



The Mystery of the Shaman's Mirror : pages 6-15

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A Blackfoot Sun Dance : page 16-19



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With a history of use stretching back some 4000 years, bronze mirrors are one of shamanism's oldest ritual objects. Modern day mirror smith **Marco Hadjidakis** shares the art and the mystery.

THE TALE OF THE TOLI 14-15

There are many teachings about the use of the toli - the bronze shaman's mirror. **Heidi Abgey** shares an ancient teaching story from her Siberian shaman ancestors.

A DANCE SWEET AND FLUID 16-19

The sun dance is an ancient Native American Plains People's renewal ceremony. **David Thomson** has danced at Blackfoot dances and shares the story of his first dance

GRIZZLY 20-24

In many animistic and shamanic cultures the Bear is highly regarded and honoured as a bringer of teachings and a powerful healer. **Geral Blanchard** looks at some Native American traditions about this mighty relative.

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Our Need to Connect to the Green : pages 25-31

GREENING UP 25-31

We live at a time of great change and crisis - an interesting time to be alive. **Mary Courtis** looks at why we need to connect with earth spirits rather than intergalactic beings, in order to be rooted and connected to our mother, the earth.

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In Lakota traditions, White Buffalo Calf Woman brought the sacred pipe and medicine teachings to the people.

Brooke Medicine Eagle shares how her teachings lead to a sacred relationship with all beings and a deep inclusivity.

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Every mother retrieves a spirit from the spirit world to this world. **Christine Nightingale** looks at why we choose our parents, and why parents choose their children.

SHAMANS AT THE CENTRE OF THE WORLD . . 36-43

Most of Central Asia is now Islamic, but in the past the area had animistic and shamanic traditions, and these often continue under a veneer of Islam. **Nicholas Breeze Wood** introduces the ancient traditions of the region.

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Shamanism and the Autistic Spectrum, **Forest** shares her story. about how shamanism dramatically changed her life and helped her come to terms with her autistic neurology.

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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)



The Islamic Shamans of Central Asia : pages 36-43

From the Editor



For me, part of the beauty of animistic spirituality - and through that, the more recent traditions of shamanism - is how long humans have been practising it. Estimates vary - and traditions will have changed drastically over the millenia - but there is archaeological evidence to show that ritualistic practices - probably connected to both fertility and the ancestors - stretch back as far ago as 300,000 years.

A much more recent part of this ancient tradition - with a history of a mere 4,000 years or so - is the use of Bronze mirrors. Our first two articles look at this traditions - which is a vitally important part of a lot of Siberian and Central Asian shamanism. We meet a modern day mirror smith, and have the rare change to read an ancient Siberian shamanic teaching story, never before published.

There are so many ancient practices and traditions held by cultures across the planet. One from the Plains people of North America is the annual renewal ceremony of the Sundance, and we hear the story of one man's first dance

Part of animism is the understanding that all beings are alive, have spirit and are our relations. For many cultures all around the world the bear is considered a close relative, and we look at some of the Native American traditions around bear in our next article.

Animism is about the earth. We have connection to the stars because they too are alive and one of our relatives - but we live here, our blood and bone is of the earth. Our next article then is about the need to be connected to the earth, rooted to our mother in a very real way.

But, although we are of the earth, spirits come from elsewhere to teach and be taught. So, in our next two articles, we look at the message of the important Lakota spiritual being, White Buffalo Calf Woman, and also how we all come from the beyond to this earth.

I firmly believe that humans are hard-wired to be animistic, so even when a non-animistic monotheistic religion stamps its identity on a culture, traces of the older animism remain - you can take the people out of animism, but you can't take animism out of the people. We see this in Europe where traces of paganism still exist, despite the church, and the same is true of Muslim Central Asia, where a form of Islamic shamanism continues to have a strong presence.

Animism is a way of perceiving the world, and everyone has a different perception. We hear from one woman with autism about how she perceives the world and how shamanism changed her life.

And we finish with a roundup of some more free animistic and shamanic films available on the internet. So now, grab yourself a bag of animistic popcorn, and we'll get on with the show!

Blessings to all Beings
 Nicholas Breeze Wood

