

Title: 0117-Our Voices-Hunts Game  
Bird Number: 110801  
Recorder: Louis Bird  
Date Recorded: November 8, 2001  
Transcriber: Roland Bohr  
Date Transcribed: November, 2001  
Language: English  
Culture: Cree (Omushkego)  
Transcript: Proof

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Louis Bird: Hello, hello, this is Louis Bird. Hello, my name is Louis Bird, today is November 8th, 2001. This story that I was gonna tell you, I've heard it from the elders, many of them, which I have listened to. It is not my own knowledge, which I am going to tell you. I did not personally know these things which I am going to tell you. It was taught to me and now I am just pass it on to you. And now the subject is the hunter and his relationship to the animals that which he hunt. The animals which he hunt and which he hope to survive from. It means every spiritual relationship to the animal that which he hunts and in our land of the Omushkego our elders have said that.

Before I begin to tell you about the past our culture, Omushkego culture, there was this thing called "mitewin." This mitewin was a very important thing for our ancestors in which they strived to acquire it, those Omushkegos. They wanted to acquire more power for their survival and in order to have it, they have to begin at a very early age, somewhere around five year old, a boy begin to study, begin to learn how to acquire some dreams, to go into the dream quest period. And it is called "dream quest period". And that's the first step.

And the next step, a person has to continue renew and seek different aspects of the dream to understand, to be able to make sense of this dream and to extend this dream continuously of a specific dream of which he want to understand. And they would go into the wilderness to fast for some days. And once they have acquired such dream and also they begin to be adult, they maintain their knowledge by continuously going into the wilderness to fast, so they would retain the knowledge and the power they have acquired. And during the dream quest they have to seek out an answer to every things they question in their minds, for example like animals, all kinds of animals, and those animals that are danger for the human life, and they have to try to understand them, and this is the way it

was in our area, where the Omushkego people live. And for example, they have to try to understand the polar bear, who is a dangerous animal. They have to study where they move, their movement to dream in a dream, as far as those animals are ranged. And also other animals that live around, and also those other animals that are considered dangerous. And also, also the birds, the waterfowl, the birds that are predators, that are, are predators, or predatory, so they would try to understand why. And also all other animals that are large, that are, have conquered those smaller animals, such as a mouse. And all those animals try to understand then how the animal world existed.

And we have heard, we have a legends that explain this all to us. When an elder is, tells us the legend, he interprets it as a teaching system, as a lesson to our young people in which they see the animals existed in the, or for first time before human, and that they were told to provide for , for the human when they emerged. And this where the stories came from. The legends are used to teach us how to respect the animals, and that animals are there to provide the life for the human. This has been said to us in our culture. And our legend has been used as that translate it into such a lesson to us, the young people.

There was a thought in that time: when you listen to these legends, and when there is interpreted by our elders and other, another legends such as Sinkiipis, all the birds were mentioned, the predators and also the waterfowl and the different kinds which chooses how to make an example to the human how to live. There were waterfowl, supposedly used to come to migrate or congregate in one area when they arrived from the migration from south to begin their regeneration, to continue their species, to mate and to nest and to brought up the young and find the routine life as it is. And all these came from all this teaching why we have to respect all animals and birds and all other creatures that have been created. And this is where we hear all those lessons and from these legends and for that reason and for that procedure, the teaching system being like that.

These animals that are mentioned in the XXMississigak-storyXX, they, they are, they have already acquired the mitewin, the spiritual gift as if they were gifted by the Creator to have it, in order to survive, to foresee the danger for their life and to understand land in which they live, the dangers in their land. Even though we know the

animals and the birds sometimes eat each other, but there was a rule that has to follow. There was a controlling system, a power that controls these animals and those the Creator who have created everything, has created animals to eat each other. There will be predators and predator, so they will control their life and also they will provide life to each other. This was the teaching system that we have and people have made an observation to the animals. They exist by a, side by side. They do not just, they do not kill each other for nothing. And all this was our other natures have been observed by our ancestors and they teach us. And anything that has been there and created and how it works and they have learned these things from the watching, the observation. Watching or observing the animals in the forest.

And the other story that the teachers have been stressing is Sinkiipis, called the legend. Why, Sinkiipis legend tells us why we should respect the waterfowl and all the birds. These, animals and birds, that have existed before nature. I have, personally I never heard them having to have the use of shaking tent. But all of those animals and the birds have had a knowledge, or some sense of survival skills, which can be acquired by mitewin, and how to survive, to be able to see and sense the danger ahead. And also it has been said that, it has been said that by the, by the legends those animals have been given the knowledge how to survive. Some of them do migrate to one, one season to another. And also the, for example the waterfowl, how to regenerate themselves.

This in a story different animals as if different families of human. They have already acquired shamanistic powers, like what we call mitewin, mitewin. They were already shamans. They know acquired, they have to acquire it for them to be able to be aware of the dangers in their surroundings, and also to be able to survive by the use of their shamanistic power. As if they had been given this power for their survival, and that's what we hear. In this story of our cultural teaching, when we use the Giant Skunk legend, the elders have explained, have interpreted to mean as although the animals were created first on earth and they were created as such to be some are predators and some are, are hunted, there is no, there was a, there was an order that they would be such a limited action, or a controlled action for their, for their survival of the, as a species. There was a controlling system there, which Creator have set to happen amongst the animal world.

There is a controlling system which only the Creator can accomplish. And this is what, what the animals have used. So, by listening to the elders, interpreting the meaning of the legend, it is there: all the teaching which we require as a tribal people was contained in all the legends that we have listened to. That there has been an order of everything. Everything has a purpose and nothing is chaotic and, and that is why the First Nation were able to study the nature of respect to all creation, to respect the Creator, that they are aware that there is a beginning, that everything what they saw works in order and have all its purpose on earth. When we listen the legend of Sinkiipis, in there also we hear the animals have, have acquired the mitewin, and in there also we hear the respect for each other and respect for the law and order. There may not been a law, but there was a custom built in from the culture. Even animals have these things to follow.

One moment please. There is something that pops up in my mind, that I remember. I personally never heard a legend in the legend, in the Giant Skunk, or with Sinkiipis and other animal stories, that these characters to have built, or use a shaking tent. That is one thing I have noticed, that all animals have had shaman power, or mitewin and also the waterfowl has it and all the, all the birds that fly in the air, and also otters. Even the fish has the power. All these things were, were mentioned in that nature.

By listening to the legend of Sinkiipis we see the order, or fashion, how they live. The waterfowl are migrating birds. Some are not, some stay during the twelve month a year. And those who migrate, they return every spring, and it is only that time in the spring that they mate and then raise their young in the area during the summer, during the short season. And then they return, they migrate again.

By absorbing these wonders our ancestors have learned a lot from it and therefore have created these stories. We learn things by observation. And we, our ancestors have done that for ages. And they pass on this knowledge to the next generation up to now. Let's take a look at the animal story again. We have heard the animal story by, by media of Wiisaakechaahk, in order to explain the situation. We know the large animals, such as moose in this area of the Omushkego people. We have moose and we have caribous and these are the big game animals that are useful. And these animals have a different season of mating, like moose and caribou, they mate in the fall. And then they have their action

designed for them what they're gonna do. They do migrate. The moose and caribou do change space during, before the winter sets in. They have an order to follow. They have, they, as if there is a law in nature, nature's law, shall we say. They follow this instinctively. And our ancestors have absorbed this. And they understand. So it seems that the Creator, or the Great Spirit have made a timely perfection for all creatures to follow in order, so everything will work perfectly.

And it was on that observation that our elders begin to understand the Creator and his nature and his principles and things that should be absorbed. It was always our elders who understand these things, because they've lived a long time. They have absorbed the nature all their life and by the time they get old, they have all the knowledge that they must, that they can in the area where they live. No matter what tribes they are, they have a knowledge. So the stories that we have heard in the legends before the human emerged, everything has worked precisely in order, orderly fashion has caused our Great Spirit have intended to be. And when the human emerged, the human only has to watch, absorb the animals and the nature and total environment of the earth, how everything works perfectly and precisely. And from it they learn by observation, by watching the animals, their behaviours in different season. And when does in nature takes place, when does the animals begin to, to pass on their life, when do the waterfowl and birds begin to mate, and, and follow order of regeneration. And so is the other species, such as fish. How are the fish migrating? When do a fish and where do they go spawning? And how do they regenerate? And all the earth's material that is there: the forest, the land and everything that is growing. And all its usefulness for every living thing its survival.

And all these was acknowledged by our elders. Our ancestors, the Omushkegos have, have a good observation of nature, the animals, the waterfowl, all the flying birds and all the fish. And the nature, the trees, the forest, all the living things. And they watch how they revolve, how it's renewed and how it's prevent for over, over plenty. For example, take for the beavers for example for population control. When the beavers are getting too many, they usually destroy themselves, not only themselves, the destroy the nature of where they stay, because they dammed the river and they river became polluted. And they destroy the trees, they make everything dry. All the woods are destroyed on top

of the dam, where the river is, where the water is plenty, over floating everything. And therefore later on the beaver begin to sick and he begin to die. And this is what our elders saw as a population control, even if they don't kill their beaver themselves. And sometimes the nature itself, the nature itself, the weather function in such a way to have the population control on beavers. We may respect the beaver being industrious, but they are overdid it sometimes. And they overpopulate, they block the fishes' waterways and they distract that part of the nature. And sometimes they block the fish up the river and they could not come down and then they die. And sometimes they destroy the water that way, plus the roots, they destroy the woods, they, they've flooded.

And sometime causes to bring a disease, perhaps maybe what we understand today as rabies, because of that. And they die. And once they die, once they begin to have a disease, they pass it on to each other, they de-populate the area in certain periods in years. And at times, if there is not a disease, sometimes the weather seems to work against the beaver. Sometimes the weather would be cold very quickly and then begin to stay warm when there is so much snow. And therefore the beaver houses are not frozen and then the, the game animals like fox, and the wolf, and the wolverine are able to dig the beavers from their beaver house because it's not frozen. And in that way the population control its own force, somehow, to control the population of beavers. The beavers actually help other animals to, to survive, even though they destroy some. Sometimes the otter will come and destroy the dam in a, in a certain control to have the fish to be able to go up through the river and back, so the fish can populate also the land, they can reach where they spawn.

All this has been made observation very good in our ancestors before the European. All this activity that took place in the wilderness. Our ancestors have learned from it that there is a power that controls everything, the Great Spirit, the Creator who has created all, has set rules that they should function properly. So therefore, animals do the job and some, sometimes the weather do the job, to have the population controlled. And that everything will be useful, that nothing will be wasted. And all this have been made an observation by our ancestors amongst the cause of our First Nation, and also a part where the Omushkego people have lived.

Now to come back to the subject of mitewin, the shamanism we call it in English, and the legends that we have listened have outlined what gives our First Nation to understand nature and its surroundings and its environment. We have used an old story, we have used the waterfowl story and we also use many other stories that have brought us to understand our culture, to understand nature, which became our culture, once the human character emerged on the land. It has been said there were just animals and there were only the birds and waterfowl and fish in our legend. And it also said, when the man became to emerge, all he did was to make a good observation of the creation of which creator have made and have learned to understand their mystery and their function by watching the animals, by watching the, the, the birds, by watching the fish and all other forest nature. They have learned from it, they begin to understand the creator in which they call Great Spirit. And so, in order for them to survive, they have understand also to acquire special powers, which we call mitewin. And so they have learned to create such thing, or have there in nature a need for a dream.

It is in a dream that they find an answer, or seek an answer to the question in which they may have encountered during their life. Once the men begin to venture into the and seek a deeper knowledge, they have, have a where they could find an answer in their dream and for, and therefore begin the nature the nature of dream quest, seeking an answer in dreams. And those who have acquired, those who have managed to do that, they became mitew and they pass on their knowledge to the next generation. And therefore the procedure of acquiring the knowledge is the first step for dream, to find a dream, or to create a dream in you and to find something that is supposed to be understood in life.

Our people then became to have established the spiritual nature of their being by doing this. They already knew there was a Great Spirit who have known, knows everything and have created everything, but they did not know exactly who. And I don't think they ever want to actually, but they wanted to understand at least the nature in which they have to live. In order to do that, they have to establish some sort of a procedure, which was then known as mitewin, to name it all. And it started with the dream quest and the practice of dreams and other things that acquired by the dream. That

means there were some people who were gifted specially, to be able to create something which we call shaking tent. Shaking tent experts. And then there are those who have dreamt about, from the dream, all these things were obtained by dream. And the dream of being a drum, how to use a drum, and hand drum that is, in our area. And then how to be an expert hunter, how to use your mitewin for a good hunting, for survival. And how to get the knowledge of the, of nature, to understand things of nature, meaning that to understand all the things that are involved in the land. And there are those who have been gifted in their dream quest to study the universe, the stars, the moon, the sun, at least to readily understand what are these for, how they are useful. And then also other things that are required in total activity in mitewin. Mitew is a person who have created or obtained a dream, things in dreams and applied in his lifetime, he is a mitew. That mitewin is an act of this procedure, this make up to the tribe, to the tribes.

And then in time past the legends were there. They were created at that time, and way out, way past. And the legends are the, are the medium. They are the use and application for passing on the knowledge to the next generation. And these things were happened before other nations ever appeared on the land. And for that reason, according our ancestors, everything works in order, as systematically. There was nothing that was overused, there was nothing that overextended off its usefulness or its, or its benefit to human. It has been understood all this are equal and it was applicable in all, in all living things, including the human life. I do not, cannot see, this happen, this has happened to other tribes in the other part of the world. They maybe another stories. But here in this area, in the Omushkego land, these are the knowledge that has been passed on to us, to our Omushkego ancestors. We the Omushkego people have, have found a systematic and how to survive in the area where we live, the Omushkego country. And all these things were applicable that have been, that have been extended to us by the Great Spirit and also have been applied in our lifetime and the teaching system that's been passed on to us by our elders. Everything has been worked well, from the beginning of time until to the time of the other nations appearance.

When other nations appeared, then everything began to change. The way it was then before the appearance the European, all the teachings that were there before, before

that time, how to respect animals and all nature. In each there was a rule, as a teaching stems from the legends and also everyday teaching. The respect for nature and all its environment and the animals and the birds. If one of these have been broken by a member of the family, a kid maybe, or one of the members of the family, and when that happens, usually the punishment of that would be that there was a, there was a retention of the benefits from the nature.

There were times when a person disobeyed these teachings, or dishonoured them, if he, if a person has for example, a, a hunter is over killed the animals with which he cannot take and use it all and when the time comes for him to need again the animals, he cannot kill it, as a punishment. When this happen, there is that knowledge. Even though the leader of the family does not know exactly why. And when this denying of the food to be killed has occurred in this family, the leader of the family, or the family members begin to suffer the need for the food which cannot be obtained, and then the question begin to seek why, why is this happening.

Before the European came, before the Christianity came, when this happened, a family would, would also, would seek out a person who has been able to use the shaking tent to find an answer. And for anything or anyone who maybe there. The rule at that time was, whoever did something wrong in the family must confess, must admit that he had, or seek the past, where has he misused the animal. And therefore sometimes it was an elder who would be asked to find out if he could find out why. And then he would seek in his mind if there was anything he has to know and therefore he will be the one to suggest what should be done.

In these, in this code of ethics, or the principles in life, there was a thing called “maahchihew,” “maahchistaw.” It means when you do something wrong, or out of the ordinary to the animal, or to the thing, will be stopped beneficial to you. And that is maahchistaw, mean, maahchihew. Usually then at that time a lady or a young girl would have stepped over some food and that would break the, the law, or the nature, because she has not done or followed the respect of the teaching. Because in that period in time, before the Christianity or before European time, there was a rule that said no women should step over the animal or the food while, whether he is, she is not, or in a period of

the month. Or the girl was taught never to step over any food or animal that is, that would be the food that is respected. And that would be a taboo in, to say the least. And that would stop the provision of that animal if that happens. That's what they believe in those days. "Taboo" is, I think is a translation of maahchistaw, maahchihew, maahchistaahowin. I think that would be the taboo, because when the women has a period in the month and she accidentally, or even purposely is worse, stepped over the animal which is the food, big game animal, moose, caribou, and also the waterfowl and the fish, if she stepped over these, especially during the period, well, committed a taboo, or maahchistaw.

Maahchistaw means, and therefore the animal, or fish, or bird will stop being killed easily and that is maahchistaw. And that is the thinking of this women natures of period each month is a taboo and usually that will happen. That's what they believe in, in the past.

When that is happening, that is when confession shall be made. Or there has to be a declaration of such action and therefore the, and the punishment would stop. In further explanation of the situation, the animals that are big, are large game animals, like for example the caribou, if a, if they are abused by any way by the hunter, or over-killed, or this, such taboo that I was talking about, a woman stepping over the animal meat, or even such animal intentionally, unintentionally, it will happen. The animal cannot be killed and therefore punishment is there, severe require the food provision is not possible. And at that point, when the elders cannot find an answer, they usually requested a person who was an expert in using the shaking tent, would be asked to set it up and then questions can be answered directly into animal who is not, who is not, who is required, who cannot be killed in, in from the shaking tent. And when the shaking expert has set up his, his tent and then the people will sit around and ask this question with humility. And ask the animal: "Why is it," if it's a caribou, "why is it, caribou, that's not allowed to be killed?" And the caribou will provide the information and would say: "This has been done to me," as if it was caribou himself, a living one has been done to him, even though the dead one has been the one that was abused. "And for that reason," he says, "I will not be allowed to be killed until such so you shall tell and then I will be able to be provided, your requirement after, after you have declared you abused my being."

There are two explanation in this, in this subject. The abuse one is a man who shoot the caribou and waste part of the caribou, is called a pastaahoowin, paastaho, animal. "Pastaahoowin" means sin against this, respect of the animal, wastage. And then the other one, the taboo that happens here is that a woman stepped over the animal food that is ready cut for food, or animals that is there and stayed over it, or straddled the animal to laugh, to whatever, without any purpose. That is also against the rule. And then it began as a taboo because of woman who does that. Sometimes even without monthly period, sometimes even when she is not. If she knows this and do it on purpose it is, it is a taboo, and then the animal is not gonna be killed. But if the woman for example is by herself and the caribou has been brought into her home and she is alone, and she has to lift this caribou by any means to prepare it, that is not a taboo.

So there are two things here that teach us to respect the animal and that is why this spiritual relationship is there, before the European came. Even today it's still there. So therefore the teaching of the women, the girl has always been very careful and secret. That a girl would be taught never to step over any, any food items or anything that is used for food, when she is young girl, even so, when she begin to be a lady, when she begin to have her monthly period, she was totally, totally explained to her that she should not ever step over any, any food utensils, or food animal flesh, or fish, or goose, or waterfowl, whatever that is, that is supposed to be a food, she should never step over anything like that. And also that was the teaching for the women, for the young girls. That is where the taboo existed, because this is today as we know is not true. And this was the teaching before the Christianity arrived.

There is a warning against the hunter also, the young man. When the young man is taught to hunt, he was instructed never to kill animal for nothing, or never to kill an animal and leave it there to rot and waste it. If he does that, he has committed a waste, sin against nature, or paastaho. Or maahchihew, or you could also that word maahchihittesew, because he done this and therefore he cannot kill the animal until he has declared he has done so. And what reason. Only then can he regain his hunting skills. So, that is, applies to the, to the caribou. So, once this happens, when the animals begin to be, are hard to kill, and then people experience a hunger, and that's when they usually set up a

shaking tent and ask the shaking tent to bring in the caribou in there to explain why does he not allow to be killed and provide the food and life. And then he would say: "Because I have been abused by this and by that person and I don't want, I will not give my, my life for you." And then the wrongdoer will have to declare that he has done so and then the public or the leader will ask the caribou for forgiveness and please return your benefit. And then the caribou says: "Okay, yes, you have now know and then you will respect me and then I will give you my life for you." And that is the answer to the matter. And that was the use of the shaking tent and also the procedures that was done long time ago in respect to the animal in spiritual relationship. And all of the living things were done the same way, respected as the same level. The animals, all the fish or any other kind of animal.

And all these things changes when the European religion arrived in amongst the Omushkegowuk, because all this activity was considered a superstition. And therefore was not practiced anymore, but still believed it is there. We still practice the conservation a little bit and we still believe in conservation ideas from the past, our ancestors. And we still do the things what we thought by the young people not to step over any animal that is to become a food for a family. We still do that and. Because subject it's not for real. There is, there is this practice, there is this belief and practice amongst our, our people which has been followed before the European came. And still is believed to be true. We still teach our young women to be avoid stepping over the food or to be a food for our people. And it's still practiced. It may not be totally believed today, but it is still there. We shall continue this tape on the other side.

Louis Bird: November 8, the year 2001. The continuation of the side A for the subject of the hunt, the hunter and his relationship to the animal. Spiritual relation to the animal he hunts. On the other side we were talking about the belief that was practiced before the European came. The, the word we call in English "taboo" was the last subject and also the difference between pastaahoowin and maahchichi, maachistaahowin, maachistaahowin. Let me explain a little bit between the two words. Pastaahoowin is the original name of sin in English comparison, in English language. When we say "sin", if we use the term from the Christian, Christian, or Jewish point of view, "sin" means

breaking one of the ten commandments of god, or continuation from Christianity to definition of sins of ten commandments. In our culture when we say "pastaahoowin," we mean the same meaning as from the beginning of time, as when the human can remember from its experience. If you do some thing against what is not supposed to do, which has been proven to be wrong, and been stated in thought in your culture that is wrong to do that and you do it purposely, it is a sin.

But there is no, there is no comparison of the sin. There is no mortal sin, there is no minor sin. In our terminology sin is the sin, regardless of how, how much. There is no definition. Now, sin in our language is comparison to indigenous pastaahoowin. Pastaaitwewin is a sin, pastaahoowin is sinning. Against what is the next question. If you were to sin against nature would be in our term pastaahowaagan. Now, there is another word which is, which is said in our language: maachistaahowin, it's a noun. Maachistaahowin means when you do something that you know it is wrong, usually you do against something, so those things you have been taught, you do not throw away the food which is still usable. If you do that, you will be, you have been taught if you do that it will be very hard for you to get some more, as if there is someone that gives you that benefit and deny it to you because you have not respected, that is maachistaahowin, because you did against the object which has been provided to you by the Great Power. So when you do that it is maachistaahowin, it is similarly as a sin, but you are the ones who'll pay for it. You did that yourself and you get it back, whereas pastaahoowin can be as high as killing or you get hurt by it, you repay, it catches up with you, regardless when, as long as you live. That is how great pastaahoowin is.

So, in our cultural stories, in our cultural training all these were emphasized and in all five legends that we have heard in our young days. They have been interpreted to mean something. So all these beliefs have been practiced by our Omushkego culture. They have been believed to be the truth and they have explained as the truth, because it has been believed by our culture. So they were traditional belief and they were practiced. So when the Christianity came in, when the European came in, especially when we introduced by the Christianity, all these were condemned to be demon's work, evil, evil things, devil's own creation. So they were totally rejected by the Christianity. And in that

they have been, effort, effortlessly tried to be forgotten or eliminated by them in the minds of our people. But they didn't work. It's still work today, it's still believed today, the pastaahowin still works, we know that for sure and maachistaahowin, it still works. But we just don't recognize it. That's the difference. Even though it has been condemned as a demon's or, or evil beliefs and practice, it is still work today. So that's the difference between the two words.

So when the European came and brought, brought their ways of fur trade, it has destroy one thing, that was a proper conservation and the respect of the animals and the earth's total environment. Three things were distracted by the fur trade. And the Christianity destroyed the traditional belief and practices, which were spiritual in nature. So now we partially answered the question of the hunter and the, and the spiritual relationship to the animal. Why it was so believed so. It works then and it still works today, only in a terminology, different culture. And therefore, when the fur trade began, the traditional belief and practice of conservation and the respect for animals were eliminated. Ever since the trap line have started, there were times when the animal population has been over killed by the First Nation because of the demand of the fur and mostly, I guess, for the greed. So, in short, that's how the fur trade impact the traditional, First Nation traditional belief and practices.

And so same applied to when the Christianity arrived, the Christianity eliminated the traditional, First Nation traditional beliefs and practices. All the spiritual ideas were, were, were condemned and eliminated by nineteen hundred and fifty, thereabouts. There are still some of us who believe some of those things. So two levels of things, like the fur trade and the Christianity have totally eliminated, almost totally eliminate the First Nation culture, education system and beliefs and practices. Especially on the spiritual part, which was condemned to evil by the Christianity.

One other thing that has been happening then, all those that are were, were in line of code of ethics, that were there in the minds, in the minds and beliefs of people have been distorted and been sort of erased in the minds of the new generations. For example, there are other things like this, for example the way the traditional teaching was that the women should respect the, the food items, especially when people used to believe when

the women has the monthly period, that she should not over step the animal, or even the food that is going to be prepared for food, all this idea, which was more like taboo, taboo, well, that has been eliminated, ever since the European came. Not the first three hundred years. Especially the last fifty years. This idea of a woman having her period during the month that she is not to step over anything, that is not at all applicable.

And a second, the other one is when people used to believe, when people used to have the teaching that you shall not kill something that you cannot use all and that you should not kill excessively the animal, unless you could use it all and that when a person abused the animal, that, that shaking tent was used to ask the animal to come in and tell why he has not allowed to be killed and that confession, or that declaration of doing wrong was required. And then this shaking tent was a sort of mental, where the spirit lives in the mind of person, was in nature in nature of spiritual connection. And to do just, to have just, or to reveal the wrongdoing was partially use of the shaking tent to accomplish that. And therefore the harmony was restored, in the minds of people and the animal. That is the spiritual connection that the human and animal, and that also was discarded by the Christianity, by condemning the use and application of shaking tent.

So these were the items that has been eliminated by the arrival of the European and their ways and their culture. It has discarded the First Nation beliefs and practices in respect to the human relation to animal, and also destroyed the respect of the animal by over-killing the population of fur-bearing animals. And also distorted, or distracted, or disregard the First Nation education system and most importantly distorted, distorted the belief and the principles, our cultural beliefs and practices and the well established, the code of ethics of the First Nation of Omushkego, the practices, the First Nation practices, especially the Omushkegowuk, in which they believe in respect to animals.

They used to believe that the Creator, or the Great Spirit who have created everything, have given those animals for their survival. And in that they respect the animal, not worship the animal, but to respect the animal for giving its life for them. And therefore they paint the provider of the animal, who have created everything, and wherever they have been, wherever they have killed the animal, they, they would give a sign to a place where they have killed an animal. And when they have a first meal of the

animal, they would thank the Great Spirit for his provision for their survival. And whenever the hunter brought the food into a camp where there is a family are , whenever the first meal is to be received in the, in the family unit, the elder would give thanks to the Creator, bless the food in the name of the Great Spirit and thank for all who received it. And at the same time they would thank the animal who have give its life for their survival, for their life. And that is how the old culture spiritual belief and practices were carried out, of the Omushkego people.

When our First Nation Omushkegowuk pray, they thank the animal that gave its life for them, they also thank the Creator of life of all living species on earth, for example the animals they get to eat, all kinds, the birds and the fish. And also they thank the Creator who have created of all things for their abundance, for their survival. They have called this being the Giver of Life, the Giver of Life. Sometimes they call it “Kaatipenchiket”, it means "The Lord". “Kaaohchipiimaatisiyet” is the word for the Giver of Life. And it is this Great Spirit whom they are talking about. And when they thank him, they thank the animal also that give its life. This belief and practice was supposed to be spiritually holy, it was not evil for them. They believed this practice was very holy. While they practiced this belief, they always remember it is the Creator, it is the Great Spirit who provide everything.

And whenever, wherever they had been provided the food in the wilderness, our people have always give a sign of respect by hanging a part of the animal bone. Most of the time it is the skull of the animal. They would hang it there where they have been given this food. And they thank the provider of the food, the animal and the creation, the Creator of animal, which is the Giver of Life, Kaaohchipiimaatisiyet, and that is what they believe. And every time when they give, they give sign to where they have been given the food, they hang some bones, not to worship the animal, but to thank the Creator of animal, and to thank him in the place in the wilderness where they have been provided for them to survive.

This was their practice. And therefore that is how the hunter have spiritual relationship to the animal he hunts. And this was a very principal beliefs which has been practiced by the most First Nations in this land. The hunter and their tribes, the elders

teach that. This is their teaching to their children. And those to be hunters, they were trained to think this way, to know that the animals they hunted are free. They are not, they are not, the animals are not theirs, no. Animals are there for their provision by the Creator, and this is what they believe. So, their practice, it stem from watching the animals. The animals themselves, for example the wolf, is a predator for animals. He doesn't kill randomly, he doesn't kill the animals for no purpose. He kills the animals for, to eat. So our First Nation Cree people have believed that all the animals must be respected, because they provide life for them, for the human.

And by seeing the animals the way they act, by killing only the animals they want to eat, and by eating every part of the animals in which they can eat, or digest, by watching that, they know how to respect the animal. By watching the, the, the birds. The birds of prey who catch the other birds to, to eat, they kill and they eat it all. They just don't simply kill for nothing. And when they watched the fish, the fish who eat fish, the fish grab the fish and swallow it whole, do not discard anything, not even the bones, they're all digested. All this observation by nature, watching the animals and birds and fish and everything, the First Nation people began obtain their education from the nature and from creation, and also the Creator, and therefore respect everything that has been created by, by the Creator in which they call the "Great Spirit" and the "Provider of Life" and "the Lord," "Kaaohchipiimaatisiyet."

They said "the Lord over our life." These words were not used randomly, or they were not used like everyday language. You do not say "the Provider of Life," you don't call a human person "the Lord over Life." No, you do not call that to a human, only applies to the Creator, the Great Spirit is God, and the Great Spirit is as highly regarded as we like to say "The Eternal God." That's their belief. Our ancestors believe that. This is how they, this is how they believe. This is how they practice, our Omushkego First Nation. They respect for the total environment, for the sake of the creator. It's the highest form of belief and worship for them. And they have practiced. This is the most highly regarded the code of ethics. One of the ethics that I have mentioned, respect the animals, respect the environment, respect the animal for the sake of the Creator, the Great Spirit, the Giver of Life, the Lord of Everything, these were the, these were the most important

teaching in our First Nations. I did not know these things myself. I did not know these things personally. I have heard these stories and wisdom from our elders, those who have lived in my time. I give all the credit to their stories and their knowledge and their wisdom. I pass on them to you. And that is the end of my story. I hope you will understand. If you do not understand part of this recording, please contact me and I will try to explain. Thank you very much, bye bye.