

NATIVE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS SUPERSTITION

In Conflict with Biblical Christianity...

1. **Indian Shaker Religion** - The name comes from the shaking and twitching motions used by the participants to brush off their sins. The religion combines Christianity with traditional Indian teachings. This religion is still practiced today in the Indian Shaker Church.
2. **Longhouse Religion** - currently has about 5,000 practicing members. Originally the Gaihwio was known as the "new religion" in opposition to the prevailing animistic beliefs, but has since become known as the "old religion" in opposition to Christianity.
3. **Native American Church** - an estimated 250,000 adherents with the tradition involving the ceremonial and sacred use of Peyote. Known for its psychoactive properties when ingested and contains the hallucinogen mescaline. The Huichol religion consists of four principal deities: Corn, Blue Deer, Peyote, and the Eagle, all descended from their Sun God, "Tao Jreeku". Schaefer has interpreted this to mean that peyote is the soul of their religious culture and a visionary sacrament that opens a pathway to the other deities.
4. **Waashat Religion** - meant for both dancing and worship that includes Ghost Dances of the plains peoples. It thought that white people would disappear and nature would return to the way it was before they came. the Natives must do the things required by the spirits, like a Weyekin. (modern day Wiccan) everything in the world - animals, trees, rocks, etc. - possesses a consciousness. These spirits are thought to offer a link to the invisible world of spiritual power. These spirits are seen not as divine beings, but as mediators.

What the spirits wanted was to throw off violent ways, cast off white culture, and not buy, sell or disrespect the Earth. They must also dance the

5. **Prophet Dance** - participants danced in order to hasten the return of the dead and the renewal of the world, particularly the world as it was before European contact. The Prophet Dance was a precursor of the famous Ghost Dance movement of the 1870s and 1890s.

6. In Navajo culture, a **skin-walker** (Navajo: *yee naaldlooshii*) is a type of harmful witch who has the ability to turn into, possess, or disguise themselves as an animal. The term is not used for healers. Navajo witches, including skin-walkers, represent the antithesis of Navajo cultural values. While community healers and cultural workers are known as medicine men and women, or by terms in the local, indigenous language, witches are seen as evil, performing twisted ceremonies and manipulating magic in a perversion of the good works medicine people traditionally perform. In order to practice their good works, traditional healers learn about both good and evil magic. Most can handle the responsibility, but some people can become corrupt and choose to become witches

7. Sun Dance - a religious ceremony held in a private and is not open to the public. pray for healing, and make personal sacrifices - young men dance around a pole to which they are fastened by "rawhide thongs" pegged through the skin of their chests.

Most details of the ceremony are kept from public knowledge out of great respect for, and the desire for protection of, the traditional ways. Many of the ceremonies have featured traditional drums, the sacred pipe, praying, fasting and, in some cases, the piercing of the skin. Also known to some as the rain dance, the thirst dance, or medicine dance.

Because of mis representation of true practices by outsiders, leaders issued a proclamation that non-Indigenous people would be banned from sacred altars and the Seven Sacred Rites, including and especially the sun dance, effective March 9, 2003

8. SEVEN SACRED RITES –

1. Inikagapi or Inipi (to renew life) . using the sweat lodge which is designed to represent the female womb, The purpose of the ceremony is to pray for health and well-being, spiritually and physically.

2. Hanbleceyapi (crying for a vision) – vision quest, A person elects to go on a quest to pray, communicate with the spirits, and attempt to gain knowledge, strength, and understanding. The person pledges to stay on an isolated hill for one to four days with a blanket and a pipe, but without food or water.

3. Wanagi Wicagluha (keeping of the spirit). Spirit keeping is a rite performed by a mourner for one year to grieve for a lost loved one. When a person dies the spirit can linger around the family and community. According to Black Elk, "this rite purifies the souls of our dead, A special place is set up for the spirit, who is fed every day. Members of the family and community can come and visit, eat, and sit with the spirit and family.

4. Wiwanyang Wacipi (sundance). The Sun Dance is often considered the most important rite where dancers pledge to make offerings of their flesh so that "much strength would be given to the nation.

5. Hunkapi (making relatives). It establishes a "relationship on earth, which is a reflection of that real relationship" with Wakan Tanka (This is usually translated as "The Great Spirit". However, according to Russell Means, its meaning is closer to "Great Mystery" as Lakota spirituality is not monotheistic)

6. Isnati Awicalowanpi (puberty ceremony). The ceremony takes place after a girl's first menses, and prayers are said to ensure she will grow up to have all the virtues of a Lakota woman and understand the meaning of her new role, and to formally announce her eligibility as a potential wife and mother.

7. Tapa Wankayeyapi (throwing the ball), a game "which represents the course of a man's life," is no longer in use. Yuwipi, which became popular in the twentieth century. This rite is performed in a darkened room under the supervision of a Yuwipi man or wicasa wakan. The object is to cure a person and at the same time to pray for the general welfare of all Indian people and for long life. Some Yuwipi men possess an exceptional ability that allows them to locate lost items or people.

9. Sage burning and Smudging out evil spirits - The Navajo made sage important by making infusions to dissolve parasites like worms and they used it in their ceremonies to clean out bad spirits and balance energy. It also can purify energies, balance, clean the mind from depression. Sage is good for negativity, bad luck, or when making a major transition like buying a new house. How? Burning sage through the house and praying that all negativity must leave is still practiced in modern times.

10. Cherokee Stomp Dance - A firekeeper and his assistant begin at dawn building a fire; one intended to last for the duration of the stomp dance. He begins with small slivers of wood from the innermost part of an oak tree (often referred to as the "sponge") using flint and rock to trigger a spark. This fire is sacred to traditional Cherokees. It is customarily built at the bottom of a pit below ground level and is tended continuously so it will burn throughout the stomp dance.

As the sun rises, the men sit around the fire talking about political issues and the women prepare a meal for the day consisting of both traditional and modern food. Later in the afternoon, sermons are given in the Cherokee language. These sermons admonish everyone to have love for all mankind. After the sermon, anijodi (stickball), an ancient Cherokee game resembling present-day La Crosse, is played. The sermons continue as the sun begins to set. The ceremonial pipe is passed to each clan member who takes seven puffs from it before passing it on. The chief, medicine men and elders gather together for a meeting, eventually calling for the first dance of the night. This dance is by invitation only and features the tribal elders, medicine men and the heads of clans. A second call for the dance is made.

The dance participants include a leader, assistants and one or more "shell-shakers" wearing leg rattles traditionally made out of turtle shells filled with pebbles. Today some use cans filled with pebbles to provide rhythmic accompaniment while they dance around the fire. The ceremonial observance involves sacrifices made by the ceremonial leaders, prayers, taking medicine, going to water or river for ritual cleansing and smoking of the pipe.

Participants visit, feast and dance far into the night. The stomp dance is considered to be a holy event for worshiping Unetlanv (God, The Creator). There is to be no littering, no consumption of liquor and no rowdy behavior of any kind. The rules are written in the Cherokee language and posted on a board hung up for the public to see.

many traditional Cherokee continue to worship at stomp dances and are members of one of the several stomp dance grounds located within the Cherokee Nation. **(Please note:** The locations of these grounds are known to their members and attendance is by invitation only. We are not at liberty to share these locations.)

The Keetoowah's bible is not written on paper. The words are woven into seven wampum belts which are shown only in rare occasions. The belts are very old, and are made of pearls and shell beads, woven with seaweed fibers from the Gulf of Mexico. The history behind the belt is said to be that many years ago the tribe was preparing to go on to war with another

tribe. The medicine men foresaw which warriors would survive the war and cut the original wampum belt into seven pieces, giving one to each warrior. After the war the belts became scattered, some being hidden and others simply disappearing. Eventually they were all recovered with the last one being found by Redbird Smith more than 80 years ago.