

The Legend of the First Human Being.

I would like to share the story of the legend of the first human being that was dropped in the Cowichan Valley. It is a place known as Mt. Prevost. Mt. Prevost Mountain.

Syalutsa' was dropped and he made his way down the mountain. And on his way down he heard something in his cave, and he went to go look. Inside was a little white dog, and he named this dog Wuqus, who was a companion for, Syalutsa', the first man. Syalutsa' made his way down through the valley and he saw what is known today as the Quamichan Village. He made his home there by the river and he noticed a lot of the things that were around him, the river and the trees, and the plants. This was a gift from the creator. He went to the water to use the water to cleanse, and bathe himself, and he realized what it can do for you - the water. Teach to go to the creek and bathe in the water. You practice this to receive his gift, his power, his purpose in life.

After Syalutsa', there were eleven more human beings that came after Syalutsa'.

The second human being coming down was his younger brother. Many of the things that Syalutsa' had learned, he shared with his younger brother. He told his younger brother to go to all the creeks, the lakes to purify himself, his spirit. His younger brother did this. He went to the lake Xaatsa' which is known as Lake Cowichan. He went to this water to bathe at daybreak, and his older brother Syalutsa' told him that he'd see many things. In this lake, he had seen a double headed snake, and this is something that Syalutsa' had told his younger brother not to be afraid if he ever seen things. This is what his younger brother saw in the lake, Lake Cowichan. He remembered the words not to be afraid. He faced the double headed sea serpent. It got so close and disappeared. This is all about facing your fears and part of life.

When Syalutsa's younger brother came back to where he lived, he shared this. That is a gift that many of our people still practice today. It is to go up to the mountains, to go and purify yourself in the water or in the creek. Especially going to places where no one has gone before, where there are no houses, or any development. You have to find a place where the water is pure and clean. Still practiced yet today by many of our people.

Syalutsa' went to a place known as Khowhemun today, by a river where he first built a weir, a salmon weir out of the iron wood. This practice was to allow the females to go by and some males to go by so that they are able to spawn. That was a practice to keep the fish generation going rather than no fish. This practice was til the mid 1950's in Cowichan until it was outlawed.

So this is a story of Syalutsa'. This lady from Sooke, a chief's daughter, knew of this man named Syalutsa' that lived in Cowichan. The chief sent her daughter to Cowichan. So she packed her bags and she left with her two other girls and they came to Cowichan. They saw the smoke in the valley. When they got to the valley to where Syalutsa' was living, they snuck up to see where he was living. They just stayed and observed what Syalutsa's routine was through the day, his life. Every day, he would go out early in the morning for his bath. He would leave with his dog, Wuqus, that he found at Mt. Prevost.

They went to go look inside his house where this man lived. They noticed this woman that was by the fire. This woman, carved bigger, made out of arbutus wood, sewed in a spindle wheel. They went back into the bush and Syalutsa' came back, and they slept there overnight. This woman had this idea. When Syalutsa' went out the next day hunting and for his bath in the morning, this woman took the carved figure and threw it in the fire that was inside the house. She took the place of the carved figure. Then Syalutsa' came back and noticed that this woman had come to life. Syalutsa' and this woman from Sooke made it and started a family of the Cowichan people. And that's the story of Syalutsa'.

Thank you very much