

The Eagle and the Valley of Tears

The sky was blue, the air was clean, and the sun was smiling as Chak-Chak the Eagle circled the sky and looked down upon his land, the land he had chosen for his people.

As he flew the sky and looked down upon the land, his heart was warm and all was good.

The Siletz Valley was his chosen spot. The place he had in mind with its sunlit valley, its fertile fields, and its beautiful river, the Siletz, running clear and cool – the most beautiful crooked river in the world! With all the many, many fresh and free running trout, salmon, and eel for his people to catch, smoke, and eat, just as he himself could. Yes, this was good!

Chak-Chak circled the valley again free and feeling good of heart and feeling so good again he looked down and suddenly his heart turned cold! The sun had gone down in the valley and the sun went down in his heart and again all was not good.

There before his eyes, he saw not the vision of his first flight, when his heart was good and all was good – No! Something was wrong, very wrong. The people, his people walking into the valley were not smiling! The air was not clean! There was dust and tears and much sadness. “No!” said Chak-Chak, “This is not good! What has gone wrong? I have failed. I must help my people!”

So, again the eagle took flight and turned his people and led them further up the river to the spot called Coyote Rock.

Then again, as if by magic, Chak-Chak felt his great heart lighten as he again saw his people smile.

The nets fell free and clean in the river, the children were smiling, the sun again shone, the air again was clean and free from dust, the dogs were running, the children were playing, and from the fullness and gladness of his heart, because his people were free and happy. Than again all was good. Chak-Chak wept tears of gladness and because of his many tears of joy came the waters of the beautiful Siletz River.

Tears of gladness mingled with some of sadness, and the hope and joy of Chak-Chak caring made our beautiful river, the crooked river of Siletz.