



Are we stealing and exploiting tribal culture? : pages 28-32

EDITOR, DESIGN AND PRODUCTION:

Nicholas Breeze Wood

DESIGN AND EDITORIAL CONSULTANT:

Faith Nolton

PROOF READING:

Linda Booth, Faith Nolton

CONTACT DETAILS:

Sacred Hoop Magazine
Anghorfa, Abercych, Boncath,
Pembrokeshire, SA37 0EZ, UK
Email: Nick@sacredhoop.org
Tel: (01239) 682 029
www.sacredhoop.org

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ON BEING A SHAMAN 15-17

With the increase of popular 'are you a shaman?' type websites online, **Mary Mueller Shutan** looks at the reality of being a shaman and how the word has become devalued.

SOUL BIRDS 18-22

Birds have held a sacred fascination for humans as far back as we can go. **Brian Taylor** looks at some of the ways birds featured in the mythic lives of our ancestors.

HEALING THE MOTHER WOUND 23-27

There is, an often un-noticed patriarchal worldview which effects both men and women across the world. **Bethany Webster** encourages us to look at this pattern and shows how it is transmitted from mother to daughter.

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CULTURAL APPROPRIATION - THE 'S' WORD . . . 28-32

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THE FOUNDING INSPIRATION FOR SACRED HOOP MAGAZINE IN 1993
"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)



Healing the mother wound : pages 23-27

From the Editor



We live in a dramatically changing world. I chat to shamans in Mongolia on a daily basis via Facebook - something that was unthinkable even ten years ago. Old ways are changing and being lost, new ways are emerging - some of them wholesome, but many of them seemingly facile.

In Mongolia, people are moving from the wild open steppes to the cities, and shamanism has become a way to express cultural identity - with old traditional forms mixing with new-age forms imported from the West and Russia. Our first article meets traditional shamans living in Ulaanbaatar, trying to balance the modern with the ancient.

In the West, nowadays, it seems everything is 'shamanic,' from clothes to cornflakes, yoga to yogurt. Many people declare themselves to be shamans with seemingly no real understanding of what a shaman is and does. This theme is explored with our second article and is a recurring theme in this issue of Hoop.

Shamanism comes from an understanding of animism - a knowledge that everything is alive and connected. Humans have always observed nature, and birds have been a vitally important aspect of this sacred observation. Our third article about birds and the soul reflects this.

But humans have become increasingly removed from nature. With that separation we have become increasingly removed from meaningful initiations into adulthood - perpetuated by a patriarchal culture which suppresses women and infantilises men, resulting in out-of-control giant toddlers like Donald Trump. So Bethany Webster looks at the 'mother wound', a major cause of this lack of maturity.

Of course, such soul-searching pales into insignificance when we are gripped with pain or illness, and our next article offers some practical help to keep us connected to the sacred at such times.

'All shamans are artists - but not all artists are shamans' goes an old saying. Jon Turk and Jody Weber look at the meeting between shamanism and art in the form of contemporary dance.

Today, as I write this, the news is full of stories about disastrous coral bleaching on the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, caused by a change to the natural environment. Closer to my home, I no longer see the hedgehog that lived in my garden a few years ago - it has gone, as so many of their kind have. Our last article is about these wonderful little beings and the surprising role they have in many sacred traditions from around the world and across time.

Things are changing - we need to hold on to our hats, and maybe we need to roll up into a spiny ball from time to time too.

Blessings to all Beings
 Nicholas Breeze Wood