



## Legend of Night and Day

Kayas, long ago, our Mosom, Pisim, the sun, had the job of taking care of a large fire. This fire brings us the heat and the light over our land and over our Earth. This Mosom would carefully watch this fire, keep it going, and watch that we're getting enough heat. At that time the heat never really changed and it was always daylight. Finally it came to a point when this Mosom was getting really old and tired and he was thinking it was time to pass this job on to somebody younger. So he thought, "I have two grandchildren, nosisimak. I've watched them and they're really good at making fires, so maybe I'll put them to work and they can share the fire making and won't have to worry about getting tired like I did working alone. They can keep each other company."

So he called his grandchildren together. "Astam nosisimak." But right away he saw there was a problem. His grandchildren, a young boy and a young girl, were fighting and wouldn't get along. He thought this wasn't good but maybe if he got them working together, they'd get along. He said, "I want you two to prove to me that you can make a good fire. So, Grandson, I want you to make your fire, and my Granddaughter, I'm gonna get you to make your fire. I'm going to watch to see how well you can keep your fires going."

So, the young boy made his fire and the young girl made her fire, but the whole while they were fighting with each other and the Mosom was watching them both. He thought, "My Grandson makes a nice hot fire; good heat, good light. He's a good fire maker. Miwasin, good."

Then he looked at his granddaughter's fire. He saw that her fire was really low but steady. It was calming and relaxing. It didn't give a lot of light and heat but it was really calming. He thought, "Miwasin, this is good as well. She keeps it steady and it doesn't change." He thought he could get them to do the fire making but noticed they were still fighting with each other and couldn't get along.

So he said, "Grandchildren, I need you to take care of this fire that provides heat and warmth for all Nēhiyawak, Cree people, kahkiyaw ayisiyinowak, all the people, and I need you to take care of this. You have to take this very seriously and you can't keep fighting all the time. I think the only way I'm going to be able to do this is to separate you guys. For half the day, my Grandson, you'll make the fire and for the other half of the day, Granddaughter, you'll make the fire and I don't want you guys going anywhere near each other."



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"Maybe once every once in a while you can get together and see if you get along but I think you guys need to stay away from each other. You can't be together. I want you guys to make this fire now. Grandson, I'm going to name you Kisikawipisim, sun, and that's what I'm going to call you from now on. Every time you come and make the fire, you'll watch it for the day and then you leave."

"Granddaughter, I'm going to call you Tipikawipisim, moon, and your job is to come after Kisikawipisim leaves. You'll come and you'll tend the fire for half the day. So, I don't want you guys ever coming together except once every 52 week cycle. Then the two of you can meet and see if you get along. If you don't get along, I don't want you seeing each other for another year. Your jobs are to take care of this fire and Kisikawipisim you're not allowed anywhere near the fire when Tipikawipisim is caring for it; Tipikawipisim, you're not allowed near the fire when Kisikawipisim is watching it. Understood? That's the way it's got to be. Only once a year can you get together to see if you get along. I'm going to watch this and see how it works."

So, the Mosom sat back and watched the cycle to see how it worked. First, Kisikawipisim came and made the fire. It was nice and hot with lots of light and Mosom was happy and thought this would do the people good. The kahkiyaw ayisiyinowak will be happy with this good light and good heat.

Then it was time for Kisikawipisim to go so he left and Tipikawipisim, his granddaughter came and started watching the fire. Right away, the fire got smaller, with not as much heat and very little light, but Mosom found it was calming and relaxing. It calmed his spirit and made him relax as it was such a gentle fire with gentle heat that was so warm.

Mosom liked this. He thought, "This is the way it should be from now on, not the way I used to do it where there was bright fire all day. But having bright light and heat for half the day and then not as much heat or light for the other half gives people a chance to rest and they won't have to keep working all the time."

He watched his grandchildren for a whole cycle until it came to that time of year when he allowed them to get together. He would watch them and, of course, once they got together, Kisikawipisim and Tipikawipisim, just like before, started fighting right away. So he sent them away from each other again.



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He told them they would keep on with the cycle and would keep trying every year. Kisikawipisim would watch the fire for half the day and Tipikawipisim would watch the fire for half the day.

So, this is the way we are told that this continues to go on where during the first half of the day we get the warmth and the light from the fire Kisikawipisim is making. And then, later in the day when the light gets to be less and the heat starts to go away, Tipikawipisim, or Grandmother Moon, takes over watching the fire. There's very little light but its gentle and soothing light helps us to rest for the rest of the day. When the morning comes, this is when Tipikawipisim leaves and her brother, Kisikawipisim, takes over and watches that fire.

We're told that at that time of year they're allowed to come together and see each other to see if they get along and that's what we call the summer solstice, or the longest day of the year. This is the only time of year we can see Kisikawipisim and Tipikawipisim together.

Sometimes they cross during that time which is what we call an eclipse. Our Elders continue to tell us that it looks like they still can't get along because we still have night and day continuing and every year they come together to see if they get along. Let's hope this continues so we continue to have these nice days when we can work and these nice nights when we can rest.

So this is the story of iskotēw, fire, that tells us of Kisikawipisim and Tipikawipisim.

Ekosi Maka