

Title: 0040-Our Voices-Shamanism and Spirituality  
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I have been shown to these things I was trying to do is to, my job for what I have done for the last 20 years is to collect a story that I say is important to have it and I wanted to do it in so and in such a way that it could be written down. And, there are so many things that it happened today which indicate that we may not even have a chance to have money or to assist to, to record these things our own version in our own Omushkego version, of our past and of the things we do.

So that's what concerns me, so I ask people to help me to try to do that so I never did get it and we have this organization that existed for since 76 I think, 75, Ojibway- Cree cultures, to set it up to do exactly that but it didn't do. It was misunderstood what it what is supposed to happen to be use and in finally it lost its value today, to them it doesn't really work well. But it began to see that the staff now begin to see their best secret information that in before the others dies before it's a bit too late. The should have found out 20 years ago. Now we lose all the original elders who have a knowledge we lost most of the last ten years we lost about 11 that I've interviewed that died. And those who are interested about telling us the history.

And so what happen is that then 20 years ago you didn't seem much about this tradition activity it still very strict, the church authorities will still have that the old 1930, 1830 to conversion strong fight against it you do it had to still exist in a 19, 1965. And then in 1967, 75 it began to talked about, this traditional our spiritual practice we assured at first and people didn't care much in only happen down there. And finally it comes 1980, come in the open this traditional spiritual part of our people. And the church didn't do anything they didn't say anything and the people mind is still have a God this is evil he is supposed to be evil and what do we do, the elders just sort of had a big question over their head and they don't want to complain, didn't want to say anything they know that it was their great grandfather's tradition they don't want to say open, that

this is a sin, because it has been told. The missionary don't want to fight it out because they already know what's coming anyways so they want to say it's they don't want to say were sorry we saved that.

This is what I saw in coming in that ten years ago. That's why I wanted to study so much about it I want to investigate the old stuff about the spiritual part, which they calleded in shaman, shamanism they used to call it. Now it is called traditional practice. And anyway and that's what I was trying to do I was trying to keep those things and then to be written down. So when I went to see the leaders of our community like, like organizations they didn't see that. Even here when it come to us all of a sudden the spiritual part then we didn't have any information. Our elders did not tell us none of them, none of them want to open this say that this is the way it's done. But they know it; they know it all along it's in the back of their mind they just don't want to talk about it. Because of their fear the church might attack them might you know condemn them.

So there are other tribes to down south at the state, like other parts in Canada that just don't care they just went ahead and dig it up as much as they can. But you know that in a state in a state they shouldn't charge so much as 300 years ago. They revive it by their grandfather's stories and they begin to practice it. But they don't they didn't capture the Holiness of it the whole the way you develop, they didn't they just practice, ritualize it, drumming and dancing around and at you can see the little kids when they do that you can see it in them. They are only doing it for fun you can actually see see the little youngsters under just whaling around how much do they know what they're doing you see that yourself I see it. But then those a long time ago the children didn't do that, there's so mystified by they couldn't do it just anytime to jump their and dance around, no they didn't do it in this place. That's what I know that's what the elders told me. So these are the information that one of the have it in my tape and wanted to write it down so people can have it.

So to initiate I wanted official initiation somehow amongst us but no elders have a guts to say lets do. I ask them, finally I asked one elder who I know who I can trust is a matter of this I said what you think if we tried to start it otherwise if we don't do anything we will be just like the way

we are today. I said you have to bring the Apache or the Cheyenne to come and shows how to do it to our or spiritual or traditional stuff, or even the Ojibwa people from Thunder Bay , they they sort of bring their own this way. I the years to review yes we did have did not exactly as there's. I said that's what I want.

So I got it started then 2 years ago and began to think we should initiate. How do we initiate the stuff? I said we should cover the elders you know it doesn't matter what their, it doesn't matter if they want to or not but get them together anyway and put the date and sort of official activities the starting off point. We will have then written down activities the act of those old people who wants to get so then we would begin from there. And that's what I had in mind, so about my writing is what I didn't get much about all the cooperation from the, the organization.

My community totally ignored that my writing my collection of stories approaching others they may have difficulty of had trying to help me. Because their other organizations is what I say is what the Cree culture Center and the Omushkego people are supposed to have the arrow to carry all the information but they don't do this so, it doesn't bring out what I want, and so I wanted to push this other particular stuff. And when I spoke to this Stan Louder about this story's collection I said its in closed there, I said: it's not the spiritual tradition act of act its in closed in my, my collections stories it tells us the elders told us that and I said that's why I recorded. I said I want that thing to you to come. And I said because you know what we are today we have to hire, we have to transport other tribes to far distance to come and show us our stuff, I said that's not ours, I say it's a shame for them to do that. We intimidate our elders because we do that we allowed to be shown how we live in the past to another person, and that's not supposed to be the way. Because we should gather our elders here and get them to say yes to the way it's done it was done this way and we could write it down and officially write it down from there we will have a solid ground a platform where you could stand to say yes we did that have the spin-off would be easier. And he, he says it's a good idea and he agree, he something has to be done.

And I have already done these 2 years ago with this with their office the Omuskego but of course he is not the Omushkego he is not the nationality of grand Chief. But he was there and he

understood that I have stories and also that he didn't he here he didn't explain particularly about the traditional activities now I have explained that also I say in my tapes they are there I don't know how he could miss them with that was to bring it a little bit. So I spoke to him and then I spoke to also another man who is important to Omushkego offices Gregory Spence or involved in this standardization of the, the writing system. So it's important, because our tradition is all language, the written properly into be able to, to be understood by majority is very good, it's very important thing. In my opinion and I insist as much as I can so I thought it was a key person to you know to see. So I went to sit in his office I said this is what I want, so he says he went to see his bosses and all the people who have the, the authority in the Omuskego office, Norman Westly is one of them who has the education part, he wanted to see these things, so when he has heard from us the way the point of your mind he agrees,

so he says: " we must do it".

So now they have agreed to finance the initiative of this stuff. So the first part is there is no money there and there is nothing yet so now they have, they have agreed to, to take a little bit of money from each department put it here for the first time to try to be done. We tried this about five years ago one time, me and Norman we tried to bring it into Holly Lake in didn't turn out to be there is no money. And now we push again, I push as much as I can; now there is a possibility. So the September they're going to bring in at least five elders. That's just to that's just something to start off so it can be written down officially it's going to be stamped as an act of starting point. As I said before.

It is where you're jumping off point when you go on and its written and it can be organized later it can be finance perhaps then we can involve more elders and we can involve youngest and the young people to see the actual that came from their own elders and which they can be guided by the practice if it's, if it's OK with everything. As we know now they the church is actually just stepping aside for the time being, they didn't say okay they didn't officially write an open just say okay go ahead okay and drum and all this,

but they said:" were not against it".

They have not yet officiated the say to include it in their own rituals like Masses and all that stuff you know the holy mass. Catholics such as yet say bring in your drum and all that stuff they didn't say that yet. But they allow it to for this they allow it. So they just sort out wait and feel their way around.

So there sort of to see wait and see sort of stuff, whenever situation happens, happen in the future there are there they are not the ones to be looked at, that's what they're doing right now. So what worries me today is this you know you hear about, about the people of protest about the Native's stuff is a danger. It may just push down again, if the natives people lost their special treatment, if they lost the treaties, if it's abolished and if it's Indian act is abolished then the reserve is abolished they become a Canadian citizen the missionary will be stepped right there and said also these things stop practicing.

They could do that and that's what I'm afraid of if we can be beat that before. We will have originally now officially started already before they can say that where we did before this thing happened, it's already channeling even the way our Canadian. So that's the way I look at it. There are things, they are many things that I think about it's now is the time to do it, if we don't do it would actually be the most, what do they call it, see the thing is you know the one, what I hear about Ojibway people, Ojibway people around here or Oji- Cree especially, they've been saying the only secret things that we have had now yet held secret is, its a mitewiwin. They said that's the only thing left with us not yet been exploited by the major society. And that's connected to legends so what I went to Holland in 1985 to, to tell the stories,

one Chief says: "you went to spill the beans",

I said: " what do you mean"?

He says: " our legends and our mitewiwin is our last secret that we have a given to the White people"

I didn't know that, I didn't think they'd think that way. I didn't look at it that way. I thought it was it's a bad thing to hide something that is already lose. That we are going to lose with the elders I thought we were supposed to bring it up,

but he says:” it was a secret. It's a native's secret the mitewiwin is the one you can only can keep for yourself.”

They don't notice it so there is, and that's the truth about those people.

They think that and I begin to think that maybe oh well just seems maybe thinking that way. Maybe it's the last thing that I want to see being exploited in the open, but it does anyway.

Because one time about a year ago, two years ago, I think it was today is the 96 a 94 I think, I saw, I saw a radio program. I think about what they call studio 2, there were two white ladies who were interviewed in front of the TV and they said they want to bring it out to their Natives that they used to their Native activities someplace in B.C I think I'm not sure if it's Saskatchewan I think. One was blonde and one was brunette and they were very much not Indian at all in appearance but they just came from the fasting 20 days in the bush without the amenities so they can have the spiritual ritual awakening which native people practice. And they really give, they really give out of TV telling about this, so make it so simply easy to obtain (hahaha) know that's totally opposite what we know that's not true you cannot, you cannot give what they call mitewiwin in 20 days, you can't. You develop it- you grow up with it- you live in the bush with it, but those two white woman to say in front of the camera to say we are now Mitewiwin you know that is totally false. So they can stand in the middle in front of the TV camera about one million people watching as saying I am Mitewiwin practicing Mitewiwin it's totally exploitation. That's part of exploitation you don't do that. So so we are to be forced to come out with the truth this is the way you do not just 20 days out there. So that's what I thought maybe we should do to, I talked about it also about well truly it's not one of these.

There's thirty years maybe so it is the fact that that is truth is you mean you need to be born with it, and 20 years you'll mature and then you practice. Not just try these and it's the same with today's youngsters who have tried to practice traditional they haven't even try how to begin they just pick it from the middle action but not, not the mind side of it. You see what I think about this traditional activity is very right across especially in the state I think it's just a show business, it's been turned into a show business and that's another part of exploitation. Because it's public appearance they use that. Dancing in front of people you know it is beautiful to look at but what

is behind it? , how far it you have this man that is a good who is a good dancer, how much does he and mitew don't listen to him, Mteew doesn't come out in and like they spray himself in front of people he has a holly tickling in his body is being and his spirit. You know that doesn't, that doesn't dance out there. So that is a traditional spiritual thing. That's what the Omushkego people say that's why how come the Omushkego's don't have any activities like any other tribes.

And they said: "because spiritual traditional activities the most holy thing, you do not display. So that's the Omushkego sort of philosophy whatever it is. It is so that's about the end of this. Okay did you get everything?

Unknown voice:" I got everything,

Louis: " I mean I'm trying to put it from the beginning and I didn't start from the beginning in.

Unknown voice- George Fulford: "That's, that's really good, you said exactly what I have been thinking. I needed to hear you say it update, you said it really well. You see a lot of people down south that don't understand that either, and I'm not sure that every once in a while reminding myself by listening to it what your words are and then trying to explain as best as I can to young people who think that a powwow is a you know native religion. As if even religion is a right word to describe it.

Louis: "It's not religion".

George Fulford: "I know that but you know people like this stupid course okay where is it now they call it anthropology of religion, now okay they assume that everything you can use a word like religion"

Louis: "O I see"

George Fulford: "and that's so you start thinking those terms you start thinking you know of institutions and church and stuff and public singing, reading all of this and you forget there may be times a spiritual practice which are private and personal and you know that they say oh yeah powwow got to be some kind of religious, this must be native religion or must be the Omushkego people, well no.

Louis:"It is different for people all over the country"

George Fulford: " of course"

Louis: " Omushkego is different kind, if you have, if we were to see the Omushkego, if we could see, but we didn't see