

DECOLONIZING AND RECLAIMING
TSILHQOTIN IDENTITY THROUGH STORY-TELLING

by

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Purpose:

The purpose of this major paper is to create an instructional resource for teachers that will help encourage students to reclaim their Tsilhqotin/Chilcotin identity through stories in the Tsilhqotin/Chilcotin language. It is intended to help the teachers better understand their Tsilhqotin identity and become more aware of their surroundings, heritage and land base thus providing a greater opportunity for successful teaching especially in regard to meeting the needs of Tsilhqotin students. This resource allows the teacher to have a greater understanding of students and the territories that they are from and in doing so bring this knowledge and awareness into the classroom. A teacher who knows a bit about the background and is able to say a few words in the Tsilhqotin/Chilcotin language reflects an open-minded and effective educator. The teacher provides a learning community with greater comfort and trust, which, ultimately will enhance student's performance and promote a family oriented environment.

My Life Path

The focus of the instructional resource is on the knowledge and language of my community, Tsilhqotin/Chilcotin, which is from the Athapaskan Linguistic family. The Tletinqotin First Nation is located in the Cariboo Chilcotin of British Columbia. English is my second language and was introduced to me at the Chilcotin Indian Day School from 1968 to 1975. The school was operated by nuns from the Catholic religion. The school had policies focused on assimilation, which is common to the many residential schools across Canada. This specific policy did not allow students to speak their language. I continued my education at St. Joseph's Mission Residential School located near Williams Lake, BC. It was approximately 160 kilometers away from my home. The residential school was not much

different from the day school that I attended; the focus on assimilation was the same and students were not allowed to speak their language. At this time, older students in junior and senior high schools were bussed to nearby Williams Lake to attend public school. I continued my schooling over the years from adult upgrading to undergraduate and then currently to the graduate level at the University of British Columbia.

I feel that I have plenty of experience in the Provincial schools. I am fortunate to say that my experience was positive even though there were many obstacles along the way. I hope to speak on behalf of my people in a respectful and thoughtful manner. As an educator, I continue to witness colonization and assimilation of First Nations people through many outside influences as well as the hidden school curriculum. These influences are in conflict with the ways of our ancestors and interfere with Tsilhqotin/Chilcotin identity. In order to re-introduce the ways of our ancestors, it is necessary to teach and speak to them in their language at all times. Additionally, it is important to have them learn the history of colonialism, imperialism and capitalism, and at the same time introduce them to the original approach of their ancestor's teachings. This can be done through storytelling, dancing, singing, and drama. The language must be spoken to students at all times so that they can get used to listening and eventually to speaking.

I want to acknowledge my ancestors and elders that provided guidance and teachings with regard to my understanding of the stories and language and recognize those that have walked on: Great-Great-Grandmother, Tudud. Grandmother, Mabel Alphonse (The Lady Who Turned to Stone); Grandfather, Charlie Alphonse (Bull Canyon Squirmish); Tsilhqotin Elder, Donald Stump (Story of the Salmon Boy); Tsilhqotin Elder, Helena Myers (How the Owl Stole a Baby); Father, Tsilhqotin Elder, Raymond Alphonse (Raven Obtains Fire)

Introduction:

The Tsilhqotin/Chilcotin language is diminishing and it will eventually become extinct, unless the language is kept alive within the community. This is of great concern to those that are fluent speakers of the language and also community members of the Tsilhqotin/Chilcotin in the Cariboo Chilcotin of British Columbia. Currently Tsilhqotin people in the mid-life age bracket are fluent speakers. It is the newer/younger generation children who are in jeopardy of losing the language over time. Many are at the 50/50 range: therefore, they are only partially fluent or can understand their language, but are unable to speak it. Presently, in the classroom where the language is taught, instruction tends to follow the Provincial curriculum and does little for Tsilhqotin students. The focus on Tsilhqotin/Chilcotin language is directed toward too much paper work and not enough talking. Originally, the language was taught and spoken orally with no written assignments. This was done through storytelling, singing, dancing, or drama where one would act out the story while translating or communicating to the audience. Everything was done and spoken in the language from first contact between the student and teacher. The Provincial curriculum does not focus on Tsilhqotin language in the classroom, learning is focused on and directed in the English language. Students leave the classroom without learning many words in the Tsilhqotin language. Attendance problems occur such as making excuses to skip class or do things other than learn the language. This Euro-centric approach devalues the language and the traditional approaches to language learning. It is important to keep the language alive. The Tsilhqotin/Chilcotin have been under external control for the past 150 years or more. Many elders have been influenced by mainstream society and have experienced assimilation. Social pressures create the process of accepting the mainstream

value system. “I go to church to socialize and out of boredom, I do not necessarily go to pray, it is not our way” (Alphonse, 1990). This is the case for many First Nation community members. They know it is not their way and would like to be given the opportunity to be reintroduced to the familiar teachings of their people instead of the dominant foreign influence, which continues to hold strong like glue. This instructional resource and lessons are an attempt to bring back some of the old history and identity of the Tsilhqotin peoples. Once introduced in the schools, it is anticipated that the community will also make an attempt to follow the approach or at least be interested in getting more information. Some community members, elders, and scholars are already working for this kind of change. There are youth that are excited about having their language and connection to culture re-established and about being able to speak the language of their ancestors in their own community. Students feel much closer to the culture through the introduction of their language through stories, storytelling, song and dance. These resources provide a way of bringing back the tradition of oral history with which the people are very familiar. The translation in English as part of this project is necessary for those that do not speak the language such as teachers or other community members. The stories shared as part of this work mention the philosophy of the Tsilhqotin/Chilcotin and how they continue in their everyday life as human beings in the traditional lands. Without the Tsilhqotin language there will be no connection to the land: the language will become less and less important since many place names and stories are told in relation to the land. The Tsilhqotin language and land go together, it is essential to also include the spiritual connection. Many First Nations languages are irreplaceable resources that require protection and support. It is important to move toward official status of First Nation languages in Canada, constitutional

recognition, and the accompanying legislative protection. In addition, provincial and federal schools can provide credit within the school system for First Nation language study (Battiste, 2000, p. 203). Battiste indicates that without the language, there is a disconnection to the land and history. The community is very aware of the importance of language revitalization and elders gather each week with the youth and do things like arts, crafts, beadwork and feasts, while the language is spoken fluently. By maintaining the language, there will be continued ties to the land, culture and history. Continued legal battles in the courts must address the use of First Nations language.

Story-telling Approaches in the Classroom

The five stories addressed here are from the Tsilhqotin/Chilcotin people. The instruction can vary; however, students have to sit and listen without taking notes and to comprehend as much as they can. Specific objectives and follow-up activities are included with each story, but in general, the idea is to read the stories to an audience first in English then in Tsilhqotin/Chilcotin. It is my belief that, the students will learn by listening to how the story evolved or if there is a lesson to be learned. Through the follow-up activities, they will have plenty of opportunities to deconstruct the stories, or use their imagination and come up with new ideas. The teachers can either have a discussion afterwards or re-tell the story and have them act it out or make a song from the story.

The students can answer questions such as where did the story take place, was it from a male or female, how many characters were involved, was it teaching a moral lesson, was it happy or courageous and so on. It depends on the teacher as to how they would like to introduce the stories. They can distribute it in different ways as appropriate to students in different grade levels. A teacher can say some words in the original language especially

those that are repeated in the story to make the students familiar with some of the reoccurring vocabulary. By listening and repetition they will remember some of this vocabulary after the story is read. Some students will have already heard it from their household family storytelling making it easier for them and more meaningful for their peers especially if the teacher has the student who is familiar with the story share about how they know it with the rest of their class. All in all, these activities are designed to make students practice the art of oral tradition. Teachers can have the story on an overhead for everyone to see so that it becomes familiar. It is easier to point out a word as well.

Another exercise that will benefit the students is to have them tell the story to each other in the best possible way they can without help from the reading. This will help in practicing oral history. Perhaps, the students would be introduced to cues on how to remember a story and small techniques to tell a story. This would depend on the age of the audience. Their homework could be to tell the story to their family at home and then retell it again the next day in class either orally or through a recorded video.

An important message for the teacher is that, storytelling has to be fun; they have to be creative and interesting to encourage learning. It is possible that non-Tsilhqotin/Chilcotin teachers might find it a challenge. They have to remember that if a student finds their teacher interested in them and their background, they will have a different approach and will likely be more motivated to learn further. So, it has positive benefits. One of the policies that we came up with earlier in our community was for a teacher to learn or do a brief study of the Nations history or learn a few words in the local language before they started teaching at the Reserve School. We found many have little knowledge and did not understand the student's family lifestyle. For example: during the

summer and towards the late fall, many students are out with their families hunting and gathering for the winter months.

Fishing is also done later depending on whether one prefers a “fat/rich” or “lean” fish. Without knowing this history, a teacher may not understand and mark students down as absent and as having missed school. It is a great honour for students to tell the story learned by their people in their communities. Field trips are one way to encourage a greater story sharing for the students and teachers, especially, when one approaches families in the camps where they fish or hunt. Even better is to have community members participate and tell stories during the camp visit. The idea is to bring back the history, culture and identity of the students so that it becomes familiar. Another way is to teach and identify where foreign religion came from. They have to be introduced to Colonial Institutions and what they are about.

As an example: use a timeline from the Tsilhqotin/Chilcotin and European history and determine the similarities and differences. And then, instruct how important the language, land, culture was and still is to the Tsilhqotin/Chilcotin since, time immemorial. Sharing the five stories is one method of creating this awareness of our people to be proud of who they are as Tsilhqotins/Chilcotins.

Background

The stories that are shared as part of this project are from the Tsilhqotin/Chilcotin Nation originally from the interior of British Columbia in the Cariboo Chilcotin. They come from the Athapaskan Linguistic Family. They have been living in the area prior to European contact, which was approximately, 150 years ago. It has been recorded that they lived there since time immemorial. The stories are from the original people and have been passed

down from generation to generation. As is always the case with most languages: the translation to English is not the same as it would be if the stories were told orally in the original language. A few of these stories are from my late grandmother who was the descendant of one of the powerful female matriarch, Tudud. Tudud was my great-great-grandmother. The name translates into: “waiting for water”; she was considered similar to the “Queen Bee” of the nation and many protected her from any misunderstanding or conflicts. Everything and everyone had to abide by her policy. The nation was also known as a warring nation. As a result, she often lost a husband due to wars and conflicts with other nations. She was kept in the dark or had a “low profile” in order to be protected. This rule was in place until the colonizers arrived. After that, matriarchy was taboo and patriarchy became the dominant rule. An elder once said after witnessing the women leading and in control during a feast/gathering, “It is good to see the females leading again, this is the way it was and no wonder we are lost today with all the males trying to lead. They need to go back in time and reorganize in order for us to go on the right path” (Petal, 1988).

There was a time and a place for storytelling within the nation. Originally, it was done mostly during the winter months and during the later hours of the night after supper. The very old (sadanx) stories were told at a certain time and not just, anytime. There is a protocol that is in place for different stories. For example, if one tells an old (sadanx) story during daytime when it was not appropriate, that person would be warned, “Be careful, you might go blind talking about the old history”. It was all that the person needed to hear and they immediately quit! There are also other protocols that existed within the community; it depended on what the story is based on. Normally, a non-Tsilhqotin/Chilcotin would not

have a clue unless instructed.

There are many different ways to deliver the stories depending on the age group. One way is to read it in English and then Tsilhqotin/Chilcotin. It is important for the students to listen verbally whether they fluent or not. The more they hear the better. Another way might be through a cartoon and have the English captions at the bottom. Although it takes time to make a video but in the modern world this type of learning is also common and works for all ages. Many of the stories that I will share as part of this project were told and introduced to me when I was a young boy. Personally, it is exciting for me since I am the storyteller rather than the listener. My goal is to pass on these stories to the young to be utilized as a tool that will continue to educate and make them aware of who they are as Tsilhqotin/Chilcotin.

The stories are based on events that happened in the life of the Tsilhqotin/Chilcotin. The stories may have an introductory lesson or it may be up to the audience to determine what the story is about. The stories encourage them to visualize and be aware of the land and the nation's world in it: therefore, reinforcing the historical consciousness of a student knowing that their people have been here and continue their existence.

The story about the Salmon Boy is to teach about the salmon and how the cycle works in the salmon world. Without this story, one is not aware of how the salmon exists. Transformation is positive; it teaches and reminds them that it is not just the environment capable of this action. This story is good for all ages, it teaches them to respect the salmon and how they migrate to spawn and how they came into the world. It also teaches them about respect.

The other story about, The Lady Who Turned into Stone is a lesson to respect

someone who had her first menstruation. The flow of the person is powerful and strong. If not careful, mishaps can happen throughout the universe. During their first menstruation women are highly recognized and considered closest to the spirits and considered have the powers to do almost magical spiritual feats. The ability to have children is in a sense the most powerful gift given by the creator. The energy of these women is at the highest during times such as when they are giving birth, therefore, respect is regarded towards them.

The other stories are similar in nature. They appear almost mythical to the unfamiliar audience. Many of the events are teachings/lessons that happened. Some are hard to explain in English but nevertheless represent the original people where the stories took place.

An additional process of authentication was included at the conclusion of documenting these stories. Community members and elders Patsy Grinder and Linda Myers Smith were contacted to listen to the recorded stories.

Stories from the Tsilhqotin:

THE LADY WHO TURNED INTO STONE

This link will provide a download of the story in Tsilhqotin language (Alphonse, 2012)

<http://yourlisten.com/channel/content/124093/LadyTurnedtoStone>

During a girl's first menstruation, a long time ago, she went off alone for about three days or so under the guidance of a mentor, who was usually an older person like an Aunty. She went alone, without seeing or talking with anyone. It was that time, for this particular young lady. She went down to the river to get a drink of water. In those days, there were no modern cups, so, she was drinking water out of a handmade basket made of birch. She was to drink only a certain amount of water.

A young man followed her down to the river. Males were not allowed to be around them especially young and curious; it was powerful for a girl at a time like that. A women's blood flow is precious and powerful, if not careful, one could damage others or self. Suddenly, she saw this young man and in disbelief. To protect him and herself; she turned away from him and turned into stone.

Today, she can be seen standing at the edge of a hill overlooking the Tsilhqotin River. In modern day, many use her stone figure as a pilgrimage. If you are ill or other related conditions, you are allowed to ask her for help, simply by asking: "Etsu (Grandmother), please help me as I am sick". Continue and rub a cloth all over your body and then place it anywhere below or in between the rock. It is a belief that is powerful and cures the sick. Story by: Great-Great-Grandmother, Tudud. Grandmother, Mabel Alphonse told it in 1979.

Discussion:

The story is about a young women's menstruation and the power they have during those times, the fact that they can have babies to make new life makes them that much more powerful. The women are respected and people are to be careful around them when they are menstruating. It is similar to them having a connection to the spirits within the outer world. The story takes place in the Tsilhqotin/Chilcotin land. The connection between normal and the spiritual life of a human being is important. One has to have a connection with Mother Earth and all life within it. It appears somewhat like working with the spirits who are no longer there but somehow continue to exist in different forms within the community.

Questions:

1. Where did it take place and what was the name of the river?
2. What was the reason she went to the river?

3. What is meant by respect in this story?
4. Is the lady who turned to stone still in existence?
5. Was there a lesson or advice in the story?

Vocabulary: Menstruation, Pilgrimage, Etsu (Grandmother), Tsilhqotin (River people)

BULL CANYON SQUIRMISH

This link will provide a download of the story in Tsilhqotin language (Alphonse, 2012)

http://yourlisten.com/channel/content/124092/Bull_Canyon?rn=v20hdlek85j4

The Chilcotins had many Chiefs; they had chiefs for different areas and each had their own group who united when needed. In the case at Bull Canyon, only one Chief was necessary. Chief Anaham and his group were invaded on top of Bull Canyon in the heart of the Chilcotin, a place where it overlooks many kilometers on either side and has a drop of 300-400 meters to the bottom.

The old Chief and his people roamed freely in their territories. They wandered up and down the Chilcotin River fishing in many of the lakes in the region. They prepared and gathered plenty of meat for the winter. As a warring nation, it was not uncommon for different tribes of Indians to war against the Chilcotin Chief Anaham and the nation. It is understood; they were never defeated. One time the Stoney Creek Indians (Carrier) sneaked into the Chilcotin country to have a war against Anaham. One man was going from his camp to another camp along the river. Going by Bull Canyon near the Chilcotin River he saw a light, which looked like someone lighting a smoke. This man knew right away that somebody came to disturb the Chilcotins. So, he went up to the top of the hill and crept in amongst them and these people smoked out of one pipe taking turns. This Chilcotin was undetected and the Stoney Creek people gave him the pipe to smoke. Later, the Chilcotin left the people without notice. Then this man told the Chilcotin

Chief Anaham and his people everything he had witnessed.

The Stoney Creek people were at the highest cliff at Bull Canyon where they could see and view all the different camps, below. When Chief Anaham heard the story he sent some men to notify all the different camps to come and meet at his place. After the people arrived at Anaham's, they talked and decided to deal with their enemies by going to the top of Bull Canyon to surround them. When the Stoney Creek people noticed they were overtaken by surprise and in dismay of being surrounded. The Stoney's jumped to their death from the cliff and the rest were killed, except, for one man who upon stepping over turned into a feather and landed softly on the ground below. The Chilcotin's recognized that this man was a powerful 'deyan' (medicine man). Warriors immediately started to run after him until one of the Chilcotin Deyan (medicine man) halted and told them to leave him. "Let him go and tell his people what has happened here and he will die soon after the message is given". Sure enough, as soon as the message was delivered to his people, the Stoney warrior died. In the old days, people fought in many different ways, it was not always physical but with spiritual powers or transformations that made them unpredictable. (Alphonse. 1970)

Discussion:

The theme of this story is to protect, defend, and respect spiritual powers. Wars are not only fought, physically. It is about the land and how precious it is to them and they are willing to do whatever it takes to protect it from invaders. The people are connected and are willing to work together to protect themselves and the territories that belong to them.

Questions/Activities:

1. Have the students write a short story about what they would do in this situation.
2. Who are the Chilcotins?

3. What area/geography are they from?
4. Can you draw the location/scene?
5. How high is 300 meters?
6. What is a feather, what would it look like when dropped down the cliff?
7. What is a Deyan?
8. Discuss or describe how one can turn into a feather.
9. What is a chief?
10. What was the reason for not killing the Stoney warrior after landing?
11. Who are the Stoney?

Vocabulary: Bull Canyon, Chilcotin, Stoney, Deyan, Anaham, Unpredictable, Feather, Invader, Spiritual, and Transformation

STORY OF THE SALMON BOY

This link will provide a download of the story in Tsilhqotin language (Alphonse, 2012)
<http://yourlisten.com/channel/content/124096/SalmonBoy?rn=wv6jba650ef4>

Once a lot of boys were playing on the bank of the river; one of them, seeing a piece of ice drifting by, jumped on it and floated away downstream. The others tried to rescue him, but could not; he was carried down nearly to the salt water, where he came ashore at a large village. In the open space of the village a number of young men were playing. He went up to a house, in front of which sat an old woman weaving a basket, and asked for food. The woman pointed to one of the boys playing about, and told him to kill him and eat him, for he was really a fish in human form. He did so, and when he had finished, the old woman told him to throw the bones back into the water. The eyes had not been cooked, but had been thrown out on the ground. As soon as the bones touched the water, the fish boy came to life again; but he had no eyes, and

came groping up to the old woman, crying because he could not see. The woman gave the fish boy his eyes, and told him to swallow them and they would come back all right. He did so, and had his eyes again.

The old woman told the boy who had come down the river that very soon all the people would turn into salmon and would go upstream. And before long he saw all the fish boys making hooks of wood, which he found were to hold them from being swept back when they got into rapid water. After a while they all turned into salmon, the boy who came to the village as well and they all started upstream. Every year at salmon-time the boy's father used to make a salmon-trap; and as he approached the place where his father usually placed it, the boy thought "Oh, if my father would only catch me, and then if my sister could take me up to the house!" And, sure enough his father did catch him, and his sister carried him up and hung him on a tree; and very soon he turned to human form again, and went toward his mother's lodge. He met his sister outside, and told her to go and tell his mother to come and comb his head. But when she did so, the mother was angry, and said that her son had died the year before, and she beat the girl for telling a lie. At last the girl persuaded her to go see. She went out and found her son, and was glad, and began to comb his head. Now, the boy's head had been bald after he became a salmon; but as soon as his mother combed it, his hair grew out long and beautiful, and hung down on his shoulders.

One day the boy went out to hunt ducks, and took his sister along. On the way he asked her what had become of his brothers, and she told him that they had gone up to the sun to get wives, and had died there. He killed many ducks, and, having plucked the feathers and made a pile of them, he lay down on it, and told his sister to blow. She did so, and the feathers floated up into the sky carrying the boy with them. The girl went home and told what had happened, and

her father was very angry.

When the boy arrived in the sky country, he saw a village, and, going to the house of an old woman, he asked if she had seen his brothers. The woman told him that his brothers had come to the village, but not to her house, and that the Sun had killed them all; but that he should come into her house, and he would be safe, and she would tell him what he must do. So he went in, and the old woman gave him a piece of porcupine-gut and a piece of beaver-gut; and in the porcupine-gut was cold, and in the beaver-gut was heat; and, taking these with him, the boy went out to see the Sun. The Sun had an iron sweat-house into which he used to put men so that they could not get away, and then he would kill them. As soon as the Sun saw the boy, he seized him and put him into the sweat-house, and then heated it very hot. But the boy took the porcupine-gut and opened it a little, and the place became cool. Next the Sun made the sweat-house icy cold; but the boy opened the beaver-gut a little way, and it became warm. Now, the Sun who knew nothing of this, thought that the boy must surely be dead, and told his daughter to go and clear the bones from the sweat-house. When she came, she found the boy alive, and brought him back to the house; and when he came in, he was laughing. The Sun asked him why he was laughing, and he said because of the fun he had rolling the skulls about in the sweat-house. Then the Sun shook his head, and said he was a very clever boy, and the boy went back to the old woman's house.

The next day the Sun went down to the shore of the lake to gather firewood, and the boy and the old woman came to the place where he was working. Now, the Sun was splitting wood with a stone axe, and, as he was chopping at a tree which grew out over the water, the head of the axe flew off and fell into the lake, and sank, and he told the boy to dive down after it. He did so, but, when he started to come up again, he could not, for the Sun had placed two nettings

at different levels in the water, so that he could not get through. But the old woman had warned the boy of what could happen, and had given him two charms. And so, when he came to the first netting; he took one charm and turned himself into a small fish and slipped through; and when he came to the second netting, which was finer, he turned himself into a hair and came through, and brought the axe to the shore. Now, the Sun, thinking that the boy had surely drowned, had gone to his house. So the boy followed him, and gave him back his stone axe. Then the Sun shook his head, and said he was a very clever boy.

The boy went again to the old woman's house and gave her back the charms, and told her that the Sun had said that there were two grizzly bears near his house, and had given him arrows, and told him to go and kill the bears. He showed her the arrows, and they were bad arrows made of soft bark. So the old woman gave him good stone arrows, and he went out and killed both the bears, and cut off a foot from each. Now, the bears were the Sun's two daughters. And when the boy came to the Sun's house and showed him the feet, the Sun was angry, and cried, "Oh, you have killed my daughters!" But he was able to bring them to life again.

When the boy went back to the old woman's house, she told him that he was in great danger, that the Sun would take him out to hunt mountain-sheep, and while they were hunting would push him over a precipice. And she gave him a charm, and told him what he must do. The next day they went out after the mountain sheep, and after a while the Sun looked over the edge of a cliff and saw a band of sheep, and called to the boy to come and see them too. And as he reached the ground, he turned into a flying squirrel, and came down softly. And when he came back the Sun shook his head, and said he was a very clever boy.

The next day the Sun said. "I wonder which of us is the better at making rain?" and the boy answered, "You try first and we'll see." So the Sun tried, but could only make a little. Then

the boy, for the old woman had told him how, made a great rain and it poured down on the Sun's head and cracked it all over, until he cried, "That's enough! If you will stop, you can have my two daughters." So they went back to the house, and the boy got both the girls as wives. The next day the boy started back for his home, and his two wives with him, but he forgot to go and thank the old woman who had helped him. Just after they had started, the Sun called them back and gave them fire to take with them. Finally they came to the boy's house, and he left the women a little way off, and told them to wait while he went in ahead. Soon his sister and he came out to fetch them; but when they came to the place, the fire surrounded the women, so that they could not get near them, and the women went back to their father the Sun. And so the boy lost his wives because he had forgotten to thank the old woman who had helped him (Stump, 1997)

Discussion:

The theme is to have respect, listen, obey, and be aware of the universe and the power within. Through a transformation, it tells about the cycle of a salmon through a human: in this case, a boy. The young man lives in a world under guidance with different lessons, instructions, powers, which comes from a human, animal, spirit or a higher power (creator).

Questions/Activities:

1. Have students make a comic book that includes sketches, drawings and paintings with Tsilhqotin/Chilcotin captions and also in English.
2. Who was the boy and where did he come from?
3. How did he arrive near the salt water?
4. Who scooped him out and with what tool?
5. Describe and discuss who the old woman was and her role in the story.

6. Describe how the boy went to the sky and why?
7. What happened to his hair and how did he get it back?
8. Did he defeat the Sun?
9. Who became his wives?
10. What lesson was ignored?

Vocabulary: Salmon, Sun, Salt water, Porcupine/Beaver-gut, Flying squirrel, Stone Arrows, Axe, Sky Country

HOW THE OWL STOLE A BABY

<http://yourlisten.com/channel/content/124094/OwlStoleBaby?rn=x4l7bsbg35ds>

A mother was busy preparing her bed. She didn't realize her baby had gone outside, and she called out, "Anish", several times, but her baby didn't return. Owl heard the baby crying, and said, "Chayi (grandchild), anish, ebedesk'ins (naastla) na#es/alh". The baby walked towards the owl. Owl stole the baby and carried (him) to a nest, high up in a tree.

The next morning, the parents went searching for their baby. They found him sleeping comfortably next to a rabbit leg in the Owl's nest. The mother took her baby down and took him home. On finding out about "his new baby" missing, the Owl came searching for him. He hung around near the family camp for days, pleading, "Seding setl'ananlhtish", to which the mother replied, "Lha nending nasestih". By: Tsilhqotin Elder, Helena Myers

Discussion:

Always be careful where the baby is and never trust anyone. The life of an animal or a bird is no different than human. Many stories are in the form of an animal or from an environment. We are all brothers and sisters in the universe. We often include it in the stories as if they were human.

Questions/Activities:

1. Have students act it out; they can make wings to look like an owl.
2. Draw the scene or make a comic book.
3. Discuss and come up with your own story in the situation.
4. What would you do if you were the parent?
5. What language did the owl speak and what do they mean?

Vocabulary: Anish, Owl, Chayi, Ebedesk'ins, Naastla, Setl'ananlhtish, Lha nending nasestih, Nest, Rabbit

RAVEN OBTAINS FIRE

This link will provide a download of the story in Tsilhqotin language (Alphonse, 2012)

<http://yourlisten.com/channel/content/124095/RavenFire?rn=k0tycbqfo2yo>

In the old days there was no fire in the world except at the house of one man, and he would not give it to the other people. So one day Raven resolved to steal it, he gathered his brothers, friends, and went to the house of the fire-man. The fire was burning at one side of the house, and the owner sat beside it to guard it. As soon as Raven and his friends came in, they all started to dance. Now, Raven had tied shavings of pitch-wood in his hair; as he danced, he would come near the fire, so that the shavings would almost catch; but the fire-man kept a sharp watch that it did not happen. So they danced and danced, until one after another grew tired and dropped out, but Raven kept on. Raven danced all that day and night and all the next day, until even the fire-man was worn out with watching, and fell asleep. As soon as Raven saw that he put his head so that the pitch-wood caught fire, and, dashing out of the house, ran about over the country, starting fires in different spots. The fire-man waked, and, seeing smoke all about, knew at once what had happened, he ran about trying his best to get his fire back, but could not because it was

burning in so many places; and since that time, people have always had fire. Now, when the woods began to burn, the animals started to run; and they all escaped except the rabbit, which did not run fast enough, and was caught in the fire and burnt his feet. And that is why rabbits have black spots on the soles of their feet today. After the trees had caught fire, the fire remained in the wood; and this is the reason that wood burns today, and that you can obtain fire by rubbing two sticks together (Alphonse, 1990)

Discussion:

The theme is not to be greedy and to share. To treat fire with respect so we do not burn ourselves like the rabbit.

Questions/Activities:

1. Make a play, have students make their own costumes.
2. Learn to sing and dance, like the Raven and friends.
3. What is pitch?
4. Where can you make pitch?
5. Draw a cartoon and color them.
6. Retell the stories as a group.
7. Introduce it to the community as a scene with singers.
8. Have a field trip to gather pitch.
9. What other uses does pitch have?
10. What is Raven's role?

Vocabulary: Raven, Fire-man, Pitch-wood, Smoke, Rabbit, Pitch, Dance

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