

In the world before this world,
before there were people, and before
things were like they are now, everyone
was alive and walking around like we do.
All Creation was talking about the
coming changes to their world.
They had been told that soon a
new kind of people would be living on
this earth. Even they, the Animal and
Plant people, would be changed.
Now they had to decide how the
People-To-Be would live and what they
would eat. (7)

The four Chiefs were:

Skimgheest (Bear),
Enteeteegh (Salmon),
Speetlum (Bitterroot)
and Seeya (Saskatoon).

They held many meetings and
talked for a long time about what the

People-To-Be would need to live.
All of the Chiefs thought and
thought.

10

"What can we give to the
People-To-Be to eat that is already here
on earth?" they asked one another.

"There seems to be no answer. "

Finally, the three other chiefs said
to Skimheest, "You are the wisest and the
oldest among us. You tell us what you are
going to do.

13

Skimheest said, "Since you have
all placed your trust in me, I will have to
do the best I can."

He thought for a long time and
finally he said, "I will give myself, and all
the animals that I am Chief over, to be
food for the People-To-Be."

Then he said to Enteteegh,

"What will you do?"

15

Enteeteegh answered, "You are indeed the wisest among us. I will also give myself and all the things that live in the water as food for the People-To-Be."

17

Speetlum, who was Chief of all the roots under the ground said, "I will do the same."

19

Seeya was last. He said, "I will do the same. All the good things that grow above the ground will be the food for the People-To-Be." (20)

Chief Skimheest was happy because there would be enough food for the People-To-Be. He said, "Now I will lay my life down to make these things happen." (23)

Because he was the greatest Chief and had given his life, all of the

People-That-Were (The Animal People) gathered and sang songs to bring him back to life. That was how they helped heal each other in that world. They all took turns singing, but Skimheest did not come back to life.

24

Finally, Fly came along. He sang, "You laid your body down. You laid your life down." His song was powerful. Skimheest came back to life.

25

Then Fly told the four Chiefs, "When the People-To-Be are here and they take your body for food, they will sing this song. They will cry their thanks with this song."

Then Skimheest spoke for all the Chiefs, "From now on when the People-To-Be come, everything will have its own song. The People-To-Be will use these songs to help each other as you have

helped me."

26

That is how food was given
to our people.

That is how songs were given
to our people.

That is how giving and
helping one another was and still is
taught to our people.

29

That is why we must respect even
the smallest, weakest persons for what
they can contribute.

That is why we give thanks and
honour to what is given to us.

31