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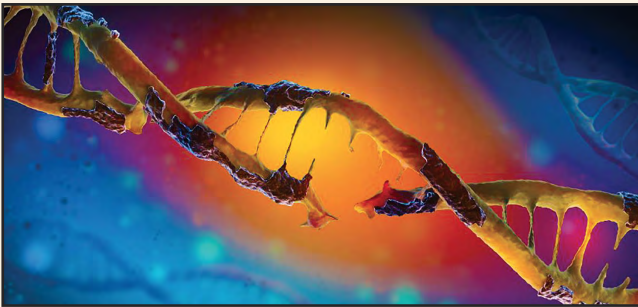
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"Then I was standing on the highest mountain of them all, and around and about me was the whole hoop of the world... I was seeing in a sacred manner the shapes of all things in the spirit and the shapes of all shapes as they must live together like one being. And I saw that the Sacred Hoop of my people was one of many hoops that made one circle, wide as daylight and as starlight and in the centre grew one almighty flowering tree to shelter all the children of one Mother and one Father, and I saw that it was holy."
(From the vision of Nicholas Black Elk Lakota Holy Man: 1863 - 1950)

From the Editor



As a moderator on the largest shamanism group on Facebook, I often see posts which either ask 'how one becomes a shaman,' or posts from people seeking to become a shaman and seeking a path which they can follow. The lack of an established traditional path in the West seems one of the hardest things that people interested in shamanism have to face, and instead many people have to pick things up here and there, from books and workshops - many of which are full of inaccurate information and unuseful practices.

And yet the spirits find people, and lead them on adventures sometimes, often in the strangest of ways; I have a friend who met a Tuvan trained shaman - 'by chance' - in a London launderette and became their apprentice. It would appear that, very often, if the spirits want you, a way will open for you.

Many of the articles in this issue of Sacred Hoop are about this subject, about the paths people have been led down after the spirits danced into their lives. We have writers who became deeply involved with traditions in Mexico, Peru, South Africa and Tuva.

These people are bringing things back to the West, bringing back precious treasures which can enrich our own culture.

There are no long-trodden paths yet in the West, but I am confident that is just a temporary gap in our culture, I have great hope that traditions - which have been tested and honed, and which are real and grounded - will emerge here, and there will be in the future, an established way that people in the West will be able to follow the prompting of the spirits. May it evolve and come swiftly - we desperately need it in the world we have right now.

Blessings to all Beings
Nicholas Breeze Wood