

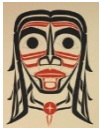
Ta ha7lh xpaʔay - The Great Cedar Tree

A Skwxwú7mesh Story of Sustainability and Resource Protection

Story adapted by Jessica Johnson and Rebecca Duncan from:

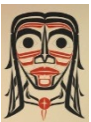
<http://www.etfo.ca/Resources/ForTeachers/Documents/Canadian%20Aboriginal%20Festival%202009%20Curriculum%20Connections%20-%20Junior%20Lessons.pdf>

1 Narrator: One **slhánaʔ** was walking into the **stséktsek** (forest). Moments before, the forest had been alive with the sounds of squawking birds and howling wolves. Now all was quiet as the forest animals watched the woman and wondered why she had come. The woman stopped and struck the trunk of the tree with her axe.



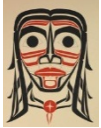
slhánaʔ: Whack! Whack! Whack!

2 Narrator: The sounds of the blows rang through the forest. The wood of the tree was very tough. The brown strips of bark clung to the tree attempting to protect the trunk.



slhánaʔ: Chop! Chop! Chop!

3 Narrator: The woman wiped off the sweat that ran down her face and neck.



slhánaʔ: Whack! Chop! Whack! Chop!

4 Narrator: Soon the **slhánaʔ** grew tired. She sat down to rest at the foot of **ta ha7lh xpaʔay**. Before she knew it, the heat and hum of the forest had lulled her to sleep. A **smemelútsin** lived in **ta ha7lh xpaʔay**. She scampered down its trunk to where the woman was sleeping. The **smemelútsin** looked at the gash the ax had made in the great cedar tree. Then the **smemelútsin** climbed onto her shoulder and softly chatted in her ear.



smemelútsin: **slhánaʔ** this tree is a tree of miracles. It is my home, where generations of my ancestors have lived. Please, do not chop it down.

5 Narrator: A **kílila** flew near the sleeping woman's ear.



kílila: **slhánaʔ** our home is in this **ta ha7lh xpaʔay** and I fly from tree to tree and flower to flower collecting pollen. In this way I pollinate the trees and flowers throughout the forest. You see, all living things depend on one another.

6 Narrator: A **tkáya** appeared from behind the great cedar tree. He growled to the sleeping woman.



tkáya: slhánaŷ I have seen the ways of man. You chop down one tree, and then come back for another and another. The roots of these great trees will wither and die, and there will be nothing left to hold the earth in place. In the spring when the rains come, the soil will be washed away and there will be no place for new trees or plants to grow.

7 Narrator: A **sp'ákw'us** flew down from the tree tops.



sp'ákw'us: slhánaŷ you must not cut down this tree. I have flown over the forest and have seen what happens once you begin to chop down the trees. Many people settle on the land. They bring bulldozers and big machines to clear the land and soon the forest disappears. Where once there was life and beauty now are houses, roads and concrete.

8 Narrator: A bright and small tree **wexés** crawled along the edge of a leaf. In a squeaky voice she piped in the woman's ear.



wexés: slhánaŷ a ruined forest means ruined lives ... many ruined lives. You will leave many of us homeless if you chop down this **ta ha7lh xpaŷay**.

9 Narrator: An **nswú7wu** had been sleeping along a branch in the middle of the tree. Because his coat blended into the light and shadows of the tree, not one had noticed him. Now he leapt down and padded silently over to the sleeping woman. He growled in her ear.



nswú7wu: slhánaŷ, ta ha7lh xpaŷay is home to many birds and animals. If you cut it down where will I find my dinner?

10 Narrator: A **sxwí7shen** snuck up to the woman and whispered.



sxwí7shen: slhánaŷ, do you know what we animals and humans need in order to live? Oxygen. And, **slhánaŷ**, do you know what trees produce? Oxygen! If you cut down the **stséktsek** you will destroy that which gives us life.

10 Narrator: The **sxwí7shen** continued.



sxwí7shen: slhánaŷ, you are chopping down this tree with no thought for the future. And surely you know that what happens tomorrow depends upon what you do today. You must think of our **mén'men** (children), who tomorrow must live in a world without trees.

11 Narrator: The **wexés** spoke once again to the **slhánay'** in her high and quiet voice.



wexés: slhánay' how much is beauty worth? Can you live without it? If you destroy the beauty of the forest, on what would you feast your eyes?

12 Narrator: A **men'** who lived with his family in the **stséktsek** knelt over the sleeping **slhánay'**. He murmured in her ear.



men' : slhánay' please do not cut down this **ta ha7lh xpayay**. My ancestors have been using this tree for generations. We need the tree for our masks and clothing; we need it to build our homes and canoes. My people need this tree. When you awake, please look upon us with all new eyes.

13 Narrator: The **slhánay'** awoke with a start. Before her stood the **men'**, and all around her, staring, were the creatures that depended upon **ta ha7lh xpayay**.



ta ha7lh xpayay: What wondrous animals they were! The **slhánay'** looked about and saw the sun streaming through the trees. Spots of bright light glowed like jewels amidst the dark green forest. The **slhánay'** smelled the fragrant smell of the forest. She felt the morning mist rising from the forest floor. But she heard no sound, for the creatures were strangely silent. The woman stood and picked up her axe. She swung back and looked at the animals and the child. She hesitated. Then dropped the axe and walked out of the forest.



slhánaŷ– Woman

“Slon-eye”



smemelútsin – Squirrel

“Smuma-LOTE-seen”



kílila – Butterfly

“Kay-LAY-la”



tḱáya – Wolf

“Tah-KAI-ah”



sp'ákw'us – Eagle

“SPAH-kose”



wexés – Frog

“Wah-HASS”



nswú7wu – Mountain Lion

“En-SWO-wo”



sxwí7shen – Deer

“SWAY-chen”





Western Red-Cedar

ta ha7lh xpa'yay – The Great Cedar Tree
“Tah Hoth Hoh-PIE-eye”

stséktsek – Forest “Sut-TSUCK”



meñ – Child “Mun”
méñmen – Children “Munmun”