



**Michael Harner's Search for Shamanism - pages 6-13**

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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)

*From the Editor*



Two things I feel good about; the sun is shining (but hush - you'll scare it and it will go away again), and the fact that this is our twentieth year anniversary issue of Sacred Hoop Magazine - the first of our new digital format. But remember you can still buy paper issues if you want to - see the little notices scattered through the magazine.

I have had shamanism as my day job now for almost 30 years, but that pales into insignificance compared to Michael Harner, our first writer, who started his 'day job' in the year before I was born. I think it is a 100% sure-fire bet I would not have my day job and you would not have this magazine if it were not for Michael's work, so I am absolutely delighted to have him lead this issue of Hoop, and I hope you enjoy the article as much as I have.

Michael began his career in anthropology, looking at the shamanic traditions of the Jivaro (Shuar) people of South America, who use ayahuasca and other teacher plants as a major part of their tradition. And so our following two articles are interviews with shamans coming from this ayahuasca tradition. Shaman Guillermo Arévalo talks to Jorge N. Ferrer, and Curandera Eda Zavala Lopez talks to Katharine Gregg. Both of these shamans stress the importance of respect when working with these powerful plant teachers and healers and I hope you find their insights interesting.

Joanna Shipley works with plant healers too, but in a very different way, as she combines homeopathy with her shamanism. Joanna set up a scientific double blind trial using shamanic journeying to determine the nature of homeopathic medicine, which of course has ramifications for both disciplines.

The natural world has always been the starting place for shamanism, as well as homeopathy. Animals are of course part of this healing connection, and we explore some of the symbolism of the Loon, a sacred bird in many Northern cultures.

We in the West are a fairly urban society, but urbanisation is spreading in many places in the world, including shamanic heartlands such as Mongolia. Lily Sage Schweitzer writes about her encounters with the urban shamans of Ulaanbaatar, where shamanism has undergone some fairly big changes in recent years.

In our lead article, Michael Harner mentions the use of fringed eye curtains in Siberian shamanism, and so I thought it would be nice to say a bit more about this. And so, taking a prompt from the many readers in our recent Sacred Hoop survey who requested more craft features, I have written an article about these masks and given some ideas about how you can make one yourself to incorporate into your shamanic practice.

Did you know that the 20th of July, 2013 will be 'International Swastika Rehabilitation Day'? The symbol the Nazi party hi-jacked and made into a sign of fear is actually one of the world's oldest and most sacred signs of peace and life. So, we are doing our little bit to promote awareness of the true meaning of the swastika and its role in shamanism and other sacred traditions. I wonder how many of us would have the courage to wear a swastika T-shirt on the day...

I guess all of us are upholding the sacred in different ways, it is what we do, so power to us all in our upholding.

Blessings to all Beings:  
 Nicholas Breeze Wood