

Title: 0131-Our Voices-Mystery Stories 2
Bird Number: 010102
Recorder: Louis Bird
Date Recorded: February 1, 2002
Transcriber: Jenn Orr
Date Transcribed: March 10, 2003
Language: English
Culture: Cree (Omushkego)
Transcript: Proof

Hello, hello. This is Louis Bird again. This is the tape number two, and today is January 21, the year 2002. Actually, it is already the February 1, fifteen minutes after 12 a.m. February 1. And now, on the first tape, I have talked about many things to try to prepare for what I am talking about. But I want to repeat myself a little bit, at this beginning. To make sure we, I did not left out anything. I, my topics were the first nation mysteries. The things that they experience which mystify them, and sometimes even fear them. And scare them. And sometimes, they didn't have no explanation. And simply accept it as it is. The mystery.

And therefore, I was beginning to try to explain what I think myself, may have happen. Or maybe something that is still happening today. But I also want to include some of the things that were, that has been continuously mystified people. Things that are, that happened to them. Our first nation Omuskego had believe -some of them- who have practice traditional belief, spiritual beliefs and practices. They have, they have had the idea of immortality (immortality). Means, without the dying. Living for a long time. And also seek ways for someone to live for long time or forever.

Many people who have became a mitew have caught themself off guard and sometimes so unexpectedly and, and tragically lost their life by the mistakes they made. And also sometimes so disappointedly die without ever achieving what they want. There is one story about recently that has happened. That was not very long ago. It is mentioned that there was, it may have been after the European came. Because this person seems to have had acquired the firearm. Or a gun. Or, we used to call it fire sticks. Or thunder sticks.

And, and apparently this person tells a story but actually he was not, he was not... It's a story about a person who live his fantasy. Or, tells his fantasy to a young, a young

people. Actually, in actual living, this person has never been anything. He's one of those type of people which you call "never amount to anything". But may perhaps everyone that lives like that on earth wanted to be something. To be it amount to something. Or to be like the other people. Sometimes this, somehow this particular person have lived his life without any accomplishing his wishes or hopes to be what he likes to be. And, at least live it in his fantasy. And was able to enjoy it by telling the youngsters that he was such a person.

And so there in that story there is a thing about, we have mentioned a while ago by some, some people, who try to explain about things. About life, that is not supposed to die. And not supposed to end, but continue on existing somewhere. It's all about this story. And this person tells a story to the children sitting inside the lean-to, while the rest of the people were making a tipi for the night. And he was asked to sit by the fireplace with the children because by this time he was an old man. Very old. Perhaps we can say useless old man.

At least he was good in keeping the children occupied when everybody else work. So the children used to love to listen to his stories. And it was one of those stories that he told about him, once upon a time that he was very powerful shaman. And that he was very wealthy, and he has many things. And he has possession. And he had anything that he wants almost. And of course he was, mostly that he was a powerful shaman and he was able to do anything.

And, there in his story, he tells a story about that he had died. Somehow, he had died, when he was a single person, living with his uncle, whom he called the blue-haired uncle. And his parents have died, but his uncle had adopt him. Adopted him. And he raised by him, and teach him as a son and everything. And also, the same time had acquired the most powerful shaman being. That he begin to be the most powerful shaman. And that nothing cannot, that he cannot do.

But unfortunately he died, one day, as still a young person, and he was a very successful young man. He was almost in the age of to be married. And he died, while he was out on his hunting ground with his uncle. And that he was buried, customary burial process. Procedures. And that is to say, where they were camping during the winter, where he died, they buried him right into the camp. Right under the fireplace. Where the

ground was thawed out and was able to chop a hole into the ground. And there, his uncle have created a -how do they call this? Structure, that people used to create, to keep their items in, so that the animals will not dig up or take away.

We used to call it paatakwaaskwahigan. Paatakwaaskwahigan It means, laying the logs in such a way as to create upside-down box. Meaning there's a hole at the bottom, no planking. But, four walls and a, and the top. Just like the box without the bottom. So that's paatakwaaskwahigan mean. It's just to keep the animals away from eating something within, or break something within. And the ground they, they could not dig anyway because it's frozen. This was usually done in the winter-time.

So this is kind of a burial, burial place that he was buried in. And it was left there after they buried him. When they find out that he had died. And so there he was. He says, "I just went to sleep one evening, I thought I just went to sleep. And it was later that I know, that I have been dead. I thought I just went to sleep. And then all of a sudden with," he says, "But because of my power, I was able to wake myself up. And when I come to I was like waking up at night. And that I was totally covered. My blanket was around me, and both side of me there was, there was some people sleeping behind me. Beside me and in front of me. And I tried to push my way, push a side away."

But the thing is, apparently, according to some stories, that he had the wives. He had more than two wives. And that usually he went to bed between the two. And this is the way he thought he was waking up. Having those two people sitting beside him. And try to push them away, and they couldn't budge. And then as he fully awake and he says, "I begin to feel that you know, there was a hard substance in my right, into my left, give the heave, nothing budge. And finally I was gonna get up, lift my head, and then I banged my head into the board of logs. And then that's when I realize that I have been put in, into this paatakwaaskwahigan. Because I have been dead.

"So it was then that I thought, 'this is cannot be.' And so, I finally with my full strength, I just lift off the top covering and then throw out the rest of the stuff away from me, and get up. And, by this time I got up. It was, there were lots of snow in, there has been lot of snowing. And, where I was buried has been covered quite a bit of snow, and the trail of my uncle is very, very old. Barely seen. And that I was left behind. And

that, according to the burial procedures that my snowshoes were there, and my, my gun was beside me, and my axe was inside there, and then my snowshoes are standing beside me. And then my toboggan was there too. And in my box where I got up from my coffin, my blanket was there, my, my rabbit sleeping bag was there, and all my clothing was buried with me, had been buried with me. And everything that I own was been placed beside me. For according to our custom, our belief that a dead person need those things in the next journey after life. And for that reason all my stuff were around me, so when I got up, I just have to pick up my stuff and go on living.”

So, there is part of that story that tells us the way people believe in those days. That they believe there is a life after death and there is a resurrection. That a body can get up again and live again. But unfortunately, this man did not get up in the other world, but he got up in the same world. And by his own power. To resurrect himself. Because he was a powerful mitew.

But of course this is all in fantasy. This was an old man who was useless, and totally nothing during his lifetime. But his stories were so fascinating amongst the children that they never forget that. And they really enjoyed his stories. And apparently they really never forgot about it, and tell it to their children. And, we tie it on. But the important thing about the stories, that you know, there was this idea of life continues on. That there is a possibility to have a resurrection. And that, that is one thing that we, we understand there.

So therefore our first nation, our first nation Omuskego believed life after death. And also they believed that a person who have the shaman power usually can extend it's life for quite some time, if it's possible. But none has ever been found to live forever. All no matter how powerful shaman they might be, have been found that they die somehow, some way. Same way as the rest of the people.

And so, this guy, which has no name at all, tells a story on and on what happened to him after that. But we are not going to tell it all today. We are just going to leave it there. Because I am tired now, because half-hour since I begin. I will now call it a night for the time being. Hopefully, I'm gonna get up in the morning and add some more of this recording before I take it back to George. Thank you for listening.

[End of Tape]

