

PROPHETIC VOICES

Of the Sisters of Honua



MARIA YRACEBURU

\$25.50

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Of the Sisters of Honua

A TIME OF PROPHECY FULFILLMENT IS AT HAND AND THE WOMEN WISDOM KEEPERS OF EARTH step forward to request our assistance in making Earth a Place of Respect. These women of great power and knowledge have long waited for the moment in time when reverence, responsibility, nurturing and life affirmation of the future would signal the re-turning of Earth... respected feminine in all areas – from healing and spirituality to peace education and cooperative lifestyle changes, the teachings being presented here are fundamental elements of earth wisdom, including actualization of common nobility, individual potential recognition, and the interconnection with Earth. The teachings reflect the proud and ancient truth of Now.

Maria Yracébûrû has spent her entire life in service to the traditional earth teachings of her hereditary lineage... that of the Quero Apache Snake Clan. It is her goal in this project, to bring together those that carry the teachings that will move the combined consciousness of humanity into the next Time Paradym, known to the Apache as the Great Coming Together, to the Inkan as the Time of Meeting Ourselves, and to the Hopi as the Time of Infinite Peace. These traditions and more are presented here, in great love and hope for finding a common ground of understanding that will carry Human Kind forward as balanced caretakers of Sacred Life.

PROPHETIC VOICES

Of the Sisters of Honua



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Stories edited & compiled by Maria Yracébûrû

Photography provided by Lynda Yracébûrû & the Sisters



To my Grandmothers, Auntys and Sisters, with thanks for their continued loving support.

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Sisters represented in photos, but not by listing are:

Great Aunty Asnyam	
Grandma Jenni Parker - dine	pg 10
Great Grandmother Naylin Lage	pg 164
Great Aunty Delshanay	pg 169
Daughter Katherine Reith	pg 203
Granddaughter Gabriella Tucker	pg 207
Granddaughter Marianna Tucker & Daughter in Law Cheri Tucker	pg 208
5th World Dragon Shiwoyé Bikazhe	pg 212
Marin the Great	back cover

Prose Prophecy by Maria Yracébûrû.

Angel of Joy by Kalei'iliahi.

SACRED VOICES was designed by Maria Yracébûrû.
It was composed on a MacIntosh computer using
Goudy Oldstyle and Times Roman.

Author's Note

THIS BOOK BEGAN BECAUSE OF THE CONSTANT PRESENCE OF SUPPORTING ELDERS IN MY LIFE. The vision of the Sisters of Honua Project, first launched in the fall of 2007, drew such a response from the Women Wisdomkeepers of the world that it could only follow that their words of experience, encouragement and insight be documented. The light that they have provided in our quest for peace throughout the world, and how to manifest that within the chaos of current historical perspective have made me re-evaluate my own life and dedication to what will come. They have brought me great honor, and a heart filling that is indescribable. When I made the request for essays, the results were immediately forthcoming, and the encouragement for this project and what the Elders of my tribe, the Apache, call Taanaashkaada – the Great Coming Together – was a blessing I now send forth upon the Winds of the Four Directions that they may touch you in the Heart of Oneness.

In most traditional earth societies, the teachings of women have been handed down from generation to generation in the oral manner. Held secret for many years, due to persecution, it came as a surprise when the Grandmothers came to my life partner Lynda and I, and asked us to be guardians of their work. The trust, wisdom and appropriateness of time, all set in motion a sequential effect that will be unfolding for another generation to interpret. While there are more than traditional Elders represented in this work, all are in agreement, that indigenous is strictly a matter of being born on earth, and carrying an understanding of our great responsibility as women to represent our Sacred Changing Mother... Esonkñhsendehí... Honua... by whatever name you refer to this planet, with integrity, love and the simple attribute of motherhood. The content is a birthing of unity among those Choosing cooperation as a new way of living.

The teachings are presented as close to original form as possible. I humbly submit that in the “pigeon” ways of some of our elders, too much editing can erase the true meaning behind the words presented. So I have done very little other than spell check. May you receive the essence of their intent.

ROYALTIES FROM THIS BOOK WILL BE DISTRIBUTED BETWEEN CREATE4PEACE, and the continued work of Sisters of Honua Pilgrimages and Gatherings. Create4Peace is an Arts & Music Therapy Project founded by Talia Morales and Vanessa Contopulos, MA, MT-BC. The traditional ways of earth are so strongly supported within this program, that the next 7 Generations might live, work and find peace within themselves, that the Sisters of Honua Project has made it their number one goal to support these fine young women in their mission. There are numerous ways you can help the Sisters of Honua Project and Create4 Peace. More information can be attained by going to our website at www.sistersofhonua.org.



To Lynda Yracébûrû of the Rom, without whom the truth of these words would never have been committed to these Talking Leaves;

To Shima Kalei'iliahi Muller Kamakawiwoole, Shima Gwendalle Cooper, Shima Sharron Stroud, PhD, Shima Serena Poisson and Tutu Yaya Beatrex Quntanna, and the other inspiring women of our family;

To Leilani Birely, Shima Happy Pahia, Hillary Raimo, Phil Chavez who illuminate our visions;

To Flo and Sal Yepa, Luisah Teish, Maria Teresa Valenzula and Regina Cuma Chavez, Dona Bernadina; along with countless other teachers, healers, and elders who preserve the teachings;

To the San Diego Women's Council & Moon Lodge, co-creative alliances of power;

To the omniscient Kokua - Helping Hands - Janet Lightstone, Janet Elk, and Talia Morales, whose love and diligent service help carry our words to the 4 Directions;

With focused intention - born of love and understanding - we honor you. We power up by being love always.



haaná násisdlii' ásts'iséhi nohwidloh honszee shinaal
hik'e shaa bil dagozhoo hanohwi'dihes nilhi

k'adíí tl'eé'yú tl'éedá' nahiseel hik'e oshkaah
násisidlii' bit'a'ts'in oniih bitl'áh ts'ilsoose
shidáyú dándiigo ilhoosh

síl'áá hidá yitis lehí k'ehgo diyi yiltsood
shil danolshoo ihi'dá kúgo
ádalde' baa kil nagowaahí

haaná násisdlii'sá'í hik'e shíí bichó
na'istl'ó diyi diyi dahidah

hik'e díí goldhí biyi' nleel t'ahi nshlii nohwá ndagoz'aa
baa shini-h bénádalniih gawa nohwidloh áde'hihi
hago doo nohwá nyée' daachaale hago honszee shinaal
kal'éé binádzahgu ch'il dénzhónéhi
godah ch'inga'go da'ilk'il dahitáá

*when i was small laughter announced my presence
and joy was the way adventure was claimed
now nights i dream and pray, becoming a wingged
soaring under stars before i sleep.*

*i have grown much as spirit has claimed me.
i love life this way, manifesting my visions.*

*when i am old and my granddaughters
carry medicine bundles the power has grown
and my time of adventure will still be my command,
i want you to remember all the laughter we've had
how it eased our tears, how it announced my presence,
like the presence of cactus flowers burst forth on a full moon.*

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THE SYNOPSIS

by the late “Grams” Twylah Nitsch

Great Mystery, I come to you with my Band Members who are my teachers of Love, Truth, and Peace. Their strong pure love is in every cell in my body. Their perfect image of my every organ is now vitalized within me in perfect form. Together, in body, mind and spirit, we are in your presence, with an awareness beyond our physicality.

This wholeness with my Teachers of Peace sets into motion a union greater than we have ever experienced. At this time of unity, we reinforce our physical and spiritual earth walk on this earth plane to give us growth and positive direction.

We live on a rainbow planet. We are all rainbow entities walking on the pathway of Love, Truth and Peace. Whole in body, mind, and spirit.

We choose to enter this experience as a spirit entity, walking in a physical world. My Teachers of Peace entered with me as part of my wholeness. Their mission is to guide my mission during every moment, with every breath, and with every step we take. Encoded within my physicality, are the questions that plot my growth as an earth entity. Also encoded within are all the answers. The lessons are what I seek during this earth visitation. When all the questions are answered, my Teachers of Peace and I leave this earth walk because our mission has reached completion.

The first commitment is: Who am I?

I am all the sacred attributes an individual can possess to support eternal love in bonding my life and growth within me as an example of Truth.

The second commitment is: What is the Truth?

Truth is all there is in accordance with nature which is all the forces of the uniworld considered collectively as one single operative principle for survival.

The third commitment is: What is our Mission?

Our mission is to learn how to walk in Truth on our Pathway of Peace.

The fourth commitment is: How do we accomplish our Mission?

We accept the guidance we call enthusiasm.

The fifth commitment is: What is Enthusiasm?

Enthusiasm is a living creative energy that enters within our area of stillness to awaken the inactivity of Truth.

The sixth commitment is: What is Survival?

Centered revelation radiating Truth is fixed survival.

I am now taking responsibility for a pattern of self-organization that gives me growth and positive direction. Each day for the next seven days, Friday to Friday, I am establishing a pattern of Truth and self-discipline greater than I have ever known in my life. Each day I shall devote a specific time in doing something for myself that sets a habit of self-esteem: make positive affirmations for personal success.

*Truth is our Gift of Beauty
Make it our Gift of Duty
Life abundant quickens us Now
Love eternal tells us How!!!*

*We are honorable, lovable, grateful and secure.
We have ambition and enthusiasm to endure.
Life abundant quickens us Now
Love eternal tells us How!!!*

We have accepted our inner wisdom as a guideline for self-development.

We have a creed:

*Oh Great Mystery
Your Gifts of Birth Enrich us
Your embracing comfort surrounds us
Your infinite Spirit dwells within us
Your Rainbow of Peace protects us
Your Cycles of Truth guides us
Your unconditional love supports us
Your Eternal Life uplifts us.*

We have a code of living:

*Our needs for Growth have told us
Our acts of Patience unfold us
Our lessons in Life behold us
Our expressions of Gratitude uphold us
Our Ego strives to patrol us
Our everlasting Peace extols us*

We walk on our Earth path whole in body, mind and Spirit as all our desires and achievements are enjoined with others who share this earth walk with us.

We accept our experiences as lessons of Truth knowing true happiness is a Sacred Trust.

We are in the Fifth World of Illumination. We have emerged from the Fourth World of Illusion... Delusion... and Confusion. We are all part of the History of the Earth.

*The History of the Earth is our wellness
While Entering within is our stillness.
Life abundant quicken us Now
Love eternal tells us How!!!*

Our Gift of Self-Awareness has entered within our Being. Our personal magnetism is centered. We are accepting being whole in body, mind and spirit through our lessons for growth and happiness. Within our inner being we are eternally grateful for the inner knowing of illumination. It has been

revealed to us through our talents and the ability to develop them that we have the potential to live a life of fulfillment.

We walk in four directions called the Four Winds with our Teachers of Peace called our Band Members. The North Wind is our Protector. The East Wind is our Enlightenment. The South Wind is our faith. The West Wind is our Truth Weaver.

*The Vibrant Core is our center of being
It transmits the Truth which is inner feeling.
Enthusiasm comes from a spiritual source
As humankind we express a physical course.*

We have an aura of wealth and achievement. We sit within our spiritual energy of Truth called a Medicine Wheel. Our Truth center of inner knowing processes the challenges of each and every day. We practice centering faith; concerns for others; spiritual magnetism; and love, within our Vibrant Core.

We have a sense of success and awareness to express an image of personal wellness. Personal wellness programs of self-esteem, self-development and self-evaluation as a total picture of self-image.

I am a total being with:

*The feeling of love is Appreciation
The feeling to care is Concern
The feeling to heal is Gratitude
The feeling to share is Service
The feeling to share is Responsibility
The feeling to think is Awareness
The feeling to endure is Growth
The feeling to help is Commitment
The feeling to forgive is Peace.*

We, as humankind, can join together to express the wellness of our place in our chosen environment. Every moment in every day, we are grateful as we say:

*We are grateful for abundant truth
We are grateful for everlasting love
We are grateful for glorious health
We are grateful for freedom from fear
We are grateful for the great supply of earth resources
We are grateful for the endurance of physical and spiritual strength
We are grateful we can see the future through the newness of each day
We join with all the creatures of our Earth Mother in glorious songs of praise and thanksgiving
For the abundant life that is ours.*

Oh Great Mystery, maker of all things, we align ourselves with you at the center of our Vibrant Core, our truth center. At once, we feel the cleansing of our lack and limitations and we allow new things to enter our being. As all things are made new we, too, are made new. We arise with stability and go forward to have an abundance of Peace and good while infinite growth flows through us.

The Truth within us knows what our right work is and what we must do to attain it.

*Oh Great Mystery,
As we enter within ourselves
Our love for you increases
A glow of Peace descends
From our feet Peace rises upward
It's from the earth our life transcends.*

Da Naho. Nayah weh Swenio

from Mythological Philosophy © 1995, permission granted

Editor's Note: Grams left us the Fall of 2007. It was a blessing to be part of her book Mythological Philosophy, and to have had her as a guiding force in my life. While she gave me permission to use this article many years ago for this book, it has only now come to fruition. Ukehi! – Maria



COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

EARTH RENEWAL

LIFE R

TURTLE WOMYN'S
MOON LODGES

communication
center

Working
Peace

warrior's
point of
freedom

Walking
Purpose

MEN'S FIRE
WARRIOR CLAN

seat of
health

Living
Harmony

ELDER'S
SOCIETY

imaging
center

Serving
Clarity

Loving
Freedom

gravitational
center

FIRE
CIRCLES

co
t

C

RITES

Graceful

Transformation

procreation
center

higher
heart

**TALKING
CIRCLES**

Learning
Will

2ndary
center
of will

Honoring
Enlightenment

**SWEAT
LODGE**

Accepting
Love

pt of
instant
memory

**HEALING
CIRCLES**

Seeing
Purity

proper
moving
center

**BUTTERFLY
CHILDREN'S LODGE**

Speaking
Grace

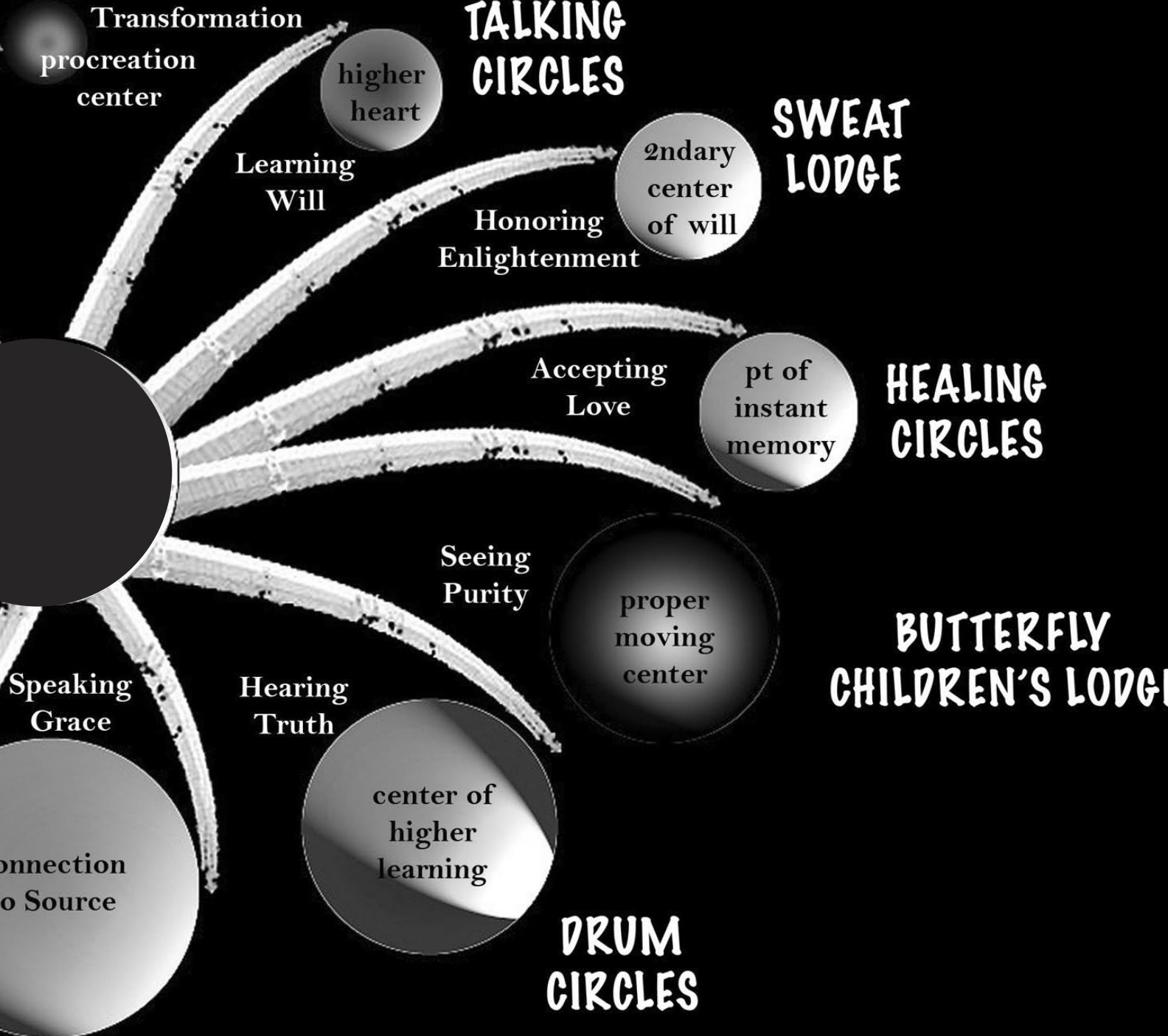
Hearing
Truth

center of
higher
learning

**DRUM
CIRCLES**

Connection
to Source

**CORE
COUNCIL**

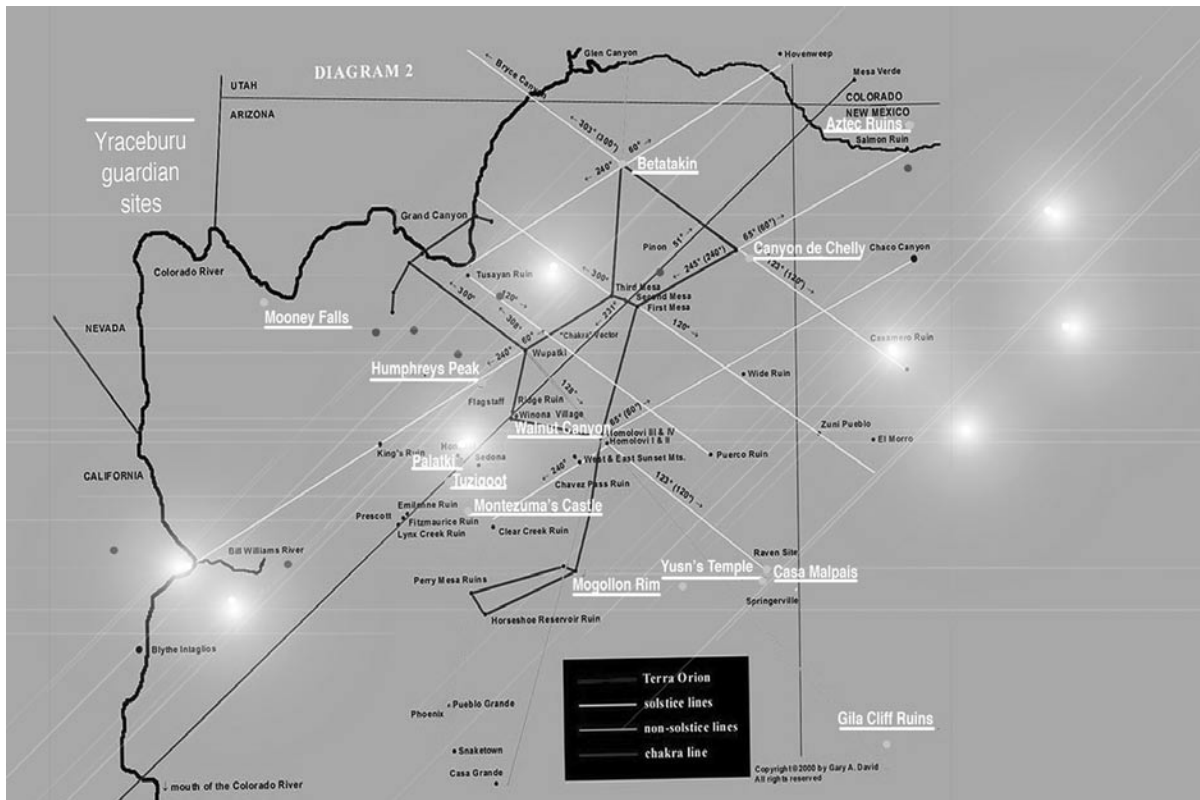




DAGODZAA – PROTECTORS

*balancing polarity... the run with the drum
 brings forth light, life and evolution.
 all things grow... from the waters depth
 pollen gratitude... yellow and white
 thunderbeings... secrets from the stars
 fire chant and remember... at once where we're at.*

*closing of roads
 painting on faces
 sunrise protectors
 calls all to be one.*



SALLY MONTOYA

*Apache Bear Clan Elder, Spiritual Woman, Grandmother
Sisters of Honua Go-Between*



HAPPY PAHIA

*Hawaiian Kahuna, Peace Educator
Kanaka Moali Wahine*



YÁ SIZIIGO – LEADERS STANDING UP

create four standing as one.
truth in prayer ties... sequential in time
family recognition... a counting of coup
claiming power... helps all to hold truth
quicken growth
the rhythm of community... listening to council
humility, giveaway... a generous beauty
listen, stimulate growth
quicken awareness
observe the silent language
track each expression of light
first search within... heart then mind
come together... recognize reflection
merge through bonding... spirit guide's sight
join as one and celebrate... bless and create.
follow through instigates living
detach and relax.
time to speak, work, play
receive, share, silence... and communion

MARIA YRACEBURU

*Apache Dreamer, Author, Ecopsychologist, Elders' Emissary
Co-Founder Yraceburu EarthWisdom & the Sisters of Honua Project*

We're about every person we help.

It makes our hearts fill so much more.

You were meant to live close to nature, and spiritually free, like the eagle who soars high in the heavens.

The birds protect us with power. Their feathers offer peace.

My family... warm and caring, generous and kind. We didn't know poverty; all cared for, and sharing.

Bright spots danced before my eyes.

Grandfather's voice echoed through the mists of time. "Time to rise with the wind..."

And the Grandmothers appeared, always there. "Evolution... part of the great Circle of Life.

Live life with joy. Greet change with great passion and ritual. Live deeply feeling.

Time passes quickly by slowing.

Happy Pahia, Kahuna Elder from Hawaii danced bare feet raising a little off the ground. Head back, she looked toward the sky, power in the light. She seemed weightless, timeless and as she danced she changed, becoming more and touching the rest of the world. And she was healed. There were tears in the eyes of those who gathering in circle and an ecstatic heart connection. Pahia's arms reached out, our hearts were filled. She went around the circle and blessed us, and this too filled us, bridging time. I was carried in prophecy.

--Along with all the great memories has come something I only dreamed I'd experience - the prophecies fulfilling. --

Pahia stopped dancing. It was a beautiful day, bright and clear and warm. We paused to watch a hawk circling above, its feathers aglow, backlit by the sun. We smiled as a large yellow butterfly landed on the petal of a flower. Dragonflies danced across the circle and disappeared around the world.

We listened, and lost ourselves in the beauty of Pahia's stories. We breathed a sigh of release in sacred ritual. The air smelled of pine and grass and earth, the sun was warm on our faces, the grass soft beneath our barefeet.

My mind adrift. A whole warm and caring people. Gentle parents. Elders held in high esteem, revered Spirit, respected life.

It's time to be different. The Grandmothers urge the women to discuss teachings. Leaders, healers, and Spirit Women. Children raised of earth mother.

Live in a circle. The power is a circle, and time comes around. Four directional poles begin to nourish the great circle. Evolution provides peace and light, strength and endurance have been attained.

Life from childhood to childhood. Earth mothers us. In front of Pahia we sat on the grass in barefeet and we felt the power seeping into our souls.

Earth is part of us. We feel her within our bodies. Science has proven the correlation between her magnetic grid and ours.

Enjoy the beauty of the green grass and trees. Find pleasure in the wildflowers. Savor the sweet scent of air as time evolves. The paradigm ahead is vast, limitless. And it is here, time, we are awaited.

Narrow opening, through which time narrows and chisels its way forward. Standing Tall Ones line the way. History is shown in ancient strata, space resting on space and all in one place.

-- Reflect and refresh --

Look up, move your eyes, grow, life span is only a short illusion. Breath in invigorating air and know that this moment is something certain and enduring, something in which you can believe.

I feel a sense of peace as I write this, a new depth of love and respect for the trust placed in me.

We are part of earth, sky, trees, and grass. The song of the wind is in our blood and in our hearts. The truth moves over the land.

We find pride, we belong.

Bid isolation farewell. Be with others, listen to the stories, the earth ways, hear the evolution of humanity.

Release fear and force patterns of fatalism into the past whence terror was born.

Almost, you can hear it now... heart pounding, energy whirls around, the wind calls through the trees.

Pahia gazed into the sky and raised her arms.

Pause, listening, waiting. The sun seemed to grow brighter. The time is here. We could feel its presence.

--Keepers of the Flame --

Listening, we heard the voices, like a whisper in the wind, calling to us through the mists of time.

It's here. We feel it's presence.

A breeze stirs the leaves, and its touch on our cheeks is soft and gentle, like a caress.

Draw a breath, murmur a silent prayer.

Relax. Let the energy surround you and fill you until it is part of you. Empty your mind of all thought.

Look closely. You are like others. You look around with questions in your eyes... just like others. Find them.

Soft chanting, the sizzling vibration of inner frequency elevation.

Sprinkle the land and all of her children with love.

Drift, weightless, stressless, through the dream of silent truth. Release pours from the Mother, draining the strength out of the ozone. Leaving humans suspended between time and space.

--By taking care of myself, I take care of everyone.--

Take a deep breath and fill your lungs with life force. It fires your vibration, filling you with exhilaration. Soar in the dream, and feel your ancestors with you, offering their support. You are human, a child of Earth and Spirit.

Pahia was right. We need vision to guide us. Think of purpose, a reason for living.

Drift, warm and safe, like a baby in it's mother's womb. Blurred images dance. Feel like child again, come home, eager to be able to trust again. Changing Mother earth becomes strong and laughing once more, carrying us through evolution.

A likeable, easy going dynamic... filled with love, patience, and tenderness, a beautiful memory.

Breathe aloud, and see the world that can be from answers found within heart and soul.

A great gladness overwhelms me and I feel the tears as I celebrate the Grandmothers coming forward, for the vision that can be, for the love we all can share.

My heart pounds. The future stands before us. There is a deep and abiding respect, as we acknowledge what can be.

Rising, energy runs, runs toward the waterfalls.

We are being reborn. The 4th World dies, and the 5th World emerges, humans who know who they are. Final forgiveness. It will be. What is to be, will be. Try to see what affirms life.

--Which way are we going?--

As you think about peacefulness and security, know that you already have them. You have started on a journey, there's no turning back.

Think on alterations of emotion in the heart, and recall the voice"... sky and whirlwind, polarity closes. Now is the time of life, of Changing Mother earth.

Perhaps we arrive at vision.





ITSE'AKICITA – FIRST GUARDIANS

*arc the fire... glorious arrow preceding birth
release and work intimately... interchanging patterns
cooperative images... revealed in directions
create first safety... inner child is emerging
sacred one who is like a parent
forms unconditional healing.
call on condor... bringing good medicine
hope brings counter balance... nite of fear restores rhythm
purpose simply stated... symbolic action clears minds
special ritual... cycles of thought
personal earth renewal... klo'hada – white lightning
is good sign for all... remain close to four legged
winged ground in electrical mooring
charging essential preparation for ceremony.
everything changes*



MARA FREEMAN

Celtic Magic, Avalon Mystery School

The Voices of the Wells

The early peoples of the British Isles and Ireland experienced their world as a living universe, teeming with abundance in land, sea and sky. They moved in the rhythms of the seasons as if to the music of a great dance, and saw the giver of all this bounty as a Mother Goddess whose name has come down to us today as Brigit, Brighid, or Bride.

Brigit showed her love for her children in many ways, which are related in the old stories. The pre-Christian Celts had an oral culture, so Brigit's lore was not written down until the Christian scribes came. By this time, the goddess was renamed as St. Bridget, but her qualities were the same: As a personification of the fertile Earth, she gave her people food and drink: As patroness of bee-keeping, honey poured from her hives; she presided over brewing and fountains of ale flowed forth; her sacred white cow with red ears kept the people of Ireland in butter, milk and cheese, and she even created a Lake of Milk in the fertile eastern province of Leinster. Women tended their hearth-fires in her name as late as the 19th century in Scotland, and celebrated her feast-day in the early spring when she came to bring light, life and warmth to the land once again.

Above all, Brighid was associated with sacred springs to which people came for healing and for answers to troubling questions. These springs, now holy wells, can be found throughout the Celtic countries today, many of them incorporated into Catholic shrines, still visited by pilgrims seeking comfort and healing from St. Bride. One of these is on a hill overlooking the sea in County Clare: The well is entered through a passage that is not unlike an entrance into an underworld shrine. There is a feeling of numinous power as you pass through walls covered thickly with prayers and photographs of loved ones left by hundreds of visitors. Candles flicker in the semi-darkness, flower petals float upon the waters of the little bubbling spring at the end of the passage, where Brigit's palpably healing presence resides.

In previous centuries, some holy wells were attended by a ‘priestess,’ usually a highly-respected old woman, who looked after the place and gave oracles in return for her palm being crossed with silver. She sat at the entrance to what was seen as one of the gates of the Otherworld, where she had a “direct line” to the goddess herself. This was similar to the role played by priestesses of ancient Greece where the oracular and healing arts were the special province of women, and usually took place at springs, caves, and other entrances to the Earth.

The Rape of the Well Maidens

A poignant story from the medieval Grail cycle tells how this ancient connection to the Sacred came to be lost. Long ago in the country of Logres, (an archaic term for Britain) tired hunters or travelers found refreshment at sacred grottoes where a spring gushed out. Here they were given food and drink by the “maidens of the wells,” women who were the guardians of these holy places. But one day, an evil king raped one of them and stole her golden cup, and his followers treated the other maidens likewise. As a result, the grottoes were deserted, the wells dried up and the countryside was stricken with drought:

The land was dead and desert . . .
So that they lost the voices of the wells,
And the maidens who were in them.

The “voices of the wells” suggests that these maidens were oracles. When the Maidens of the Wells were violated, the channels to the Otherworld were severed, leaving the world cut off from its wisdom. Its spiritual riches, once so accessible to humankind, were withdrawn:

And since then the court of the Rich Fisher which made the land to shine with gold and silver, with furs and precious stuffs, with food of all kinds, with falcons, hawks and sparrow-hawks’ could no longer be found. In those days when the court could still be found, there were riches and abundance everywhere. But now all these were lost to the land of Logres.¹

The depth and profundity of this sad story is made clear when examined in the light of early Celtic beliefs about the sanctity of the Earth and the importance of the ruler’s relationship with it. It was deeply rooted in Celtic society that each chieftain had to undergo a ritual marriage with the goddess of the land, for without her consent the country would fall into ruin: harvests would fail, the trees would bear no fruit; women would miscarry, and the people sicken and die. In the light of this honorable

ritual contract between ruler and land, it is easy to see how the rape of the well-maidens utterly turns this ancient wisdom tradition on its head. The balance between the human world and the living world of nature is overthrown, as the king uses his brute strength to sexually violate the maiden and seizes her freely-given golden cup for his own gratification. Because the maiden and her sisters personify the fruitful earth, this brutal act has the inevitable result of turning the land into a barren wasteland. To put this into a historical context, in the words of ecofeminist philosopher, Charlene Spretnak:

In the patriarchal societies that replaced the earlier Earth honoring and female-honoring cultures of Neolithic Europe, both women and nature were – and are – considered potentially dangerous and chaotic. Only by dominating and transcending both of these seats of supposedly threatening power could males experience spiritual deliverance according to patriarchal religion.²

This story of the raped well-maidens could not be clearer in its message: that we rape and plunder the earth at our own dire cost. Violence done to women is violence done to the Earth—and to the feminine within each one of us, be we man or woman. Living in a world that constantly devalues the feminine principle—the intuitive, feeling, artistic, relationship and process oriented—it is no wonder that the image of the Wasteland is as fresh today as it was seven hundred years ago. T.S. Eliot tapped into the collective unconscious when he sounded the anguished note of the modern age with his great poem of the same name. And the image has lost none of its clarity as we enter a new century:

What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
You cannot say or guess, for you know only
A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,
And the dry stone no sound of water.³

The Wasteland lies all around us today. Patriarchal religions such as Judaism and Christianity, which favor a distant, transcendent sky-god model over an immanent, earthly goddess, taught us to split our experience of the world into two: Spirit and Matter, rather than seeing these qualities as two aspects of the Sacred Whole. The resulting centuries of separation from and denigration of the natural world has resulted in many people of the ‘civilised’ countries suffering from a sense of alienation and emotional homelessness. The over-valuing of masculine qualities such as drive, growth, action, the intellect, focus on goals, and control, have resulted in the predatory, unbridled domination of other

people and other countries – even the Earth herself, whose health has been drastically compromised by the continual plunder and pollution of her vital systems: water, air, forests and seas. Like the rape of the well-maidens, Earth’s precious gifts are ripped out and the glorious, miraculous Web of Life, that took millions of years in the making, is torn apart for the gratification of the material desires of the few. The under-valuing of feminine qualities such as receptivity, connection, feelings, process, and healing have resulted in a world that refuses to prioritize cooperation, ecological awareness, interdependence, nonviolence, conservation and the development of peaceful solutions to world problems. Our relationship to the Earth could not be further from the loving relationship of our ancestors with the Earth goddess Brighid.

A New Communion

To begin healing this sorry state of affairs – to restore the sacred springs, heal the feminine wound and rediscover the Courts of Joy – women must look for the Voices of the Wells within the deep waters of the soul. We must learn to allow the living waters of spirit to flow through us so that we may speak the truth and point the way to healing in harmony with the Great Mother who has gifted her children with this miraculously beautiful planet. It is not enough to regard the world around us as “the environment,” a word that suggests that everything which is not a person is merely a background to the all-important drama of the human race, to whom “all the world’s a stage.” Both the ancient wisdom of indigenous peoples and the modern science of ecology tell us that our race is one strand in an interconnected network of life-forms which are thoroughly interwoven and interdependent. Theosophist and visionary, Geoffrey Hodson has written:

The globe is a living being with incarnate power, life and consciousness. The earth breathes. Its heart beats. It is the body of a Goddess who is the Spirit of the Earth. Rivers are as its nerves, oceans great nerve-centers. Mountains are the denser structure of a giant whose outer form is humanity’s evolutionary field, whose inner life and potent energies of the abiding place of the Gods. The approach to Nature by modern people is almost exclusively through action and the outer senses. Too few among her human devotees approach her in stillness, with outer senses quieted and inner sense aroused. Few, therefore, discover the Goddess herself behind her earthly veil.

It is in the stillness of the soul, beneath the ceaseless chatter of the mind, that we can reconnect with the living powers of the Universe, to learn their language, hear their stories and songs, open to their wisdom – and pass the message onto our fellow human beings that the Earth is alive and bleeding

from the wounds we have caused Her. To do this, we must become the Voices of the Wells ourselves – and the Voices of the Rivers, the polluted waterways and seas; Voices of the Trees and the dying, decimated forests; Voices of the Birds and Animals, whose own voices become fewer each year as industrial development consigns more and more species to the eternity of extinction. This is a task all human beings must be prepared to engage in, whatever our gender, but women, who have suffered the same wounding as the planet, are uniquely positioned to empathize with our Mother Earth, and to speak on behalf of all her creatures.

We must speak for the Earth as mothers, daughters, teachers, businesswomen, scientists, service workers, lawyers, laborers, or in whatever role we play in the world. We must let her voice be heard through whatever medium we most comfortably express ourselves in: words, music, art, crafts, and in the settings we find ourselves in each day, whether that be the home, office, school, court, university, factory or fields. Becoming Earth's mouthpiece is not necessarily about becoming an activist or engaging in the political process, although many do feel called to speak for the Earth in this way. It is a matter of recognizing that, because we are an intrinsic part of the Earth, her need for healing is not distinct from our own. Through living our lives in the awareness of the sacredness of the Earth, and recognizing our interdependence with her in everything we do, we naturally come to make different decisions about the way we live: what we eat, where we buy our food, what we wear, what kind of transport we use; how we heat or cool our homes; what kind of job we do, how we raise our children. In each area of life, the awareness that we are inseparable from the Earth will inevitably make us choose the path that serves both us and the planet best. This shift in perception naturally returns us to our true selves, for our "ground of being" is rooted in the living universe just as surely as a tree is rooted in the soil and flows from the same wellspring of life as do all the rivers of the world. Eventually, those whose lives we touch will also begin to perceive the Web of Life in this new, yet old and familiar, way as our true home, the original mothering source of all good, and the restoring of the wasted land can begin.

I know that I am one with beauty
And that my comrades are one.
Let our souls be mountains,
Let our spirits be stars,
Let our hearts be worlds.

-- Ella Youn

(Footnotes)

¹ Brown, Arthur C. L. *The Origin of the Grail Legend*. New York: Russell & Russell, 1966.

² Spretnak, Charlene. *Earthbody and Personal Body as Sacred*, in *Ecofeminism and the Sacred*, ed. Carol J. Adams. New York: The Continuum Publishing Co., 1993, p. 272

³ Eliot, T. S. *The Wasteland and Other Poems*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1958.

