

Pronunciation Guide

Woodland Cree translation and Roman Orthography Y-Dialect

by

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Woodland Cree Y-Dialect is a dentalized language with the letter K sounding like an unvoiced G or a soft K sound. There is no puff air behind the consonant sound.

The letter T is like an unvoiced D. Move the tongue back so that it connects with the alveolar ridge and do not allow a puff of air to follow the sound.

The letter P is like an unvoiced B. There is no aspiration or puff of air following the sound.

The letter H is pronounced with a strong breath, like the English word “hay.” In the IPA transliteration, the H is noted; in the phonetic translation, a double “hh” is used to denote pronunciation of the H.

Capital letters or bolded syllables as marked below indicate stressed syllables. If there is no stress indicated, all syllables are equal.

The IPA transliteration is written in square brackets, the phonetic illustration below and the English translation at the end of each group.

askîy kitôfîminaw translates as “the land is our relative” in Woodland Cree Y-Dialect. It is pronounced [ʌ-ski kI-to-tIm-nʌw] or “uhs-kee kih-toh-tihm-nuhw.”

askîy kitôfîminaw

ʌ-ski kI-to-tIm-nʌw

uhs-kee kih-toh-tihm-nuhw

The land is our relative

kitaskînw kiskinwahamâkanaw

kI-tʌs-ki-nʌw kIs-kIn-wʌ-hʌ-mʌ-kʌ-nʌw

kih-tuhs-kih-nuhw kihs-wuh-huh-muh-kuh-nuhw

The land teaches us

wâhkôhtowin kîyânaw

wʌh-koh-to-wIn kI-yʌ-nʌw

wuh-kohh-toh-wihn kih-yuh-nuhw

We are related/kinship. All of us

The Story of the Song

This song brings all of us together as relations with each other and the land. *wâhkôhtowin* is an important Cree word that acknowledges us all as relatives and loosely means "we are related" or "relations" and *kîyânaw* means "all of us together" or "you and I" strengthening our connection. These words embody connection for everyone, related by blood or not. Cree teachings connect people, the land (rocks, plants, trees, animals) and all living things, which is why we must listen to what the land tells us and teaches us. We notice when the land reacts to activity and destruction such as floods, fires, famine, and other environmental disasters and how these disasters affect the living beings that live and thrive on the land. If we truly believe we are all related as humans in *wâhkôhtowin*, we can work together as relations to take better care of the earth as co-stewards or caretakers, not only for our generation but for future generations to come.