces to pray -
You are to teach this. You think I am the Creator, you think I am God, I am happy.
You have made me your Creator, you figured it out, I am the Creator.
I will give you what you asked, this person will be called "woman."
This is what you wanted, someone to walk with you. I glow.
It is I who gives life, I gave this woman life. This is where this name comes from "iskwêw."
Part of the name will explain that she will talk to you a lot in the future. "îskwew,"
that is where the name "woman" came from. At first she was called a woman,
the man was called a Spirit Person because our Father made him.
Man was made to look like him, but man didn't glow.
The Creator said to man, "In the future you, it's what you want, it will be called a child (awâsis)
When there are more, they will be called children (awâsisak), why is that?
As you see me, the glow of fire, this child will have the same glow as a child.
There is no sin, there is nothing bad, he/she has a clean spirit.
S/He grows up pure, pure thoughts; s/he will have a glow (ê-wâsisit), the child (awâsis)."
That is where that word came from, that is why I say our language is spiritual.
It is spiritual, it comes from there, we think of him as spiritual,
the Spirit, we call him the Creator today. Our language comes from him.
They began to have children and they were called children (awâsisak), because they glow, they glow.

***Interviewer: What can young people take from going to university, something for them to think about?
that you are going to speak about?***

This is what young people should understand, university students, our young people,
where we all originated from as people, the ones called Red Skins.
This is where we came from, the Red People, the Red Skins.
There were five races of people made by the Creator, the Red Skins were one.
We were one of them. That's where we came from, as told by our Grandfathers.
Another race was the Dark-Skinned People. They came from where the sun goes down, far away.
That is where they roamed. They were made over and over.
It's like our Grandfathers when they were made over and over.
White People, White-Skinned People, were made overseas. That's where they originated.
Black People, Black-Skinned People, were overseas. That is where their land is.
That is where they were made. Yellow People - far from where the sun rises,
overseas, that is where they were made, too.
Today there are different races of people everywhere,
but one thing about our people is to remember where we came from.
To stay with their own Aboriginal people, their Red-Skinned people.

It doesn't look right when a Red-Skinned person, and a White-Skinned person are in relationship.
It doesn't look right, is what was said by Elders in the past.
But when the first Whiteman landed, he already was going with our women.
Aboriginal women, Red-Skinned women, he was making attempts to be with them.
So it came to be our women courted with Whiteman. That's where Halfbreeds came from, Halfbreeds.
But what looks right, Elders said, is when an Aboriginal man and woman are together.
It looks appropriate when an Aboriginal man goes with an Aboriginal woman.
So that way our Aboriginal way of life continues as intended, as it was told.
So if Aboriginal people use due diligence, but if we use due diligence, we will always know
what and where we came from, how things happened in the past.
If young people don't learn and understand, it was told by Elders,
it will be that we will lose our identity. We will be lost to the point
where we will start being destroyed. We will become extinct as people.
It was foretold, these stories I bring to life. The first man, when he was made a woman,
when life began with the next generation, when the woman was made,
she followed. The man - one year before she was created -
when the woman was created, they were warned. It was the Great Spirit who warned them.
The Great Spirit is what he is called. That's who man calls upon.
That is why he is called the Great Spirit from that point.
Great Spirit. So it was said to them by the Great Spirit,
I am telling you never to eat white berries that have a crown, are with a crown.
Never eat those berries, you will live forever, you will live forever.
Your children, your grandchildren, will live forever. But if you ever
eat the the white berries with the crown, if you ever eat them,
you will come to meet a thing called death. You will meet death.
At that moment, he rose (Great Spirit). He ascended with a light, the Great Spirit.
So they (man/woman) went everywhere together. What he had wished,
it came to be. The woman gave birth to a child, a child, who glowed,
who they nurtured. As the child grew, another child, they had another child.
As their children became adults, soon they started having their own children.
It came to be, it was meant to be, for life to continue into the next generation.
This is a law, life, it's got to be taken care of, nurtured.
Never end your life, continuance of life, Elders would tell this to us.
That is why life is leaving us as human beings. That was the first law, never end a life.
When the time comes, you're going to finish your life, when it is going to end.
You personally, it's going to happen. When it happens, some will be young,
some will be old, some will have pure white hair, before their time comes.
It was told by the old men, this is where they learned it from.
There was no death at one time. Old people had multiple grandchildren, great grandchildren.
Family was very precious. That's why people loved and respected each other.
Life/Family flourished into the future. Soon there were many people.
One day as the women gathered, they came upon the white berries
that had horns/a crown. That is where they ate them as they picked.
They didn't eat them right away. They took them home, the berries that were picked.
It was mostly the white berries. The old men warned the people not to eat the berries.
We were told never to eat the white berries, we were always told not to.
The old women repeated the same words, but the young people said nothing would happen,

let's eat them. Pretty soon people were convinced, they wanted to eat the white berries. So the people ate the white berries. Not too long after, at one of the tipis, a man fell to the ground. He was left on the ground. It was the first time death was seen. The people didn't know, but the old people said this is what we were warned about, because we eat the white berries. That's what was told to us. Soon the corpse of the man started to develop a bad smell. A woman had made a raw hide, so the corpse was rolled into the raw hide, pushed the corpse up against the tipi. The smell continued to get worse. The oldest of the deceased man's sons had been gone wandering, but had returned. The son came into his parents lodge. As he spoke to his mom, "Aho. Where is my father?" he asked. "And what is the smell in here that stinks? Something smells really bad, what is that smell?" "Your father fell to the ground," said the mom. "There he is over there. I had rolled him up in the hide." "What happened?" asked the son. "It is death, that is what it's called," said the mom. "Holy," replied the son. "The corpse can't be left in that state. I want you all to help me," said the son. He went, looked at his dad rolled up in the raw hide. They carried him outside. He was helped as they carried the corpse outside the tipi. Over on the side of a small hill, the corpse was placed with head facing south, to the south. A hole was dug, a grave was being made. "Take some of his hair," the son said. "Tie the hair to a small stick, and stake it to the ground by the grave." The son took a rock, placed it on the south side where the head was. The corpse's feet were in the north direction, he placed a rock there also. So he returned to the lodge. When night came, as he slept, his father came to him. The spirit of his father. The father spoke, said, "My son, what you did was correct. Everything you did, the grave site you made for me." The father continued, "I am still around, I have been given a job/responsibility. The Great Spirit gave me a job. I will be in the south. I was the first to die, so he gave me a job. I will be called the Grandfather Spirit, I will watch from there. Because of the white berries that were eaten, many will follow me to where I am. That is where all the spirits will be when they leave their bodies here on earth. The hair that you cut and tied to the stick, you did the right thing. When four days have passed, you will put up a feast. You will pray to the Great Spirit because he will be present. You will pray to me, also, as the Grandfather Spirit. So I can come eat. I will come. The hair you will put in a bundle. You will take care of the bundle. Each time a relative passes you will add their hair to the bundle, or something of their personal belongings. This will be called a sacred Ghost Dance Bundle. You will take this with you at all times. In time, songs will come to you to learn, and a dance. You will have to dance with the Bundles. It's going to be a traditional way of life. That rock you placed there, another person is going to go ahead (spirit world). It's going to be, I will tell you then, next time what that person will be called." So it was, four days came to be. He went and got the hair tie, he brought it back. He had told his mom to cook and his younger sibling. So they cooked. So they had a feast, he told them that he had made a grave. He told them his father had come to visit him, he had done the right thing. At the feast, the stick with the hair tie - he stood it up. The Grandfather Spirit started whistling to let them know he was present.

Prosperity was gifted to them because they offered a food offering to him.
When the feast was done, he took the hair and wrapped them together.
That was the first Ghost Dance Bundle ever made, the first Ghost Dance Bundle.
So another day had come and gone, another man fell dead,
The young man was called upon to take care of the dead, so he cared for the dead man.
He did exactly everything he did the first time. Again his father, now Grandfather Spirit, came to visit.
"My son," he said. "This person will be known as the Ghost Rock Spirit.
He will live underground. But when you feast again, you will pray to him, also.
He will open the door to the individuals (spirits) that you ask to come and feast with you.
He will close the door behind them (spirits). When the spirits are ready to return, he will close the door.
He will be called and known as the Ghost Rock Spirit.
The second one who just passed away, this is the job he's been given.
The second person who went was given the job, he was named the Ghost Rock Spirit.
He opens the door so the departed spirits can come back and eat."
Everything was done the same way, the same for everyone.
Another one, this time it was a woman, a woman dropped dead.
Everything was done the same again. The head directed to the south, the feet to the north.
Again the Grandfather Spirit came to see him. He said, "My son, the one who has gone first,
the Great Spirit will give her a job, but I oversee all of the spiritual helpers.
She will be known as the Grandmother Spirit, she will sit from the north in this ceremony.
When a person prays with the pipe, when a food offering is made, offer to the north for this feast."
So with that, he did all of the ceremonies the same, and the woman who fell dead,
her brother, older brother fell dead. No, her younger brother, the younger brother.
Once again, the young man was given responsibility. Once again, the Grandfather Spirit came to him.
"Now this one who has left will be known as the Cold Spirit, he will live on the moon.
That will be his work, he will watch from there, to watch over people .
When it comes time for a person to leave this world, he will cool the body.
The person will turn cold, that is the Cold Spirit. That's why he's called that name.
He (Cold Spirit) carries a bundle on his back. When offerings of food are made,
he puts them in his bundle and brings them to where we are (spirit world).
He will bring the recent deceased spirits hand in hand. The Grandmother Spirit,
she, too, will come holding hands; she will bring them.
But the deceased people's spirit will not want to leave. They will want to stay with their families.
Something they loved they will not want to leave. But these spiritual helpers will bring them.
I (Grandfather Spirit) was given helpers who are going to work for me, for this ceremony, for this way.
The feast cannot ever give back life," said the old man. "But I can give prosperity
that you can be given if you ask the spirits to come feast with you.
Only prosperity. But in every way, you will have prosperity."
The story I am telling, I am not bragging, and I am shortening it.
The first feast ever, the first one that took place, plus the Ghost Dance.
The Sacred Ghost Bundles are danced with, and those Spiritual Beings who look after the feast.
Many things are lost today. I go to many feasts all over, many ask for life.
That is not the way. When we have feasts, it's prosperity we ask.
They can't give life; prosperity is what they give in every way.
There are many things that are lost, but when they start to understand, the young students,
once they understand white berries with horns (a crown) are not to be eaten, we were warned.
Overseas the white people, their forbidden fruit was an apple. They were told not to eat it.

Us over here we were forbidden to eat the white berries with crowns - were not to be eaten.
We have, we have from the beginning of time, since the earth was made -
the Great Spirit, God, he made this earth. We have stories, legends and myths.
That's how long legends have been around, from that time, up until now. They're still around.
But we are close to losing them. Unless we are blessed, maybe the Great Spirit will help us.
Maybe the helpers who are around, or the spiritual beings, four directional spirits.
Our stories will bring life, a way for a parent to teach their children.
It helps an Aboriginal woman to stay with her people, helps an Aboriginal man to stay with his people.
Helps stay with his tribe. They will stay at their birth place, because it still continues.
I was born in my Aboriginal community. When I die, that's where I will die.
I don't disown any person who is different coloured skin, I don't hate them.
But they are different. I can't put them before me, I can't put them above me.
I would rather honour my grandfather, great-grandfather, great-grandmother above them.
I will host a feast, make food offerings to them, that's how much I honour them.
That way I teach my children, I show my grandchildren, they learn to honour their ancestors,
the ones that have gone ahead. That will benefit them so greatly in the future.
Ceremonies, too. For example, the Thunderbird Dance, I have made Thunderbird Dances (Chicken Dance).
But I don't want to overdo things, I have done it six times already.
I hosted a dance, but I am trying to bring long life to my children.
They will learn a little at a time, why am I so respectful (ceremonies).
A long time ago, before we were gifted with a Sundance, things were done eight times.
That, too, is a story by itself. What I am talking about comes from a long time ago.
The old man from long time ago only did eight Sundances, not any more.
All of that has stories. This day I am only allowed to host eight Thunderbird Dances (Chicken Dances)
That is what old men did in the past. My children will do eight ceremonies each.
My grandchildren will, too. I am hoping for white hair, if I am blessed, I will give thanks.
When I get white hair, I will sit in elderly positions, I will be happy.
I am hoping it comes with good health, good mobility, good oxygen, and good mind.
I will give thanks, I guess there is nothing else I can say.
The stories I tell. I want people to understand we have red skin.
We as Aboriginal people, we have stories about how the world began.
Even when the Great Spirit destroyed the world, turned the world upside down,
he started the world all over again. An earthly people were created, he was a person made from the earth.
Life started from this point again. We as Red People, the White People, too, Black People,
the Yellow People, and the Dirty Skinned People were all destroyed by the Great Spirit at the same time.
When sin came to every race, I hate talking about this at times,
the first time people committed a sin, people were able to communicate with every creation.
Eventually people started intimacy with animals. That was after death came to people.
But they started committing sin. From this, came beings that were half human and half animals.
That's when the Great Spirit destroyed the world, he was very saddened.
He didn't wish for any of this to happen, he turned the world upside down.
Everything was destroyed. Old men over time have said, in the future,
this is going to happen again. If the Great Spirit can turn the world upside down once,
he started life again. The world had flooded at one time, the world shook.
He destroyed the world again. This is where Wesakechak came to be, he was responsible for animals.
This is going to happen again, the world is going to turn upside down once again.
When this time comes, he (Wesakechak) will take his people through. It will be tough, it is said.

A bow and arrow are going to help to get through, a straight arrow. That's going to get us through.
A person living humble, that's the one who walks and feeds his children
and takes them back to humanity. This is how old men would speak.
Education today is wonderful, it is good young people can make money.
To make good money to feed their children, to walk their children in a good way.
But don't ever forget where you were born, an Aboriginal person, a Cree person,
or a Saulteaux, a Sioux, a Stoney, and those called Dene, all different tribes.
Don't forget who you are from, where you rose from, where you were born .
Don't ever forget to be respectful to an old person, don't ever forget to respect life.
Life is so precious, and don't ever forget to pray. The birth of life,
the Wind Spirit, the Wind Spirit is who gives the birth of life.
The gift of a long life is what he grants, long breath of life, long breath of life.
So it is, you will have a good long physical life, you will have a good long mental life.
With that, you will be granted white hair with long breath of life.
When you have white hair, with the gift of long life, you become an educator.
That's what was said by old men. Give thanks to the Great Spirit.
Give thanks to the Wind Spirit, Give thanks to the Thunderbird, brings down blessings.
That is where a story comes from, Thunderbird, brings blessings, bring blessings down to us.
The Sun Spirit, the main helper, give thanks to him. Other helpers call him the main helper.
Like the Sweetgrass Spirit, but the Sun is first, the one who brings light.
The Sun Spirit never gets tired of working for the Great Spirit. He goes forever; ever and no tiredness.
In that way our young people will be blessed with being relentless with their duties as helpers.
Even with their positive energy, the helpers will be generous to others.
As the helpers work for old men upon this earth, and those who conduct our ceremonies,
these are the keepers. If it weren't for them, there would no order, there would be no laws.
Those are the keepers of laws, how to live a good life,
how things are supposed to be in harmony, how to get along, to have good kinship.
I guess that's a half hour over again.