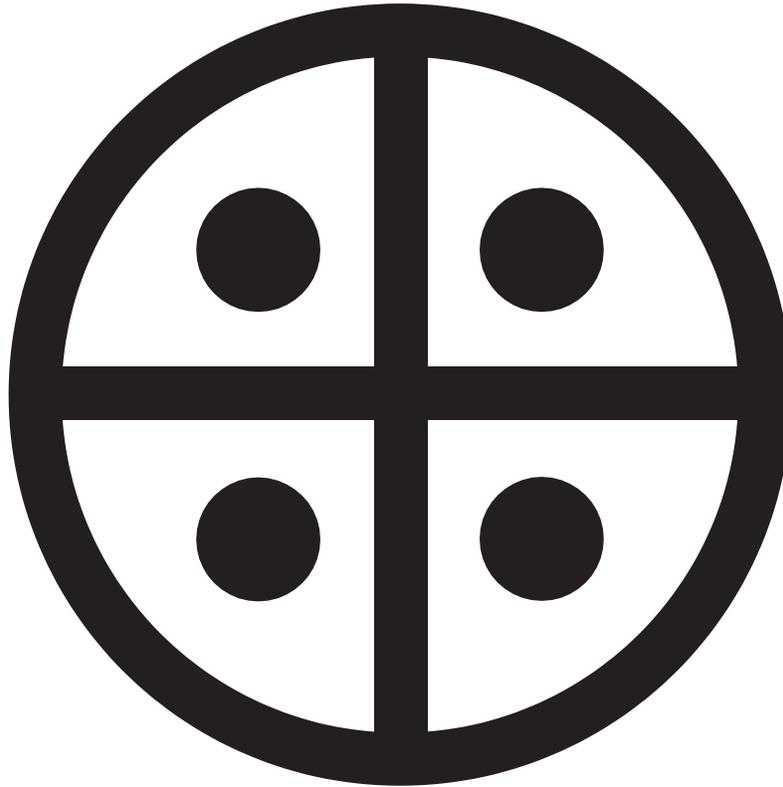


# NATIVE SPIRITUALITY - SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

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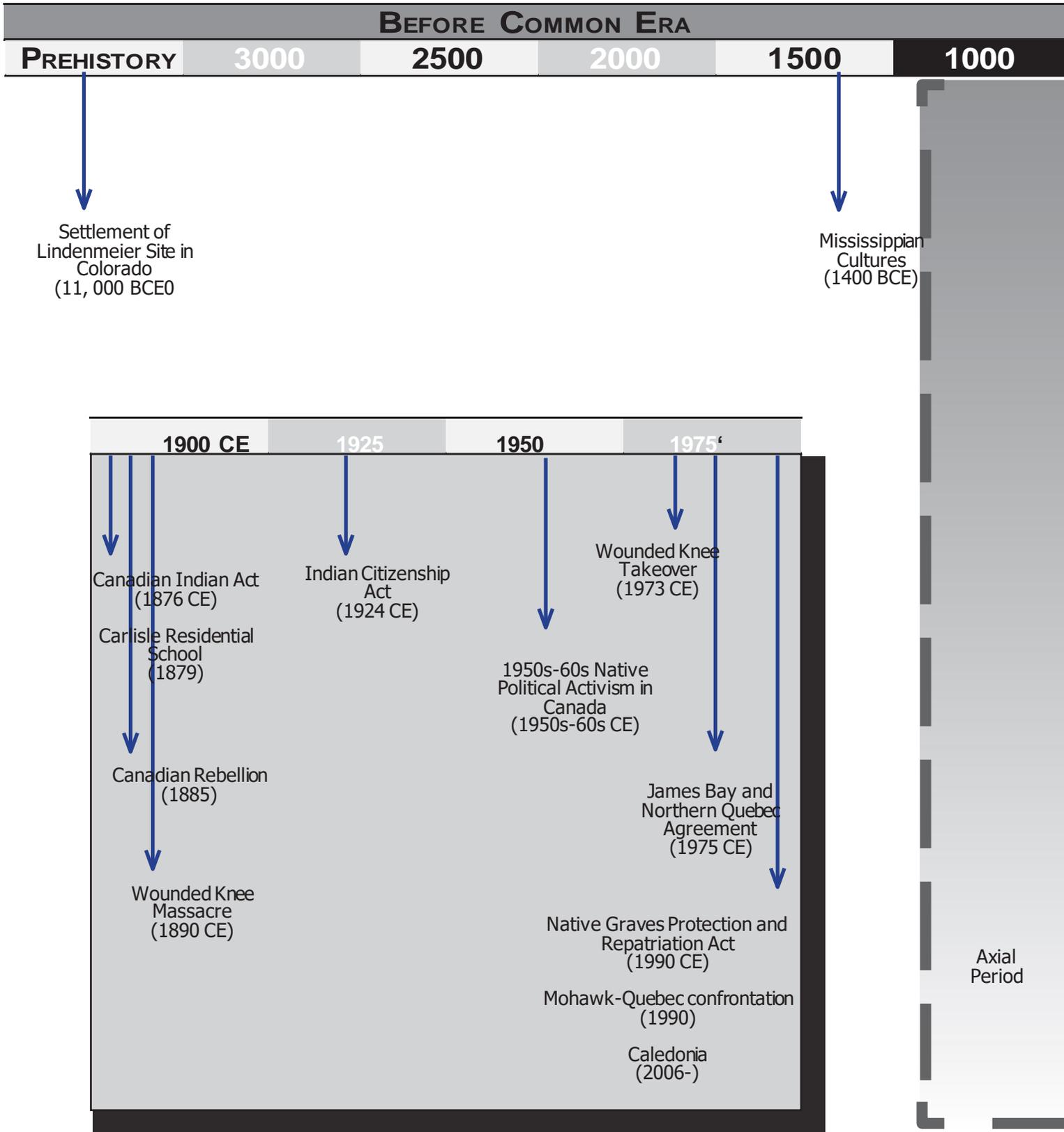
LIVING IN SEVEN DIRECTIONS

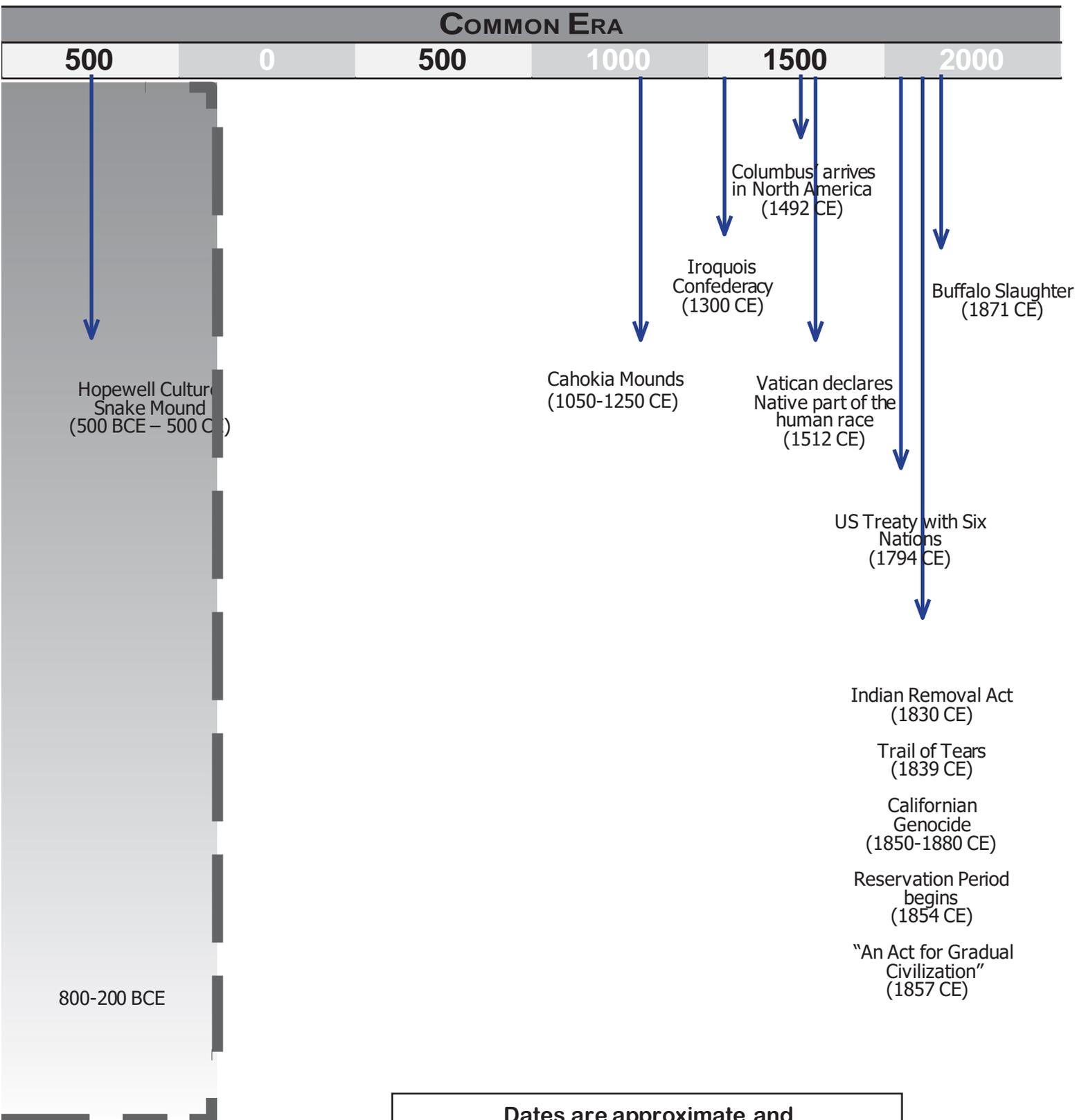


*Great Spirit, help us learn the lessons you have hidden in every leaf and rock.*

-Native American Prayer

# TIMELINE





Dates are approximate and in some cases debatable.

NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBE LOCATIONS



Olive Patricia Dickason & David T. McNab, *Canada's First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples From Earlier Times*, Oxford University Press: Don Mills, Ontario. 2009. & Arthur Versluis, *Native American Traditions*, Element: Rockport, Massachusetts. 1966.

## PEOPLE

### LEGAL TERMS DESCRIBING ABORIGINAL PEOPLES IN CANADA

#### REGISTERED OR STATUS INDIANS

- Ancestors recognized as Native by the federal government
- Ancestors signed treaties with the federal government
- May be gained by birth, marriage, or adoption
- Often belong to a band ( one of about 600 groups for whom the government holds common land on one of about 2300 reserve)
- Receive free post-secondary education, pay no income or provincial tax on income earned on a reserve, have special hunting/fishing rights, entitled to free housing on a reserve, may freely pass between US/Canadian border

#### NON-REGISTERED OR NON-STATUS INDIANS

- Ancestors not recognized as Status
- Do not receive benefits of Status Indians

#### MÉTIS

- Mixed heritage (Native and French)
- Do not receive benefits of Status Indians
- Recognized as a separate people in the Canadian constitution

#### INUIT

- Single is Inuk; plural is Inuit
- Native people traditionally from the Arctic or northern Quebec and Labrador
- Determination of who is Inuit are complicated (prove at least ¼ Inuit blood, possesses a number form original Inuit census, considered Inuk by the community, etc.)
- Like Status Natives, Inuit received special rights from the government

### NATIVE AMERICAN SPIRITUALITY

#### ROLES OF MEN AND WOMEN

- Each gender has its own medicine or spiritual powers (men may be more in the physical realm; women may be more in spiritual realm)
- Traditional gender roles are not rigid; individual gifts are more important
- Reflects complementary dualism, as men and women are perceived as different but both necessary

#### ROLES OF CHILDREN AND ELDERS

- Elders are key (sometimes primary) in child rearing

#### ROLES OF WARRIORS

- Emphasize not fearing danger or death

- Greatest warrior is not one who kills his enemy but one who “counts coup”

### **ROLES OF HEYOKAS**

- A trickster and teacher (also called “contrary”)
- Pokes fun at people, rituals and customs including the most revered of both
- Crosses social boundaries to help question and define them

### **ROLES WHILE SITTING IN COUNCIL**

- Members of council chosen for their wisdom in acting in interests of all
- Sit in circle indicating all participants are equal
- Goal is to bring balance, not justice
- When one speaks, others listen respectfully (bowed head, looking down, not in their eyes, while listening reflectively)

## PRACTICES

### BUSHYHEAD CORNHUSK MASKS

The northeastern Iroquois weave many types of basketry including masks. Some masks are twined from cornhusks, but the majority use a braid foundation coiled and stitched together.

The masks made of cornhusks, called bushy-heads or husk-faces, are sometimes associated with the Husk Face Society. These masks usually embody or are inhabited by spirits associated with the corn harvest or growing grains.

The masks are worn by both women and men during ceremonies or dances. Tobacco is often burned

for the husk faces. Cornhusk faces frequently appear in conjunction with the wooden False Face masks. Husk-face dancers do not carry a rattle or staff like the False Face dancers, but they dance with a mush stirring paddle or digging stick to beat out a rhythm. Cornhusk dancers deliver messages about the harvest or prepare the people for the "grandfathers," the False Faces.

The full-size masks are worn by dancers during rites of the Mid-winter Ceremony in January and for the Green Corn Ceremony in the spring. The full-size masks can be made to represent male or female spirits, the female often having cornhusk tobacco bags called medicine drops hanging from the nose, cheeks or lips. Some

masks have braided noses, while others use a stuffed nose. Some masks have puffed cheeks or protruding and drooping features, denoting great age. Slightly smaller, medium-size masks are used for calling spirits and asking for favours.



Miniature cornhusk masks are used to pacify spirits who disturb a person's dreams. Dreams of this sort are generally associated with the Mask Image Spirits. The person who has the dream of the spirit borrows or makes a small cornhusk mask in the form of the spirit and gives it a feast including sacrifices of tobacco. After the festivities this mask is put away and kept to deter any further imposition by the spirit.

Miniature masks are also used in the formal Dream Guessing Rite that occurs during the Mid-winter Ceremonies and is performed by an elder for a person bothered by recurring dreams or trouble. The content of the dream would have to be guessed with the afflicted person answering only yes or no to a series of questions. The person who guesses the dream correctly then makes a small mask and gives it along with wishes of good fortune to the dreamer. Because the mask in the medicine, it is kept at home to prevent recurrence of the dreams.

## THE NATIVE DRUM

The drum is much more than a percussion instrument. The drum is a powerful and resonant symbol of Native identity and spirituality. The Anishinaabe Ojibwa people of the Great Lakes region have particularly rich traditions surrounding the drum. They speak of it as the heartbeat of the people, not itself an object of worship but a spiritual messenger that voices the collective prayers of the people to the world of spirits.



In the Ojibwa language which distinguishes animate from inanimate objects, drum are considered animate. Drums are fashioned according to long-standing traditions by respected drum makers who make drums in response to visionary experiences. These drums are passed down through generations with care.

Drums are treated with elaborate codes of respect. They may be clothed with blankets, regularly purified by smudging, and thanked with offerings of tobacco.



## MEDICINE BUNDLE

- Pouch to keep one's medicine tools
- Tangible example of the wisdom of a tribe or person
- Different bundles for different reasons
- One's bundle is private
- Bundle burned at death if not passed on
- Tribal bundles called Grandmothers

## POW - WOW

- Important social gathering
- Brings together diverse tribes for dancing, singing, games, trading, socializing and enjoyment
- May include the potlatch (a gift giving ceremony)

## SUN DANCE

- Women clear a sacred circle and a tree is erected in the centre
- Male participants purify themselves
- Dancer's pectoral muscles are pierced



with a wood spike and connected to the tree (see pictures above)

- Dancers dance without stopping for four days and four nights
- To fall is a bad omen
- Men blow whistles made of eagle-wing bone and decorated with eagle feathers
- Drums, fasting, dancing all contribute to the experience and acquiring visions
- Ceremony honours Grandfather Sun who loves Mother Earth by bringing light and warmth.
- Dancers greet the dawn by singing:

*Here am I. Behold me.  
I am the Sun. Behold me.*

The man has an opportunity to demonstrate a willingness to sacrifice

By willfully suffering, fear of suffering is overcome



Wa'Na'Nee'Che and Freke, Timothy, "Thorsons Principles of Native American Spirituality"; Versluis, Arthur, "Elements of Native American Traditions"

## SWEATLODGE

- Important ritual carried out all over "turtle island"
- The lodge is a metaphoric "womb" and "tomb" from which one emerges reborn or resurrected
- Usually a low, dome-like structure made with willow poles covered with hide or bark
- Intention is to heal spiritual wounds and heighten spiritual awareness
- Participants sit close together in the dark on the ground
- Glowing hot stones are placed in a



depression in the middle of the earthen floor

- A flap is closed over the small opening to retain the heat
- Leader pours water over the hot rocks to produce steam
- Participants pray, smoke the pipe, sing, drum, listen to teachings
- The flap may be opened periodically to allow anyone who needs to leave to do so and to receive more stones to increase the heat
- Finally one exits the darkness into light and breathes the cool, fresh air
- Reconnect to oneself, each other, the earth and the Ultimate

## VISION QUEST

- A spiritual quest combining fasting, meditation and physical endurance
- Often done by young boys at puberty to obtain guidance for their lives and to acquire a guardian spirit
- The quester is led by a spiritual advisor to a secluded spot in nature
- The quester undergoes a physical ordeal
- The resulting vision may take many forms
- In some traditions, questers must externalize the vision publicly
- A "Night of Fear" (alone, cold, hungry) may be done as preparation for Vision Quest

Sources: Wa'Na'Nee"Che and Freke, Timothy, "Thorsons Principles of Native American Spirituality"; & Versluis, Arthur, "Elements of Native American Traditions"

## A VISION QUEST

John Fire Lane Deer (1903-1976), a Sioux holy man described the vision quest he had as a young man.

*The old man left me on the top of the hill. He had been with me in the sweat lodge and prayed, "Oh holy rocks, we receive your white breath, the steam. It is the breath of life. Let this young boy inhale it. Make him strong."*

*I was still lightheaded from the purifying sweat bath and my skin tingled. It seemed to make my head empty but maybe that was good...plenty of room for the vision. Sounds came through the night, but suddenly I became aware of a huge bird flying around me. I could hear its cries and feel its feathers. All at once I was up in the sky with the bird. I heard a voice say, "We are the fowl people, the winged ones, the eagles and the owls. You shall be our brother. You are going to understand us whenever you come to this hill to seek a vision. You will learn about herbs and roots and heal people. A man's life is short. Make yours a worthy one."*

*I felt that the voices were good, and I was no longer afraid. I lost all sense of time. Then I saw a person coming out of the darkness and swirling fog. It was my great-grandfather who had been shot by a white soldier. I saw the blood dripping from his chest. Then I understood that he wanted me to take his name, Lane Deer, and it made me extremely happy. I felt my soul within me and a power surge through me like a flood. I knew then that*

*I would become a medicine man, and I wept with happiness.*

*Finally the old man was gently shaking me. He said I had been on the hill for four days and nights. He gave me water and food, and I told him what I heard and saw. He told me I was no longer a boy but that I had become a man. Now I was Lane Deer.*

Source: Exploring World Religions, Oxford University Press, p.44.

## MEDICINE PIPES

- The pipe and its instructions were given by White Buffalo Calf Woman.
- The smoke makes breath visible
- Smoke is a visible offering carrying prayers and intentions to the Great Spirit
- One earns the privilege of being a Pipe Carrier through instruction and initiation
- Used in council meetings, sweat lodges, and often the only thing taken on a Vision Quest

### PIPE SIGNIFIES:

- The male and the female
- Linking the smokers by their shared breath
- Bridge between spirit and matter
- 4 kingdoms (human, vegetable, mineral, animal)
- 4 elements (earth, air, fire, water)

### PIPE CEREMONY

- Ceremony represents the spiritual grounding, power and survival of the

### Native people

- Pipe is packed a pinch at a time accompanied with prayers
- Pipe is offered to the 7 directions (north, south, east, west, above, below, where you are)
- Pipe is smoked with bowl in left hand stem in right hand
- Participants share personal thoughts
- Each smoker offers pipe to Mother Earth and Father Sky, and passes it clockwise



## PHILOSOPHIES

### THE STORY OF HADUI (BROKEN NOSE)

As acts of inter-tribalism increased between the Six Nations and the Western Abenaki, the two cultures began to share many ceremonial traditions. One of these traditions, that continues up to the present day, is the existence of False Face Societies. These masks have been used in ceremonies asking for success in hunts, abundance in harvests, and for the passing of loved ones to the other side. Members of False Face societies also used these masks to cure illnesses, alleviate pain and drive out demons. One of the most famous masks has a broken nose. His name is Hadui, and his story follows.

*Hadui, later known as Broken Nose, studied and learned all the basic things about the universe. He also studied all the medicine ways and, though it took centuries, he also developed all the spiritual powers on earth and knew all the ways of the Great Spirit. One day, Hadui stood out in a large field looking at the skies and mountains in the distance and thought: "Knowing as I do all the ways of the Creator, all things in this world are possible for me. I now understand how all things are done. If it should be my will, those mountains should have to move."*

*He then heard the voice of the Creator whom he knew as the Great Spirit of the Universe. The voice said, "I am the Great Spirit, and the mountains are there by my will." Hadui paused for a moment. Many times he had heard the voice of the Creator, but now he was thinking only of*

*himself. Speaking aloud, he announced in a powerful voice: "I have come to know the ways of the Great Spirit, and I can duplicate them all! I can move these mountains if I wish!" The Creator repeated: "Yes, I am the Great Spirit and I can move mountains."*

*"Not you," shouted Hadui. "I am referring to myself. I am talking about me. Have I developed all this for nothing? Can I do nothing myself? I have learned all the rules of power and creation! Do you still think I am useless without you?"*

*"You are never without me," the Great Spirit answered in a gentle voice, "for I am always with you."*

*"But I know all your secrets now," Hadui protested. "I know how you do all these things."*

*"It is because you have come to me," said the Great Spirit.*

*In spite of all that he had learned, in spite of all his training and wisdom, Hadui experienced a rush of pride and anger, and shouted at the Creator, "Go away. Leave me alone. I don't need you anymore. I am now powerful, and you want to think of me as your little child. I am not your little child anymore. I can do anything that you can do. So just leave me alone."*

*"Alone?" said the Great Spirit. "There is no alone. How can I leave you? We are*

*one and cannot be apart."*

*These gentle, loving words only made Hadui more angry. It seemed to him, in his anger, that the Great Spirit was discrediting him in spite of all his long efforts and the remarkable knowledge and power that he had attained. It seemed to him that the Great Spirit was still claiming all power for itself. In his angry state, Hadui determined to have a contest with the Great Spirit of the Universe. Hadui said to the Great Spirit, "I know you don't want these mountains moved. But I am going to move them against your will. Then you will see that I am something in my own right. You can pit your power against me if you wish!"*

*"I do not pit anything against anything," answered the Great Spirit. "This idea of a contest is a temporary dream. Wake up and come to me now and you will see that nothing is anything in its own right apart from all that is."*

*But Hadui repeated his challenge: "You are trying to take everything away from me. You cannot take this chance away. Do what you like. Oppose me if you like, but I am going to move these mountains anyway, knowing that you want them where they are, so that it will be clear that it is done by my will alone."*

*Hadui waited there in the field, grim and determined, and there was nothing but silence. So he went about the contest. Though he strained with all his might, trying everything that he had learned and developed over the centuries, nothing*

*happened. Nothing at all. There was only a soft breeze, and the mountains stood in the distance as always. He flew into a rage, cursing violently, and when there was only silence, he dared the Lord to respond. He called the Great Spirit a fake and a liar, claiming the Creator had pitted his great will against him despite of promising that he would not.*

*Suddenly, an idea came to him. He would have his contest yet. He shouted at the Great Spirit, daring It to move the mountain while he tried to block it with his own will as the Great Spirit had done to him. He believed that if the Great Spirit had neutralized his power that he could do the same to the Great Spirit. But he also believed that the Great Spirit might well want the mountains where they were and would be unwilling to move them. In either case, nothing would happen. He craved to claim victory over the Lord and felt sure he would win his dare. He shouted his challenge again. He clenched his fists and squinted his eyes and screamed into the sky; and before he could finish his sentence, he heard a trembling and a rumbling. He spun around to look just as the mountain was coming to his side. That was a mistake, for that caused the mountain to strike his face and break his nose.*

*At that, the gentle voice of the Great Spirit was heard again. "Now look what we have done to our beloved Self. No matter. It is only temporary. We shall now set it right with our collective will, shall we?" Hadui felt a moment of great pain, and then he had a sudden awareness.*

*There was no contest. There never had been any contest. This was another of his countless lessons. But this was the ultimate lesson and he had arranged it – he and His Own Self – so that he could be free from being apart and alone.*

MASK OF THE IROQUOIS FALSE FACE SOCIETY as  
retold by Mad Bear Anderson

*We know that we all are related and are one with all things of the heavens and the earth...May we be continually aware of this relationship which exists between the four-leggeds, the two-leggeds, and the winged ones....*

Black Elk, Sioux

## SELECTED QUOTATIONS

*Mother Earth, have pity on us and give us food to eat. Father, the Sun, bless all our children and may our paths be straight.*

Blackfoot Prayer

*The Sky blesses me, the Earth blesses me; up in the Skies I cause to dance the Spirits; on the Earth, the people I cause to dance.*

Cree Round Dance Song

*I am blind and do not see the things of this world; but when the light comes from above, it enlightens my heart and I can see, for the Eye of my heart sees everything; and through this vision I can help my people. The heart is a sanctuary at the centre of which there is a little space, wherein the Great Spirit dwells, and this is the Eye. This is the Eye of the Great Spirit by which He sees all things, and through which we see Him. If the heart is not pure, the Great Spirit cannot be seen.*

Black Elk, Sioux

*In the beginning of all things, wisdom and knowledge were with the animals; for Tirawa, the One Above, did not speak directly to man. He sent certain animals to tell man that he showed himself through the beasts, and that from them, and from the stars and the sun and the moon, man should learn. Tirawa spoke to man through his works.*

Chief Letakotys – Pawnee

*Every person has both a bad heart and a good heart. No matter how good a man seems, he has some evil. No matter how bad a man seems, there is some good about him. No man is perfect.*

Mohawk Tradition

*Do not seek to benefit only yourself, but think of other people also. If you yourself have an abundance, do not say, "The others do no concern me, I need not bother about them." If you were lucky in hunting, let others share it. Moreover, show them the favourable spots where there are many sea lions. Let other have their share. If you want to amass everything for yourself, other people will stay away from you and no one will want to be with you. If you should one day*

*fall ill, no one will visit you because, for your part, you did not formerly concern yourself about others. Grant other people something also. The Yamana do not like a person who acts selfishly.*

Yamana Inuit Tradition

*Our people are ebbing away like a rapidly receding tide that will never return. The white man's God cannot love our people or He would protect them...If we have a common Heavenly Father He must be partial, for He came to His paleface children. We never saw Him.*

Chief Seattle, chief of the Suquamish

*Our religion is the traditions of our ancestors -- the dreams of our old men, given them in solemn hours of the night by the Great Spirit; and the visions of our sachems, and is written in the hearts of our people.*

Chief Seattle, chief of the Suquamish

*Every part of this soil is sacred in the estimation of my people. Every hillside, every valley, every plain and grove, has been hallowed by some sad or happy event in days long vanished.*

Chief Seattle, chief of the Suquamish

*with the Great Spirit; and rather than knelling with my hands placed together in prayer, I let sweetgrass be feathered over my entire being for spiritual cleansing and allow the smoke to carry my prayers into the heavens. I am a Mi'kmaq, and this is how we pray.*

Noah Augustine, Toronto Star, Aug 9, 2000

*If you take the Christian Bible and put it out in the wind and the rain, soon the paper on which the words are printed will disintegrate and the words will be gone. Our bible IS the wind.*

Anonymous

*The Spirit of the Thunderbird flies to all four corners of the Earth and brings the people back to the natural way of life. Not through religion or a Native American way, but through the 'Old Way', that once belonged to all humans.*

Wa'Na'Nee'Che

## **MODERN SELECTED QUOTATIONS**

*Rather than going to church, I attend a sweat lodge; rather than accepting bread and toast from the Holy Priest, I smoke a ceremonial pipe to come into Communion*

## GLOSSARY

**ALGONQUIN** - language group of tribes such as the Ojibway, Chippewa and Ottawa whose traditional land is near the Great Lakes region

**ANIMALISM** - mystical relationship between hunter and animals

**ANIMISM** - belief that all things (animate and inanimate) have spirits or souls

**ELDER** - a man or woman of great respect who may teach others

**EMANATION MYTH** - myth about the origin of the world

**EMERGENCE MYTH** - myth about the origin of humans and other creatures

**FEATHER CARRIER** - one who has been invested with an eagle feather

**GHOST DANCE** - named for its round-dancing supposed to contribute to the return of the dead and of good times

**HANDSOME LAKE** - Iroquois holy man (1735-1815) who brought a Good Message inspiring natives to reform their ways

**KOYAANISQATSI** - "Life out of Balance" (Hopi)

**MASTER OF THE ANIMALS** - the idea that every animal species has its own supernatural ruler or master who protects the animals of that species and either offers them to or withholds them from the hunter

**MEDICINE** - any supernatural power, particularly if received from a Native

**MEDICINE BAG OR MEDICINE BUNDLE** - bag used to carry a variety of sacred objects  
Medicine Man/ Woman – one who has received supernatural power, particularly for healing

**MEDICINE WHEEL** - arrangements of stones around a centre to calculate days or events

**MIIGWECH** - Thank you

**MITAKUYE OYASIN** - "all my relations" or "we are all related in Lakota language.

**PEACEMAKER** - founder of the Iroquois League. Also known as Dekanawida

**PETROGLYPHS** - carved or drawn images or symbols on stone, cliffs, caves, etc.

**POTLATCH** - a social gathering that includes an elaborate gift-giving ritual where genuine sacrifice in giving is honoured

**POW-WOW** - important social gathering of the Plains tribes

**SHAMAN** - a religio-magical practitioner who, on behalf of society and with the aid of guardian spirits enters into a trance to establish contact with powers in the other world

**SHAMANISM** - a complex of rituals, tales and beliefs concentrated around a shaman

**SUN DANCE** - ritual dance of sacrifice honouring the Sun

**SWEAT LODGE** - steam-filled hut used in a ritual of purification

**TERRAGLYPH** - image carved into or built on the earth itself

**THREE REALMS** - physical, subtle (soul), spiritual (eternal)

**TOTEM** - an animal symbolic of a particular clan

**TRICKSTER** - a character in the mythologies of many North American peoples

**WAMPUM** - belt of coloured beads that recognizes a treaty or acts as a historical record

