

## The Peacemaker of the Longhouse indians

The Peacemaker incarnated at a time of widespread violence and turmoil, in a village north of Lake Ontario. Before he was born his name was revealed to his grandmother in a dream. A messenger of the Great Spirit told her "The Master of life, who holds up the Sky wants your daughter, who is a virgin, to bear a child. His name will be The Peacemaker, the Master of Things, for he brings with him the good news of Peace and Power. Care for him well, thou and thy daughter, for he has a great office to perform in the world."

"What is the child's office to be?" asked the grandmother.

"His office is to bring peace and life to the people of the earth," the messenger replied. "After he is grown to manhood, see that thou place no obstacle in his way when he desires to leave home to spread the New Mind among the nations."

The prophecy came true. The Peacemaker left his village early in a canoe of white stone, tradition tells. The canoe, which could float on the water in spite of its weight, bore witness to the truth of his words. He spread his message of peace among the tribes.

On his journeys The Peacemaker met a woman who lived by the path of the warriors, which connected the east and the west. The woman offered him food, and asked him about his message. "I carry the mind of the Master of Life," he answered. "And my message will bring an end to the wars between east and west."

"How will this be?" the woman asked, surprised. She used to feed the warriors passing on their way between east and west.

"The World that I bring is that all peoples shall love one another and live together in peace. This message has three parts: Righteousness, Health and Power. Righteousness means justice practiced between men and between nations. It means also a desire to see righteousness prevail. Health means soundness of mind and body. It also means peace, for that is what comes when minds are sane and bodies are cared for. Power means authority, the authority of law and custom, backed by such force as is necessary to make justice prevail; it means also religion, for justice enforced is the will of the Holder of the Heavens and has his sanction."

"Thy message is good!" the woman said. "But a word is nothing until it is given form and set to work in the world. What form shall this message take when it comes to dwell among men?"

"It will take the form of the longhouse, Kannonsionni," The Peacemaker answered. "In the longhouse there are many fires, one for each family, yet all live as one household under one chief mother."

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"That is indeed a good message, I embrace it," said the woman.

The Peacemaker named the woman "Jigonhsasee", which means New Face, because her countenance evinced the New Mind. "You will be called the Mother of Nations," he said. "In the Longhouse the women will have the power. They will appoint the chiefs of the tribes,

since you my mother is the first who embraces the good news of Peace and Power.”

“I am a woman and I don’t engage in war,” Jigonhsasee answered. “My work is to feed the warriors passing my door on their way between east and west. They too must also accept the New Mind; otherwise there will be no end to the killing.”

The Peacemaker continued his travels east, towards the sunrise. There lived a man, who people said, ate humans.

When The Peacemaker came to the evil man’s house he climbed up to the roof and lay prostrate so that he could look down through the smoke hole above the fireplace. Soon the man came home, dragging a human corpse which he put in a kettle on the stove. The Peacemaker moved closer to the smoke hole and looked down. Just then the man bent over the kettle. He was taken aback to see a face reflected in the water. It was Dekanawida’s image, but the man thought it was his own. The features expressed such wisdom and strength that he never in his wildest dreams would have thought he possessed.

“But this is wonderful!” the man thought. “Something like this has never happened to me before. I didn’t know I was like that. It was a great man who looked back at me from the kettle.”

The man bent over the water in the kettle again and there was the great man’s face, just like before.

“It is really true,” he said to himself. “It is in my own face I see such a wisdom, righteousness and strength. But this is not the face of a man who eats humans!” He took the kettle and poured out the water outside of the house. “Now I have changed my habits,” he said. “I no longer kill humans and eat their meat. But it is not enough. It is harder to change one’s thinking. I can never forget the suffering I have caused and it makes me unhappy.”

He wished there was somebody who could tell him how he could atone for all the evil that he had committed against so many human beings. When The Peacemaker heard this he climbed down from the roof and went in to the man. The man told The Peacemaker what had happened.

“It is truly wonderful,” The Peacemaker exclaimed. “You have changed your very pattern of living. The New Mind has been given to you. And you are unhappy because you can not bear your old memories. Heal your memories by working for righteousness and justice. Bring peace to the places where you have caused people harm. Together with me you will spread the good news of Peace and Power.”

“That was a good message,” the man said. “I embrace it!”

The Peacemaker named the man Hiawatha, “He who combs,” and told him to comb the knots of ignorance out from people’s distorted minds.

Hiawatha’s first task was to go and see the Onondaga chief Tadodaho, who was so cruel that he killed and ate all humans who approached him uninvited. He was so powerful that the birds fell dead to the ground at a simple wave of his hand. Tadodaho’s head was covered

with snakes and his body had seven hunches. He loved chaos and hated peace. He frightened everybody but The Peacemaker knew that the peace work could not be carried out without his help.

Hiawatha made many attempts to approach the terrible Tadodaho, but failed. The Onondaga Indians received the message of the New Mind and wanted to have peace. But Tadodaho sabotaged the peace work with black magic. He created enmity between the peace followers, sent storms against them so that their canoes capsized. Much blood was shed. Hiawatha was wounded, not physically but emotionally and his mind was darkened by the afflictions that Tadodaho sent him. Hiawatha's three daughters were taken ill and died. And when his followers gathered to comfort him his wife was trampled to death.

At last, after a long time of grief, Hiawatha was reunited with The Peacemaker, who helped him heal the pain. "I wipe the tears from your face using the white fawn-skin of pity; I make daylight for you ... I beautify the sky. Now you will find peace when your eyes rest on the sky, which the Perfector of all gifts, the Master of all things and beings has created to give joy to the created beings."

Followed by chiefs from the peoples of the League The Peacemaker and Hiawatha went to Jigonhsasee, the first woman who had joined the League, and asked for her advice how to convert Tadodaho. Jigonhsasee taught them a song which she told them to sing to Tadodaho. When the chiefs at last after many challenges found Tadodaho they sang the song for him. Tadodaho was first threatened and resisted them, but after a while his heart began to melt. He agreed to listen to the peace message. The Peacemaker and Hiawatha finally succeeded in converting Tadodaho's mind with songs and words, just as Jigonhsasee had foreseen. And Tadodaho became one of the League's great leaders.

## The new mind

At the first Great Council of the Iroquois The Peacemaker planted the great tree of Peace, gave the teaching and initiated the customs and ceremonies which during the coming several hundred years would help to keep the peace among the nations of the league.

When the council was closing he bade farewell to the chiefs. "If men should ever become indifferent to the League perhaps I may stand here again among your descendants. If the Great Peace should fail, call on my name in the bushes, and I will return." Then he covered his body with bark and buried himself in the ground.

The peace League of the Iroquois was called Kannonsonni, the Longhouse, which means to be united in one family. The Peacemaker taught the chiefs that at the opening of the council before they sat down to work with their own affairs thank the Creator and all manifestations of his Mind in nature, the earth where men dwell, the streams of water, the pools, the springs, and the lakes, the maize and the fruits, the medicinal herbs and trees, the forest trees for their usefulness, the animals that serve as food and give their pelts for clothing, the great winds and the

lesser winds, the Thunderers, the Sun, the mighty warrior, the Moon, the messengers of the Creator who reveal his wishes and the Great Creator who dwells in the heavens above, who gives all things useful to man, and who is the source and the ruler of health and life.

The Peace League of the Iroquois was to last for hundreds of years, and at the time of the birth of the United States of America they were the greatest Indian power in North America. Their empire was kept together not only with might, but with statesmanship and a deep insight into and faith in the source of peace and the dream of the good within peoples' heart.

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