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Only the Earth Shall Endure: Thoughts on Native American Survival

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Abstract

Our native nations of the Americas are survivors. We have survived over 500 years of attempted assimilation and genocide. Manifest Destiny is only an excuse to take our resources and conduct ethnic cleansing. Nations have survived in spite of oppression, imperialism, invasion, and capitalism. Our history and cultural memory differ greatly from that of the general American society. Information about Native Americans in American history books is minimal and for the most part inaccurate. The indigenous nations need to be brought into the twenty-first century, into the new millennium to overcome major problems they face such as poverty, insufficient health care and education, crime and treaty violations that plague their homelands. We need to be seen as here and now, not in the skewed view of the past. We are resistant to joining mainstream America because to do so would mean to lose the things that mean the most to us, and that is our culture. Cultural survival means protecting what we deem of value as a society. Value is what has allowed us to live in harmony with our Mother Earth and all living things. Mother Earth will be just fine. Humankind is the one you need to worry about and pray for. Throughout time Mother Earth has seen species come and go. When one is out of balance, they are not long for this world. As the NuEta people say “Only the Earth Shall Endure.”

Keywords Genocide, survival, Bering Strait, George Catlin.

Yalnızca Toprak Varlığını Sürdürmeye Devam Edecektir: Kızılderililerin Hayatta Kalışları Hakkında Düşünceler

Öz

Amerika'nın yerli ulusları beş yüz yıldan uzun süredir asimilasyon ve soykırım çabalarına rağmen hayatta kalmayı başarmışlardır. Önlenebilir Kader Doktrini, kaynaklarımızın elimizden alınması ve izlenen etnik temizlik politikası için sadece bir mazeretti. Yerli uluslar, baskılar, emperyalizm, işgal ve kapitalizme rağmen hayatta kaldı. Tarihimiz ve kültürel belleğimiz bugünkü Amerikan toplumunun tarih ve kültürel belleğinden oldukça farklıdır. Amerikan tarih kitaplarında Kızılderililer hakkında yer alan bilgiler yetersiz ve büyük oranda yanlış. Bu tarih ve kültürel bellek, yerli ulusların fakirlik, yetersiz sağlık ve eğitim olanakları, yüksek suç oranları ve çığneden anlaşmalar gibi sorunlarına çözüm üretebilmek adına, yirmi birinci yüzyıla taşınmalıdır. Geçmişin çarpıtılmış yaklaşımları bir kenara bırakılarak, Kızılderililer artık görülmeye başlanmalıdır. Ana akım Amerika'ya katılmaya direnmemizin sebebi, bunun bizim için her şey anlamına gelen kültürümüzü kaybetmek anlamına gelmesidir. Kültürümüzü hayatta tutmanın yolu bir toplum olarak değerlerimizi korumaktan geçer. Toprak Anayla ve tüm diğer canlılarla uyum içinde yaşamamızı mümkün kılan işte bu değerlerimizdir. Toprak ana iyidir ve iyi kalacaktır. Asıl endişe etmemiz ve dua etmemiz gereken insanoğludur. Yüzyıllardır, Toprak Ana türlerin doğuşuna ve kayboluşuna tanıklık etmiştir. Toprak anayla uyum bozulduğunda türlerin uzun süre varolması mümkün değildir. NuEtarın da dediği gibi, "Yalnızca toprak varlığını sürdürmeye devam edecektir."

Anahtar Kelimeler: Soykırım, hayatta kalma, Bering Strait, George Catlin

Ma Ah Nuh, Ta Skach, Me ma O'doch, Shehek Shote weda seh. (In NuEta: My people, I greet you, I am here, I am called The White Coyote.) Greetings in my NuEta Language. The white man calls us Mandan, but the name for ourselves is NuEta, meaning the people.

My people's homelands lie in the very heart of our great Turtle Island along the Missouri River in North Dakota. I am NuEta (Mandan), Hidatsa, Aps'aaloke (Crow), and Cree.

Our native nations of the Americas are survivors. We have survived over 500 years of attempted assimilation and genocide. What they referred to as explorers we called invaders. What they called pioneers we called squatters. The freedom of their religion meant the suppression of ours.

The America that they claim is still and always will be our homelands. Manifest Destiny is only an excuse to take our resources and conduct ethnic cleansing. Our history through times of triumph and tragedy is not so different from that of other nations all over the world. Nations have survived in spite of oppression, imperialism, invasion, and capitalism. Our culture defines us as human beings. It tells the world who and what we are, what our values are, how we live, and how we see and interact with our world.

In November 2009, while presenting at the Hacettepe University Conference, *Native American Voices: Languages of Survival*, I was asked by Turkish students what advice Native Americans might give to Turkish students about America. After a few moments of thought I responded "The best advice we Native Americans could offer Turkish students on America is... don't trust the Americans."

Our history and cultural memory differ greatly from that of general American society. Information about Native Americans in American history books is minimal and for the most part inaccurate. When asked what an Indian looks like, most Americans describe a Northern Plains Indian that lived 150 years ago, complete with feathers and tee-pee. In their minds we still exist in that place, in that time. It is their stereotypical romanticized view of Native Americans. For the most part, we are invisible in America. As Ralph Ellison once wrote:

I am an invisible man. No, I am not a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allen Poe; nor am I one of your Hollywood-movie ectoplasms I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination—indeed, everything and anything except me. (3)

So why would we be invisible in our own lands? Do the Americans know that we are still here? Or, is it perhaps they do not want to look in the mirror and see what they have done to the indigenous of this land? In the words of Winona LaDuke (Anishinabeg), an environmentalist from the White Earth Reservation: “We are erased from the public consciousness because if you have no victim, you have no crime” (“Voices from the White Earth”).

The indigenous nations need to be brought into the twenty-first century, into the new millennium. To leave us in the past is not to address our needs and concerns in the present. The indigenous nations need to be brought into the twenty-first century, into the new millennium to overcome major problems they face such as poverty, insufficient health care and education, crime and treaty violations that plague their homelands. We need to be seen as here and now, not in the skewed view of the past.

In America, we lead the nation in all the wrong areas. We are number one in diabetes, teen suicide, school dropouts, inadequate access to quality healthcare, and poverty. At one time, our people knew no diabetes, alcoholism, drug abuse, ulcers, heart disease, cancer, or tooth decay. Due to changes in diet and environment, many of our tribal nations suffer ill health and inadequate healthcare. As a free people we lived a much healthier lifestyle.

As the indigenous of our lands, we are in survival mode in terms of culture and environment. The greatest threats to our people/nations are cultural genocide and genocide in our homelands and Mother Earth. Many Americans inquire, “Why don’t we just leave the reservations and join mainstream America?” We are resistant to join because to do so would mean to lose the things that mean the most to us, and that is our culture. We would cease to be distinct indigenous nations. Perhaps, we are not so eager to join the American Melting Pot simply because we never left our homelands to take up residence here, we were already here. We didn’t flee our home countries to avoid religious persecution, tyranny, disease or starvation. We were and are home. We were quite pleased with our situation in our beautiful homelands.

Five hundred years ago immigrants began to land on our shores. They left their homelands for many reasons, but primarily for economic gain. Christopher Columbus was not an explorer, he was an opportunist and exploiter and a seeker of riches. When riches were found,

they were taken at great human cost. The world's largest holocaust that is never acknowledged or talked about happened here in the Americas.

The New World was not empty or devoid of people, nor was it a wilderness. In fact, the West was not "wild" until the white man arrived. It was homeland to several hundred indigenous nations. Since then, America has always had the "Indian Problem."

We first knew you a feeble plant which wanted a little earth whereon to grow. We gave it to you; and afterward, when we could have trod you under our feet, we watered and protected you; and now you have grown to be a mighty tree, whose top reaches the clouds, and whose branches overspread the whole land, whilst we, who were the tall pine of the forest, have become a feeble plant and need your protection.

When you first came here, you clung around our knee and called us father; we took you by the hand and called you brothers. You have grown greater than we, so that we can no longer reach up to your hand; but we wish to cling around your knee and be called your children. (McLuhan 117)

Many believe that we came across the Bering Strait some ten to twelve thousand years ago, and that is how we arrived in the Americas. While I was doing some graduate work at London's Roehampton University, a guest speaker came to class one day. This guest speaker was an American. Our class was about organizational and international service. He began his talk by saying "America is a land of immigrants." I immediately shot my hand up. When he finally called on me I said, "When you say America is a land of immigrants, aren't you leaving out an entire race of people?" He responded, "You mean the Native Americans." I replied yes. His next sentence was "You know they came across the Bering Strait." I said, "really, when did this happen, what evidence of this happening do you have, what facts do you have to back up your claim?"

He looked like he was stunned. He stood there silent. He finally said, "you are right, you are right," and continued with his presentation. I believe this gentleman like many others, believes things when he hears it often enough, be it truth or not.

As Vine Deloria, Jr., a Hunkpapa Lakota said in *Spirit & Reason*, “The Bering Strait is simply shorthand scientific language for I don’t know, but it sounds good, and no one will check” (78). Deloria’s argument is that the Bering Strait Theory is not based on any proven scientific evidence, or any logic. He goes on to say that the Bering Strait Theory is not a scientific theory at all, rather it is a political statement and rationale to covet our land and resources, saying, “you are not really from here either, you are immigrants like the rest of us, you are not entitled to America any more than we are” (78).

The erroneous and unfounded assumptions contained in the Bering Strait Theory are fundamental because they cut to our very identity, the very heart of who we are as peoples and indigenous nations. What right does one nation have to tell another nation where they come from, and who they are? This is done to us because we are politically weak in America and have been silent for too long. Archeological digs throughout the Americas give evidence of human activity and advanced civilizations as long as 50,000 years ago (Goodman 16). Of course the scientific community does not accept such findings. After all, we cannot have Indians living in sophisticated civilizations while European peoples were still living in caves 40,000 years ago.

One may ask, what we are trying to preserve, and to what are we trying to hold on? What is so important that you will not let go? Cultural survival means protecting what we deem of value as a society. Value is what has allowed us to live in harmony with our Mother Earth and all living things. A man who visited and spent a little time with our NuEta people in 1837 may best sum it up. His name was George Catlin (Bowers 13). After his return home he penned this creed.

Catlin’s Creed

I love a people who have always made me welcome to the best they had.

I love a people who are honest without laws, who have no jails and no poorhouses.

I love a people who keep the commandments without ever having read them or heard them preached from the pulpit.

I love a people, who never swear, who never take the name of God in vain.

I love a people who love their neighbors as they love themselves.

I love a people, who worship God without a Bible, for I believe that God loves them also.

I love a people whose religion is all the same, and who are free from religious animosities.

I love a people who have never raised a hand against me, or stolen my property, where there was no law to punish for either.

I love a people who never fought a battle with white men, except on their own ground.

I love and don't fear mankind where God has made and left them, for there they are...children.

I love a people who live and keep what is their own without locks and keys.

I love all people who do the best they can.

And oh, how I love a people who don't live for the love of money! (*Last Rambles* 354-55)

My family history is much like that of most tribal nations of the Americas in that it shares a love-hate relationship with America. We maintain a love for the land that has always been ours. Our struggles have been with the government that has imposed its will on Turtle Island. As native peoples of America we have been involved in every armed conflict this country has ever been in, either with or against the United States. We are also the only nations in the world that can claim that we have repeatedly defeated the US Army on its own ground. The Lakota Nation under the leadership of Chief Red Cloud and Crazy Horse handed the United States its first military defeat in what is called the Red Cloud Wars ending with the defeat of Custer at Little Big Horn in 1876. We are also the first to sign up for duty when this country goes to war, such as World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, as well as the current situation in the Middle East. In World War I, Natives volunteered and went to war on behalf of the United States and were not even recognized as citizens of the country at that time. There is no other ethnic group in our country that on a per-capita basis has more representation in the US Military than the Native American. As the *Saturday Evening Post* said "We would not need the selective service

if all volunteered like the Indian” (Rawls 6).

In America, there has always been the Indian Problem. The truth is the Indian Problem has never been an Indian problem. It has always been the white man’s problem. The problem perceived is what to do with us when the American government wants more land, resources, and when it comes to treaty rights issues. In our minds, and perhaps a few others, we are still the legal, moral, and ethical landlords of this land. Various methods have been used to solve the Indian Problem. Each attempt was thought to solve the Indian Problem in one generation. Attempts included military campaigns, bounties on Indians, religious conversion, boarding schools, money, forced removal-relocation, assimilation, reservations, allotment, genocide, biocide, and termination. The government imposed blood quantum to define tribal identity. In America only horses, dogs, and Indians have an official document stating their blood degree. No other Americans require such documentation.

We have survived all of these attempts. Perhaps the most devastating to our nations were the diseases that spread amongst our people. We were a healthy people and had little to no immunity to diseases that the Europeans brought to the Americas. For centuries, the Europeans had build up immunities in their bodies against diseases that animals carried, mostly by living in close proximity to them for several generations. When unleashed upon the indigenous of this land, they had a devastating effect. In one incident beginning in 1539, Hernando De Soto passed through a portion of America starting at what is now Tampa Bay, Florida, spreading disease to several thousand natives. The diseases were carried by his two hundred horses and three hundred pigs (Mann 97). For four years, this group tramped through the southeastern United States covering several states. The De Soto party documented large cities and urban areas on their journey. Only a few years later, when other Europeans entered the same areas, gone were the urban areas and large populations. Tribal nations that remained told of sickness brought to their people.

My tribe alone suffered two major small pox epidemics, one in 1782 and again in 1837, reducing us from over 15,000 in central North Dakota to a mere 175 survivors. Today, there may be only two or three NuEta (Mandan) speakers left. The gift of the smallpox-infested blanket was the world’s first act of bioterrorism and reduced our

once powerful nations to ones in poverty dependent on government programs and regulation.

When the Europeans first appeared in our lands they were not perceived as threats, for we did not know what was to happen to our tribal nations. My great-great-great-great grandfather Shehek Shote, a NuEta Chief, befriended Lewis and Clark in 1804, even helping them to survive a harsh North Dakota winter. Shehek Shote told Lewis and Clark “if we eat, you shall eat, if we starve, you must also starve.” In 1806, Shehek Shote returned with Lewis and Clark to meet President Thomas Jefferson and view the east coast of America. This encounter created an alliance between the Mandan and Americans. Had Shehek Shote not saved Lewis and Clark’s Corps of Discovery expedition, history may well have turned out differently. Had Shehek Shote known how history was to turn out, he may well not have welcomed the Americans. I carry Shehek Shote’s name as given to me by way of ceremony.

Down through history, not all of my family was on such friendly terms with the government. In 1870, Chief Crow Flies High of the Hidatsa led his band of Hidatsa away from reservation lands and continued to live free for nearly twenty-five years until his band was forced marched back to Fort Berthold in North Dakota (Trail Tribes). That was my mother’s great-grandfather.

Another family member Chief Big Bear, a Cree from Canada, refused to sign a treaty with the Canadian government because it restricted their freedom and they would cease to live the lifestyle of their free nation. He was considered a rebel and hostile by the government and after an outbreak of violence was blamed for the incident although he had nothing to do with any of the uprising. Big Bear was found guilty, placed in chains and imprisoned for three years. That was my father’s great-grandfather.

For 500 years we have been fighting to survive and remain who we are. We are resistant and resilient. It is not that we can’t get along with other peoples; we just want to be who we are. We are satisfied with how The Great Spirit created us, and where he placed us. We are pleased in our relationships with our fellow kinsmen and our Mother Earth.

Generations ago it was foretold by prophets of the NuEta people that there would be end times for the NuEta. One story was when Coyote Chief, who was usually a humorous and yet holy character, said

one day, in a serious voice, “come, I have something to show you.” When the people gathered he said “look at this buffalo skull, tell me what you see.” As the people looked at the skull, they noticed that red ants were eating the flesh off a fresh buffalo skull. Coyote Chief said, “Look again.” This time the peoples noticed the appearance of one white ant among all the other red ants. As the people watched, more and more white ants appeared, and soon almost the entire skull was covered with the white ants. There were but only a few red ants left. Coyote Chief said, “this is what is to come, it will be the end times for our people as we know it.”

Stories such as this were told to me as a child. The importance of stories such as this one is to stress our frailty and the importance of cultural survival. Elders would say keep your children around the drum for it is the heartbeat of our people. As long as we are around the drum, our people will live. Most of our cultural activities involve a drum.

Our way of social organization keeps our culture strong and continues on to future generations, in spite of attempted cultural genocide and assimilation. As Crow Elder Joseph Medicine Crow pointed out in 1939,

There is no question but that both kin and clan affinities are extensive and inclusive, and the result is mutual and wide affection throughout the whole tribe. Tribal unity and harmony is thus maintained...the influence of the whites has not yet affected this kinship system. School children who had been away would return and try to disassociate themselves from tribal custom and traditions, but invariably would be reclaimed through the kinship route. It is so affectionate, so real and embracing that before they know, it has melted their individualistic tendencies into the Indian nature which is sympathetic, understanding and philanthropic.” (Hoxie 169)

I grew up hearing the languages and knowing many of the customs of our culture. Generations prior to mine suffered the harshest conditions as they witnessed and experienced the loss of their homelands and freedom. The world they knew and loved came to an end, for it was a time of great change, and not all for the better. It was a time of forced boarding schools.

Native children were forcibly removed from their homes, communities, and family often for a decade and not allowed to return home. In 1897, this was official government policy for assimilation (Childs 56). My grandfather Victor Three Irons, Sr., was one of the children shipped off to a boarding school in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. The rationale was to assimilate young native people into American society. Native children were separated from their social structure and support, not allowed to speak their own language, nor practice their culture. Brainwashing techniques were used on the children such as separation from homelands and isolation from loved ones. Everyone looked alike with uniforms and haircuts to extinguish their identity. The children were made to march, much like in a military school. This attempt at assimilation met with some success. Many native people today do not speak their languages because parents that attended boarding schools had learned to fear speaking their language, because to do so often meant physical abuse. They thought it better not to subject their children to the trauma, violence, and humiliation that they endured.

My mother spoke of her forced removal from her grandparents' home. Filled with emotion, she told how she was torn from her grandmother Eagle Woman's arms. She said that was the last time she saw her grandmother. She said, "I think grandma died of a broken heart." My mother also told of her first beating by the boarding school matrons for speaking the only language she knew. For many of our native children, corporal punishment was a new and terrifying experience. Henry Pratt of the Carlisle Indian School said it was better to kill the Indian and save the man, meaning erasing native culture and replacing it with the traits and thinking of the white man. Up to that time, some social behaviors were unheard of amongst our people, such as spanking or beating children, spousal abuse, substance abuse, and loss of identity. These were all learned behaviors that were brought back to our people by way of boarding schools.

Growing up on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation, there were but a few sweat lodges in our community. They were utilized by only a few people, and were a private matter not open to the public. Also kept private were other ceremonies such as naming or healing ceremonies. All of this was done at home and away from public view and knowledge. In the early reservation days, agency superintendents outlawed native religion. Oftentimes, our reservations were divided up like a pie, and certain denominations received a certain portion of the

reservation to convert to Christianity. The church organizations held much power on the reservations. If native peoples were not behaving in the manner that was expected, they could very well be cut off from food supplies or even imprisoned. Punishments were as harsh as being incarcerated for up to sixty years for practicing one's own religion.

It is only in the last forty years that strides have been made to preserve and protect our culture by our own people. During America's Civil Rights Era of the 1960s, the indigenous began to voice their concerns and become outspoken in the American consciousness and media. The 1960s marked the beginning of Red Power and the American Indian Movement. At the height of the movement was the standoff between the United States and the indigenous nations at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, that brought worldwide attention. Activism was prevalent in Indian Country. We began to voice our concerns in a new way.

News of Sundances being held in native communities in South Dakota spread like grass fires across native communities in the early 1970s. In my own community on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation, we as children grew up knowing that we never talked about ceremony in front of white people, especially government officials or clergy, as there could be negative consequences. Our spiritual practices were still underground.

Imagine the average person in America going to church on Sunday and knowing that you have to keep it secret and tell no one about it. The thinking of the oppressor was so ingrained in our native people that we even condemned our own people for participating in our forms of spirituality. We had become good Christians.

The revival of our cultural and spiritual ways first had to run the gamut of criticism and condemnation by our own people, then the outside world. My brothers and I, with the guidance of one of our uncles, conducted Sundances on the Fort Berthold Indian reservation beginning in the mid-80s. Since that time, our own spiritual ways slowly gained acceptance in many of our native communities. Today, ceremonies such as Sundance and Sweat lodge are common on many of our reservations. Today, we are not ashamed to say that we follow the spiritual ways of our forefathers, without fear of retribution from the government or our own people.

Up until 1978, we were committing illegal acts when we prac-

ticed our spiritual ways. In 1978, the Freedom of Religion Act allowed us to practice openly without persecution from the law. In the last forty years, many ceremonies and practices have been revived. On my reservation alone we have seen the revival or reemergence of the Black Mouth Society, The White Buffalo Cow Society, and Kit Fox Societies. It is okay to be Indian again.

In our history, we have three BCs that affect our culture. The three BCs are Before Christ, Before Columbus, and Before Costner. The movie *Dances with Wolves* (1990) brought awareness of the Native American to the consciousness of America. There has been a renaissance and revival of our culture. Native languages are often a part of the curriculum in our reservation schools. More and more of our colleges and universities offer native languages as well as American Indian Studies majors and minors.

True preservation of our culture and survival will not happen until we undergo the process of decolonization. We need to think like free indigenous people again. We need to liberate ourselves from the mindset of the oppressor. It is inspiring to see tribal nations who empower themselves for the betterment of their nation. One example is a reservation in east central North Dakota. The lake was known to the Dakota people as a place of sacred water. They said the water had a healing spirit in it. It was called Mini Wakan or sacred water. The European immigrants that came to North Dakota called this place Devil's Lake. After a reservation was established, the reservation and people were called the Devil's Lake Sioux Tribe.

The name was not correct for the lake or the people. The tribe officially changed their name to Spirit Lake Nation (Spirit Lake). More and more, we hear our proper names used. More Lakotas are using the name Lakota as opposed to Sioux, which was used for a long period of time. More and more tribes are calling themselves by their proper names. Navajo are more properly identified as Dineh; Chippewa and Ojibwa are Anishinabe; Crow are Aps'aaloke; Mandan are NuEta; and Papago are Tohono O'Odham. A part of cultural survival is to know who you are, and what your name is, not what the oppressors call you. This goes to the very core of our very identity, of who we are.

The indigenous are still fighting battles with the invaders. No longer do we fight on the plains; rather, we fight in the courtrooms and

classrooms of America. Our weapons are no longer bows and arrows; rather, they are law and education. We educate our own people with our truths and culture, and we educate America with our truth and culture. We are in a constant battle for America to honor its own words and guarantees made to our people. We are not asking for handouts or aid of any kind; we are simply insisting that the government honor both the spirit and letter of what is stated in treaties. We ask for nothing that is not already ours. The treaties made by the US government are said to be the Supreme Law of the Land, superseding all other laws (Pevar 37). We have found that not to be the case. The United States has broken over 400 treaties that it has made with our indigenous nations. In other words, every treaty it has ever made.

If we can survive culturally, can we survive physically? There is a saying among the NuEta people: “Only the Earth Shall Endure.” There may be those that are concerned for our planet. Our traditions say she is not the one to worry about. Mother Earth will be just fine. Humankind is the one you need to worry about and pray for. Throughout time Mother Earth has seen species come and go. When one is out of balance, they are not long for this world. That is just the way things are.

We live in a world of balance, and when we are no longer in balance we destroy ourselves. We are all accountable to the same set of laws, no matter what our culture and society may tell us, and they are the laws of nature. They are the highest laws, and to them we are all accountable. Modern humans do not understand that we are all connected. What one does has an effect on other living things. We say we do not live on the land; rather, we are part of the land. What we do to the land, we do to ourselves.

In a letter to the US President Franklin Pierce in 1854, Chief Seattle (Seathl) of the Suwamish Nation wrote: “love the land as we have loved it. Care for it as we have cared for it. Hold in your mind the memory of the land, as it was when you take it. . . . Continue to contaminate your bed, and you will one night suffocate in your own waste” (Kaiser 527-28).

Can the cultures of the indigenous in America survive? Perhaps, another question is can *we* as citizens of Mother Earth survive? Will we be here tomorrow? What we do know is that the indigenous tribal nations have survived and have had sustainable societies for

thousands of years. The industrialized society of the last 150 years has seen the disappearance of more species of life than from the ice age to the industrialized revolution. We know indigenous nations can survive. Can industrialized civilization survive? It depends on our worldview and how we treat each other and the world we live in.

I believe Baba Dioum of Dahra Senegal sums it up nicely: “In the end we will conserve only what we love. We love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught.”

Numak Ga gee, Awa mi (We are humankind, all of us)

Shehek Shote (Valerian Three Irons)

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