

Ximkila Totem Pole - "Dawn of a New Day"

This totem pole was carved by Silyas - Arthur Saunders - in honour of Ximkila - Scott Lee John Joseph Moody (1968-2009) - and Scott's nephew, Lhalyamc - John Earl Edward Moody (2003-2009). It was raised on 10 September 2011.

Silyas asked Scott's Father, Cecil Moody (Chief Nuqwlqwliyu), where the totem pole should stand. He replied that the Healthy Beginnings building in Bella Coola would be a good place because it represents families working together. Healthy Beginnings is a community programme that supports families during pregnancy and early childhood and it is honoured to give the Ximkila totem pole a home.

The figures at the top represent the Four Carpenters, who made all life, gathered around the Sun. The Raven stands on the shoulders of Skimina. The figure on the Raven's belly represents Alhkw'ntam, Creator. (This is the Nuxalkmc name given to Gail Moody, Scott's Mother, at her wedding ceremony by Grannie Felicity Walkus). Skimina is holding Raven as he transforms into a Baby. His hands are reaching for the globe of light. The Lhalya between Skimina's legs represents Lhalyamc, Copper Man (John Moody). Dr. Margaret Sisini Siwallace and other Nuxalkmc Elders told the story of Ximkila as follows:

In the beginning of time, when the world was covered in darkness, the very dim light was the colour of copper. The people were in constant sadness and prayed to the Creator, Alhkw'ntam, to give them light. Alhkw'ntam held the sun in a box in his long-house in the land above, Nusmata and let no one see the light. The Four Carpenters who made the world were sitting around a fire in Nusmata, when the eldest, Yulm, grabbed a piece of charcoal out of the fire and shook it in his hands. When he opened his hands it was a bird. The second Carpenter then made the wings. The third one made its eyes. The youngest one gave it life. The Carpenters asked the bird to say his name and the bird flew into the sky and cried out, "qwaxw, qwaxw, qwaxw!"

The Carpenters gave the bird the name, Qwaxw, Raven. The people begged Raven to get the light for them. He flew to Nusmata and observed Alhkw'ntam's granddaughter, Skimina. He thought of a way to get the globe of light from her grandfather. Raven transformed into eagle down first and lay on the water where she drank every morning; but, she blew him away. Then he became a hemlock needle; but, she blew him away. Finally, when he muddied the water, she drank and he was taken in. She became pregnant and Raven was born to her very fast. Raven grew up very fast and Alhkw'ntam loved him. When Raven cried for the box holding the globe, his grandfather refused to give it, until he could no longer bear the cries. Raven rolled the globe of light back and forth and finally, broke it against the wall of the long-house. The light leaked out into the world, through the smoke vent and became the sun, stars and moon. The people were no longer sad, because the darkness was gone.

The story of "How Raven Gave Light to the World" is Ximkila's name and means the "Dawn of a New Day." The Ximkila Totem Pole represents transforming life and the bringing light into the world. It is fitting that the Totem Pole stands in front of Healthy Beginnings as a symbol of what family means. We all work together to help one another and make a good life for our children.

Thanks to Silyas and Chief Nuqwlqwliyu, for this great gift to the Bella Coola Valley community.