

My name is Birgil Killş Straight, this is a series of tapes I will develop for the Museum of Rapid City. I will begin by remembering several legends that were told by my grandmother Good Thunder in the 1940's who was from Norris SD. She was blind and I took care of her needs such as feeding her and helping her with her clothes. She was also 102 years old but she was very alert, she learned her stories from her grandmother who lived to be about the same age. Therefore these stories are over 200 years old and I have kept these in the back of my mind and it has been 50 years since. These stories were all oral history of events past or of our creation. My grandfather Dewey Beard also told me stories he heard from his father, uncles and elders, these were about the Hunkpapa, Hokewoju, and the Oglala bands of the Lakota. Another grandfather whose name was Iron Hail died on November 1 or Oct. 3, 1955 he was 98 years old, at that time I was 14 years old. His stories were also similar to my grandmothers but his were based on actual experience as a young man who lived around the Little Big Horn Mountains, the Black Hills, and as far south as the Platte River and the eastern part to the Missouri River. Iron Hail although he was very old he had a perfect set of teeth and 20/20 vision. He had broken bones from battle, but even at the age of 95 he was still riding horseback.. During his life the territory known to the Ochte sa o wi extends way into Canada, the great Lakes area down to Oklahoma and clear to the Big Horns north to Canada. Hunting to them was very important, stories told recently that the "Indians followed the buffalo", I think that was not always the case, the buffalo knew where they should be at any given time through out the four seasons and the Lakotas understood as well and just happened to be in the same general area. It was only in recent history that people began to claim that the buffalo was the main source of food and we had to follow them, which was not always the case. Understanding this would serve as practical knowledge for the Lakota people. Unfortunately many of these

are not documented or are not made part of the educational system so we don't see it that way. My uncle Frank Packed lived north of us and at different times the children including myself, his daughter Caroline, my cousin Orville would come together at some event or our parents would be visiting and we would ask Frank to tell some of his stories. The reason I remembered his stories were it seemed like an odyssey, the story of a young man who took a journey throughout life and how he understood the meaning of life. This understanding came from the celestial bodies in the universe and how all of these tie in with certain places here on the land that we lived on. The story of the sacred hoop as told by Frank Packed was a journey of a young man who was given a ring by a snake which was supposed to tell us a greater story of all life and that within this particular circle all life exists. The story of this came from the stars. Frank Packed would go into detail. I was always interested in this because they were told by my grandmother and uncles. But Frank explained more clearly in Lakota. Many of these stories were told at gathering or pow wows. The protocol was that my parents would provide a meal to the elders, aunts and uncles who would come and tell these stories as a part of a child's education on oral history throughout their life. My grandmother was a medicine woman and with this experience I grew up with more insight into that life around me. All of these stories have never been documented. At some point I would like to document these as a service to our children for their education in these ways. I would also like to organize these for textbooks. In the sixties and seventies Frank Fools Crow told similar stories when I was a grown man. I remembered these because many of the stories that were told to me earlier in life were forgotten, I couldn't retain all the information. I've done a lot of reading I studied some philosophy and receiving some education at Holy Rosary Mission for four years, a Catholic Jesuit School, I was forced to study religion and Latin Language. At the



time I didn't really care for these but it was a good foundation for understanding a little about the life that was beyond Pine Ridge. Some of the stories and history books were part of the Early American History.. The prayers that we said reflected western thinking that there was to them a Jesus who was a savior supposedly I say that because in later years I found out that he was not the savior, historical documentation had placed Horus as a savior. In understanding this I was able to draw my own conclusion how life was and what it meant to me to live in both worlds.. Many of the stories that were told were not just oral history but if you look at the stars you can see the stories up there. There are songs that were sung which tell about these events. For the Lakota we can go back and measure time in that way we know there was a past and present and future. All of these was a part of the sacred circle or hoop, that some how all of these come together and the past can be our future. There are many stories that talk about how the past is a very important part of our future. This made you think because we came from the earth and over time we became something that is alive, walking, breathing, dreaming and talking, then we return to the spirit we have completed the circle of life. So life for us as humans might be short but being once buffalo people and however many years they lived we were part of that also. The songs we still sing in ceremonies takes us back into that particular event in the past that gives us understanding if you can speak this language. Our understanding of life is deliberated amongst the whole family, the elder (matriarch or patriarch) usually has the role of telling these stories. Fortunately I grew up with my own grandfather Iron Hail and my fathers grandmother Good Thunder who took me back into time and my uncles and aunts and more importantly my father who always reiterated and through action showed me some things that were to be very important later in my life. He would always ensure that I listen. It was easier to understand from my grandfather who helped

me understand more. It was later in life that I understood who we are and what the songs and the ceremonies mean when the spirits come into the circle of people and they began to talk through the spiritual interpreter or medicine man as he is generally known. My mind would go back into the past and the support that the spirits gave me was very important because I was able to pass through time in reverse and almost like a replay of a current day video I would see my grandfather who talked about the same things that they did during the time they were alive when I was a child. The ceremonies were very important for me I grew up with that and understood the importance of these when I grew up and began having dreams about the clouds and their formation and how the animals reacted around me especially the coyote, eagle, deer had a very profound effect on me because I began to understand what it all meant. The dreams I had in the sixties had a great impact on my life almost 20 years later. I explained these dreams to my father and he was able to explain different parts of these dreams to me such as the colors, the rocks. The other parts were explained to me by my brother who had an alter and helped through ceremonies. When the dreams became alive it was amazing and I was astounded the way these things took place and I was very much appalled by the way events came about and how I was placed in these particular dreams. So about 1982 I started to respond more seriously to these recurring dreams and some of the events that came from these dreams. To me as I grew older I began to take life more seriously I underwent a lot of violent confrontation in the style of politics that was practiced here in Pine Ridge. I didn't realize that I was living through a sort of preparation for something that was supposed to come later. Many of the questions that I had, I had to find the answers on my own through purification lodges or inipis as we call them in Lakota. Many of these were had and it was a time of cleansing and healing for me and for many hours and many days I sat



alone in these inipis and began to talk and understand a little about what was there before me. Through these practices I began to understand a little about these dreams. On numerous occasions I would make a journey alone on top of a hill crying for a vision, for me it was time I had to communicate with something out there that was so powerful it controled every facet of life around me in the community. They were good times and terrifying because only in retrospect did I realize that some of these were very real and the instruction that came from the voices of the animals manifest into other being that are human form or bird form that the story was falling into place a little at a time. In the ceremonies when there was a spiritual interpreter present it was easier to ask the spirit and he would respond with the answer. Some the of the questions were, to me, not quite clear and some of the questions had to be brought up but because of my training and indocrinations in the western education that was based on religion and European concepts on what is sacred and a way of life around me and all of us in America where the technology seemed to surpass mans own idea of life that when we began to live in that world and if your accustomed to living to according to the demands made by the greater society it was difficult for anyone especially for me to understand more of our history. So for a period of about twelve years it came about very slowly and for the first six years I realized they were a preparation and all of a sudden those questions I had in the beginning the answers were there except I couldn't understand what it meant. The last six years of my life has really been a good way of life I finally achieved an understanding that I could accept and without questioning all that happened. I was just reminded many times during our discussion at the time our advisory board would meet some of the questions that I would have it wasn't me, as I found out, it was someone else or something else that somehow made those comments and sometime those particular questions seemed unimportant to some of the people there

that I was still amazed at times that somehow or another it came out of me. It doesn't mean I am a seer or clairvoyant or medicine person I just realized that someone puts himself into that place and those questions that come about on certain issues seem to come from some other place. Very much like the question I had regarding the museum which took me back to the time when my father had spoke about quite often, that at some point his grandfather, his father, and his father in-law who was Iron Hail would talk about when we had a perfect world at one time and a understanding of life which was in a circle and that everything that happened in the past would sometimes become the future because we lived in a society back then where we believed in that what we learn today becomes the past tomorrow , tomorrow of course is the future. This goes on for days and years and so forth and at some point we come back to the same point in life perhaps years later but again throughout our life we would experience that particular part of our own mind and take us back to that point in our time when we can realize and live again as another person. Pretty much like what I studied in other forms of religion. The Lakotas also had it and in fact to me what we have is much more genuine because I can speak the language and understand what the spirits have said and the movements of the clouds, trees and how the animals move throughout the seasons that I began to realize the importance of it until you've come up against it or you have gone beyond that particular point when the statement that has been made is brought out in a manner that is very basic and very simple it is so simple that we seem to overlook it. When we search for answers we always look for it in some fashion that we expect to explode in our minds and its not that way. Because little by little on a daily basis when this understanding comes about for many nights especially where I live now you can go outside away from the hustle of business that requires vehicles and you began to look at the stars and slowly all of those things that have



been said about the past and the future seem to come back to life. I've had the experience of riding horseback for miles on end, one night the sound that was beaten out by the hoofs start to form a language and when twelve hundred hoofs began to move on a hard surface with gravel and horses moving saddles creaking that there was a language that was spoken among the horses and it was a language that the horse and I could understand and this particular horse that I was riding began talking and you can understand just by the movement of his body, his leg, outline of his ears in the dark and the way his hoof moves and the hoofs of the others in back of you and the way even the horses were carrying on a form of communications that I couldn't understand initially because I was just so astounded by what has been there all along and when I began to realize there was this language being spoken it was too much for me. The only thing I could do was cry because there was a message given to me and I couldn't understand, the only way I could was to shed a part of myself and how helpless and how small and unimportant life is at least my life that I felt that I was nothing compared to the whole movement of horse and sounds of nature and life about me, even the stars or sun rays that come out early in the morning, there is a sound that comes with that and its hard to understand that because they move so quickly. But when your mind slows down to a point where these things can be understood, the answers of all these questions were there and I just overlooked it until I was alone and even though there might be two or three hundred riders with you, you still feel totally alone and only a small part of that whole mass movement of men and horses that as an individual I still felt I was a small part of that whole moving language that came about and those instructions and what those instructions would call for. So I guess I've talked a bit about myself and my understanding of life and only some of my experiences. Getting back to the building when I said it was a Moslem I think Sitting Bull and

his words were documented and he said at some point we will cease to exist as Lakota and what we will have is our bodies will lie along side a gray square building with a cold atmosphere and my fathers explanation was that we live now in a lifestyle is so much part of that lifestyle of a greater society that we began to lose our language, culture and our songs and many of our understandings of our spiritual ways. And the songs have said that it will probably be very difficult to recapture all of this, that's what came to my mind when I first saw the building, that not only sitting bull but my father talked about that within these walls will be a story being told but outside of that we will have no entry and that some how or another we will never be part of that because that understanding will be told inside and will be devoid of all those natural things. In my own experience before this came about I envisioned this building and the words of my father and grandfather Sitting Bull but there words struck me that in the center of the universe there will be this explanation and it will be in a square box that this particular story will be told but we will not be part of that. Those were some of the old stories that go back over a hundred years ago. That particular setting immediately drew my attention to the stories that were being told you cannot fit a round object in a square space or vise versa. Our life has come to that level of understanding where our basic understanding of the circle is being lost in its place is of course the square building and everything happens in a straight or lineal manner history is told that we have migrated here from the east in the 17 th century and that we were intruders and these are some of the stories we take out of the square books and we began to believe it . That particular documentation of history is totally erroneous because when you move outside of that particular square box you begin to understand that in history there was several natural catastrophes and major events in time that our ancestors have experienced. Frank Packed told about these events, some of the stories



that he told was the odyssey or the journey of this young boy into a world that is not known and how he was able to go through this world and it was totally different but from those experiences he was able to understand a little bit more about his life. At the end he says that when his enemies or the people that he encounters along the way were chasing him, the spirits told him that he could slow this down with water so he through out this water that he was carrying and it created an ocean yet they were still pursuing him and crossed the body of water, remembered he had a little twig and he through this out and this became a jungle and the people had to cut through that jungle and still pursued him and all he had was a little flint so he through this out and it created a huge fire which blazed into sight and it stopped them for a while until he was able to gain ground and get ahead of them. As he came back into this world he then had a piece of twine and threw this out and a metal fence or web had been created. That particular story was interesting and it took Frank four hours to tell. When you bring this story to life and look at it everything that has been said even though they didn't know these things exist studying history and understanding a little bit about the geology and formation of the world this all seemed to make more sense in how the oceans were created and how the land mass seemed to separate itself with the little dirt that the boy carried he was able to rise above the water. Little did I know they were talking about a spirit of this Lakota who passes through time and evolution of a time when this particular spirit was alive and inside all of us. Everyone of us has that kind of experience and understanding all of that seemed to bring back into question how valid those particular stories that were contained in books and how that information was kept in buildings that were square or the little containers with wagons with wheels were white and how they were transporting some foreign matter into our particular area of land that we call home.

The stories of my grandmother Good Thunder and grandfather Iron Hail seem to parallel and I'll try to bring that into how I understand it. Life begins with an Inyan or rock, that in an explosion Inyan gave life to Wi or the Sun. From this when Inyan(rock) and Wi (sun) are formed together they become Wiyan a woman and from this woman all life was created. It was said that the first world was the spirit world and from this world we came into this life or the second world that we know today as Wahutkan Oyate or Root Nation before any form of life existed on the rock or Wiyan. From this we evolved into the third world when it was said that we lived as the Wahutopa Oyate meaning the four legged nation and here we lived as the Pte Oyate or buffalo people before we evolved into what we are today, our spirits were part of the buffalo and it was a the bufalo who came up onto the surface of the earth through a cave of the Black Hills. In the fourth world we became what was known as the Wahu Nunpa Oyate or two legged nation. In this world we lived in the water and walked on the surface and we also flew. In the fifth world we become part of the spirit world where we came from. Perhaps there were other ways of explaining the evolution in the stories and legends that have been told by our story tellers, it goes back into the time when we also lived as reptilian creatures the ZuZeCa which is the one we identify with was part of this world and an important part of our history. It was only after contact with the European Christian doctrines that we see the snake as something evil and something that we should fear. However the snake has always been a major part of our lives, it was the snake that gave the understanding of the sacred hoop. Again in later years I discovered that through my reading a greek philosopher by the name of Homer described the snake as Venus, the constellation Venus has a tail like a comet and when it appears it looks like



a snake. In Greek mythology they talk about a scorpion or Iktomni who fought for the rightful place around the sun, Iktomni was Mars. Today in the place where I participate as a sundancer the ceremonies begin before the rise of the morning star which is really Venus. there is a star that proceeds that and when we see this the leader goes out and prays to all powers of that day, and we will experience pain, sacrifice, and rebirth. It is not always in that order but this is basically the prayer that would be said to the powers that come from the east and with the rising of the morning star the day begins, this is what we call the red day. The red day is then followed by the sun from the east, by the time the sun appears the dancers are out in the center and the dancing begins, which continues all day until right before sundown the last dance will be performed. then they will come out and go into the Inipi to purify themselves again and as soon as they come out of the Inipi it is dark or twilight hours and you see the same star or Venus and it is called the evening star and the blue day begins. This understanding was given to us by the snake i mentioned earlier that Frank Packe talked about the sacred hoop or ring (Numseoh'li) that was brought to us by a snake and the snake instructed us how to live within the circle. This is what i try to understand or try to look at when my elders talked about it, it seemed to make more sense instead of the Christian faith bestowed upon us, in the Christian faith we were baptised and after this we are recognized by God for us we are recognized by God at conception that is why we are here and from that time on until our bodies become dust we are a person who undergoes life in four parts; at birth, maturity, old age, very old, then we return back to that world where we came from. It was our understanding that when our bodies become dust that our spirit still reside in that region where our bodies are buried and for that reason

we call the spirits Wamaskanska meaning (wa-pure snow, maka-dirt, skanska-movement) "sacred earth that moves" that is what we call the spirits who come in. I mentioned earlier that we lived as reptilian creatures or as a snake and it is very possible and when you see life that way and our bodies begin to decompose the maggots, flies, and all of those things that have been inside us along with the bacteria which begins go through that period of decomposition where other forms of life are created. It is also our understanding that the snake or bird might eat pieces of a decomposing body underneath the ground. Our believe is that whatever eats part of this becomes a least for a time we have become part of that. We also eat different animals and take their spirit and send this back to the spirit world. When we eat these animals and vegetation we could become that particular animal or plant so it is a cycle that we all draw from each other. We were once root nation, four legged, and we lived underneath the ground, in the water, and we also flew so everything must give life so others can live. This story goes on so that when we eat a piece of food we are part of that food that once was. This is how we once lived as creatures before, this is not a valid point in medicine or in the studies that deal with this but for us it is something that we recognize and we respect all forms of life because our food comes from them and our bodies provide food for other forms of life to be created and to gain strenght from. The snake played a major role in our life, it creates the holes that go into the ground and help the water drain which is where we draw from. Like snow which melts into the ground to become water where life begins as roots. Some of it becomes the aquafurs which we drink. All life forms that are part of the water and earth are all integrated into one form at different times, this is why it is easy to understand when we say a prayer that everything that is



related even in today's way of life that we might reject other forms of life that we can easily find at different times in the past and even now we can become part of that. Now for us every form of life plays a major role in the creation and drama that goes on. We use all forms of energy from the sun, the water and from other beings that come from the dirt and our life is formed and of course there is a part of us called the spirit which resides in everything that lives and everything that moves, from the smallest insect to the largest mammal has a reason to be there as a part of life and if it wasn't intended it would not be there to begin with. But for some reason there was a greater power throughout all of us that placed that there and for that reason we are all integrated with each other. And when we look at life with this understanding, in a Lakota form there is a whole discipline in understanding this and it takes a lifetime to decipher what is here. When we look at life and when these stories were told those natural events that took place were explained by the spirit of the Lakota that wandered about from the beginning of time 4.5 billion years ago when the earth formed. For us the understanding of life doesn't come from what the doctors told us or from our mothers but from the way the natural cycles move and from the way these have to be respected. A lifestyle can be developed to fall that rhythm of some sort of life we understood that everything always moved in a clockwise manner that these natural things are there to give us this understanding. This is like the seasons, when the thunders return in the spring with water that is the first power along with the nitrogen that explodes into energy form and the nutrients that is needed to develop that seed which pushes through the ground and the heat from the sun and water to form a life. From a small seed there is a new blade of grass or a new tree that forms, which is amazing when you look a

life that way. You never realize that there are so many pieces that are need to create one life. Recently things are created in a synthetic or unnatural way or ingredients are placed in a tube and through the proper way of engineering life is created out of a natural body. Science has advanced so far as to give us an understanding of DNA and the laser as part of our use in ceremonies, the spirits that come originates out of the ground or out of that alter first as a sparkle of light or sometimes it explodes into something very powerful right away but life at that moment is there in some form of animal or perhaps a winged form which can then become a human form or even forms that are foriegn to us but whatever is there is a spirit that lived at some time and from that spirit and depending when that spirit lived we can go back to that time when they lived and in most cases they can take you mind back to 3 billion years and show you what is there. This is something that science couldn't do and they would give you the formation or the sequence of a celestial setting at that time where, how the construction of a constellation is how that is created and is taken in a very minute form it begins to say that this is yours or part of one species. It is so small that you can see it and it begins to grow. In Lakota these very small pieces when compared and tie it together with some form of light and the DNA of a human or any kind of being is created from that. It has always been there but as I said different times throughout our life we did not bring it forward and as a result the understanding is lost. Only after reading science and looking at some very old ceremonies that understanding comes back. If one is not used to these practices it is hard to understand and believe. We used fire in healing, and i did not realize at the time we were talking about lasers but the little bits of electricity that create life and when the spirits come in as little flickers of light the smallest and as



they grow they travel into your blood stream as a human. You can almost see the red and white corpuscles break apart if you ever take that journey. Your mind is able to be guided along by the power that is there and is giving you that understanding that when you take that journey into yourself you travel through that huge river that moves through your body through the arteries the veins and as the blood moves about you and you can move with it. You begin to see what scientists have today described. No one really made any kind of comparison except that, I for one realize that after having experiences where I need to find out more about myself . I took several of these journeys and i have also traveled outside of of my body just to understand the life that we have as Lakotas is still here . Many books that I have read where experiences of other peoples undergoing some of these similar kinds of experiences have been quiet the same as mine and other brothers and sisters having experiences of that kind. There were times when i being inquisitive would ask the spirits about different things and a whole story was told while we were traveling with a friend who is a spiritual interpreter that as we travel the language that we used was used just between my brother and i who are humans I mean we talk in Lakota and the spirit who came there began to ask about different things in life that somehow or another someone else would ask a question in different place and he wasn't quite sure how to respond so having some understanding that there might be a human with answers, the spirit came to us and ask us a particular question about some information and took it to another part of the world and gave it to someone else. The power that is there is very strong with each individual and for us as Lakota we still have that connections through certain alters of life we can begin to understand who we are. I've gone through the process many times and it

is hard to explain exactly how it works but i know it is there. I have lived on the east side of the black hills, and i have observed that the thunders always come from the west or beyond this. When i see the clouds form and the lightning to the west i'm reminded of what our prayers in Lakota mean regarding the four directions and how they were explained to me. There are several versions or ways of praying but the one I always remember is where the person who invokes the spirits always prays to the west first, it is our understanding that from the west the lightning an rain comes from or thunder (Wahukpe Koza) live in this direction. From this direction there are certain powers that are very great. The first being the Tunkasila who comes to us comes from the west and it is very powerful when the spirits from the west come. It is from the west that we understand tha heat and fire an lightning and water is some of our soul needs that are very powerful. Heat, energy and water constitute part of what we see today as life. The prayer is made to the west requesting help to understand and through the lightning and thunders as they speak and bring water. They are very helpful but they can also do great damage if not used properly as evidenced by things that are struck by lightning, with almost one hundred thousand watts of electricity going through a person or as it comes together in some form either from the groung or from the air or from the clouds the powe is fery great in heat, fire, energy and even the smallest (pe'sni'sa) the very smallest piece of that is used as lasers and the spark that is in every human or every life form is the energy or heat that is inside of every person and when that particular spark is estinguished life does not exist anymore. The west is alway revered as a very strong source of power, in a proper setting life comes from the west. In the form of animals or winged people Wahupe Koza, those who have wings, a form of



animal that may speak to us. to the north that power is just as great because this is where the cold wind comes from along with the snow and purifies the environment and takes the impurities from the air and goes into the ground and becomes water. The wind can kill any form of life, but it can also cleanse the things we don't want as part of our life. so the north has just as much power as the west has through heat and energy. To the east as the sun appears in a spiritual setting the morning star appears and we expect a red day which begins with the beginning of life with the sun. The physical part of the environment and everything begins to warm up with the sun and the understanding that we get from a new day or new beginning is brought with the understanding that life is in a circle. From that direction we receive this understanding and hold on to these and gain wisdom. To the south, the power that is there can also be used in a reverse setting meaning that when life ends especially human life makes the journey back to the spirit world in the south. There is a period of time this person makes that journey to the south and as we look into the heavens at night we see the milky way (Wanangi Tanca) or spirit trail where our spirits re-enter to another world or in the western sense we go to heaven through this trail. When you get further south in the direction south we come to a point where we do who live in the northern hemisphere that particular south ends there. And it becomes perhaps the equator of the northern hemisphere their spirits go to that point and then they return to the spirit and this trail directly above the equator is the milky way or spirit trail. We can go back into time or even the future as well. This is the understanding or belief we have in the four directions along with animal spirits that have claimed these powers, as their own and they are around us in those directions as we are in the center, they say wherever the four

powers cross it is sacred, so we understood life in that our bodies in that sense are a sacred part of the whole universe. A spark or energy that governs the rest of our bodies is inside of us. Wherever these four powers cross with us being in the center has the potential to create all other forms of information and can go out so that others can see this too. Above us is Tunkasila or god and is involved in every form of life. He is part of us, the earth, the universe, and every life form around us. Therefore even the smallest grain of sand has the potential to create life and there is a reason for everything. The seventh power that we draw our life from is of course, the earth which creates life in many different life forms. The stones (Tunka Oyate) the stone people are the first born, our ceremonies recognize this, the purification ceremony which is really recreation of life comes from heating the stones until they are red hot. The stone is ready to give life and when you add water in the center of the inipi it evaporates very quickly and creates steam which makes a hissing sound but to the spiritual interpreter or medicine man hears the stone (Tunka) talking. When they ask the stones questions the answer could be brought back in many different ways. But that understanding of the rock and what it can do, can take you back to the time when the earth was first created. Recreating life in this way gives us an understanding of the sacredness of life. I've known individuals who have gone back into many worlds or parts of time. This brings us into the part of the black hills, or where we came from as pte oyate from the ground. This is hard for any one of us to imagine how a human can once be a buffalo a four legged creature. But in the third world they say when we lived as part of the Wahutopa Oyate, they also talked about the Wahutopa being the buffalo, and we immediately think about the current shape of the buffalo. But in history or the study of palientology



and geology and the discoveries recently of animals who lived here billions of years ago, there was a buffalo or something that resembled a buffalo and that takes us back into that time when we lived with reptilian creatures and as reptilian creatures in order to survive. All of these understandings have been passed on to us by our ancestors who have lived many years ago. Something I would like to say or tell a story about myself before I go on, which seems out of place but I would like to tell. I worked in after 1984 when I left my current lifestyle and no longer worked in the field of education I was asked to change my lifestyle. I quit my job and left everything and for several years I lived everyday by celebrating through purification for two years in order to reach a level of spiritual understanding through vision quest, sundance, and other ceremonies. Having that experience and going through life as an educator, politician, community activist I found myself without any profession or any form of income. During the time I spent around the spiritual alter or Hocoka, and understanding a little bit of that i made several different trips. Usually don't know how the trips came about because someone would call me and ask me to be in a certain place at a certain time in some part of the world and I would find an airline ticket in the mail and I would leave. This one particular experience I had, was going to a place called Winchester Switzerland where a man by the name of Billy Myers who had made contact with people from another planet. A gentlemen came with two others and introduced themselves, he knew we were coming, he knew my name, and the conversation started with this gentlemen who said he was not from this world but came from one of the constellations in the Pleateus called Hiadre where they lived for 250 million years which he equated to earth time. Before that they lived in a constellation Orion but there was

some sort of event that took place and he had to move to Pleateus. He became friends with the people who lived on that particular planet and he lived there. He began talking about how the people there were able to communicate already with people who lived here on this world and one person in particular. He described the Black Hills and the place around it, and for 250 million years they have been in contact with the people who lived here. When I told him I was from this region and that I was a Lakota. He said it was your people we spoke with and began speaking Lakota and that it was through this language we communicated with. We have people who have made journeys there and to this day are still there. Of Course for me it was totally spellbinding because I was talking to a person who knew who I was, there was some doubt in my mind because I could not believe everything. But when he began describing things only I knew, landscape and things in my past that no one else in the world knew about these places and events, I began to believe what he was saying. He talked about several different kinds of transportation systems that were used, it took him approximately seven earth hours to move from that particular world and negotiating their universe until they move into our galaxy. The first person that came here was a woman by the name of Zinjavi that Billy Myers had met in 1948 and had kept in contact with them. The real interesting thing about this meeting was not only the fact that I knew the existence of our people being here 250 million years ago, but everything that I have been told by my relatives was being recognized he knew about the Black Hills and this particular language, and how some of the spirits that have journeyed there are still here with us. I was reminded of my own cousins alter when one of the spirits who come to his alter, come from that particular planet in the region of Pleadeus where that spirits come from.



We were able to communicate with this spirit about some events or things that we wanted to know and it just really made sense although he was totally unknown to me. It wasn't just that, but this person knew what I was doing and he was travelling with me at different times. Over the next few years 1988-1993 he came to me in different parts of the world but always that same person but in another body. I don't know how much of this makes sense but to me I find it very real. To some they might think I'm crazy, those things to me are very real, because I made part of a contact and through spiritual setting understood a little bit about the world beyond and not only the journey inside of a person but also the outside where we could see life in different forms and to this day how we are able to communicate with those forms of life through our alters and through our time in vision quest or through the inipi.

There are many stories of the Black Hills and each nation had their own stories to tell. For us as Teton and Lakota speakers have several but one I thought would be the most exceptional. This comes from my father when he talked about the Black Hills the place where spiritual interpreters go to meet their future helpers from the spirit world. This was a place where our ancestors return to when they depart from this world. Many stories were told about the many visits that were made by the holy men who journeyed there during a vision quest or some other journey that would take them to the other side or spirit world. Some people who had passed on and lived again talked about finding the Wanangi Makoce a place where their ancestors went and at different times they would make that journey. I've personally have heard different people talk about the sacredness of the Black Hills and the fact that this is where we go when we leave this world. My uncle Mato Wanbli first received his power and the

instructions came from the people who took him to the spirit world. He talked about being on bear butte when several days elapsed when a black tail deer came to him and asked him to join him and took him to the spirit world where he will be introduced to his helpers or the people who want to work with him. The deer turned and left and he followed him through the rock in front of his alter, this rock seemed to open up. They walked through a dark tunnel until they came to a light and when came through this opening and it was daylight and he found him self in a valley or meadow that can be found in the Black Hills. At this time the deer became a man and introduced himself and others. These other men gave him different instructions on healing and to do many different forms of work when he returned back to this world, that is how he meet his spirit helpers. After what appeared to be a long time he began to see his relatives who lived here but are now in the spirit world they came to him and greeted him and bid him farewell and wished him luck and the next instant he found himself on his alter, it was time for him to come back down. After following the directions of the spirit helpers he was able to bring them into this world and they did all the work for him in other ways, but in other cases of healing and other things that were given to him he was able to do. Mato Wanbli told many different stories and I've been to many of his ceremonies which were held at any time during the day, one time in the morning, at night and there were times w hen he didn't use his alter and he would call his helpers: black tail deer, buffalo, owl, or whatever he would call they would come to him. It was such a beautiful way to bring these animals from the material world near his home and he would communicate with them. Of course there were times when there was an "official" ceremony with the proper flags and tobacco ties, he was a very



powerful man. He used the thunder, lightning, he would control the environment, he could split the clouds, make it snow or rain, and make it stop or move in other directions. From his hands he could generate bolts of lightning whenever he wants heal or deliver a message. He was also able to do a lot of work with tiny flickers of light. He did this until the day he died.

Another person who told his story is still alive, when he went on a vision quest, he did so at the request of some spirits who came to him and for several days he stood on top of Bear Butte. As he stood there the place in front of him seemed to open up and someone called his name, he went forward and came out on the otherside of this passage, one of the holy men who was still alive introduced himself and also introduced the spirit helpers and the people that he would work with. He didn't recall how long he spent there and he went into greater detail about what these powers were and how to use them. The medicine man then took him to the edge of the forest and said he would return him to this world. Two men came and lifted him up and he realized he was traveling around the world at the wings of these two men. Early in the morning as the sun was coming up before day break he said he was coming from the east and the way he explained it , it was like flying on a plane except he was by himself with these two winged men, he could see perhaps one hundred miles or so the Black Hills. As he came closer he could see his alter and the next thing he knew he was standing there. That was how he received his power. Another medicine woman talked about her own when she died after going through some sort of illness. She found herself in the Black Hills, in a meadow there was a large Lakota encampment and as she began to walk toward the people she recognized, her sister and mother, she called their

names but they did not acknowledge her they faced the other way and would not look at her. Then she heard her name being called and she found herself on her bed at home recovering from what people call today a near death experience. These were the kind of stories that people talked about who had thee types of experiences. The Black Hills has always seemed to be the place where when they go into the spirit world they have always described them (the hills) in different ways. We learn from these stories that the Black Hills is sacred, unlike today where roads, carvings, buildings grew, but this is the place I would eventually go and this is where I expect to meet my relatives at some point in the future. The stories of the Black Hills as a geological formation is also a very interesting one, there was a race around the Black Hills by all the animals and again there are different stories about this. There is a red clay area all around the hills and the ground became red because the animals ran until they couldn't run anymore and it is their blood which has saturated into the ground. It was a way to sanctify or to make sacred the inner part of that circle which existed around the Black Hills. It is called the race track and there are many stories about this, some real and some made up to tell the children. My understanding came a little late in my life (about six or seven years ago), I've had experiences where people from the spirit world would come to me in some form either in dreams, vision quest, or inside the inipi. There were times when it seemed I would move away from my body and was able to communicate or understand what the people were trying to tell me. These usually come not only in human form but in animal form also. So with that kind of personal experience I was led me to believe what my elders told me and there is no need to question the sacredness of the Black Hills. My father always said that this is also the place where we go to



when we are hungry to gather food, medicine, roots, vegetation, and the flour which gave certain healing powers to the people who could use them. My grandmother was such a woman, she was a Pejuta Wiyan (medicine woman), she knew every root of almost every vegetation or tree or some stalk that would grow and what these are used for. I always remembered those things such as the little edie or whirlpool of the creek which has a healing effect, the purple cone flower has such a powerful healing agent that it could heal your broken bones in a matter of hours as it was in my own experience. These were originally found in the Black Hills area, there were many other roots and vegetations and different kind of berries that were used to color needed materials. My father talked about the Black Hills as a sanctuary where we could go and find refuge from the elements of nature and find food. The wood was used for the tipi poles and bows and arrows, they found all they would need in the Black Hills. My father told me that Cante Wagma cog'na'ke is what they referred to as the Black Hills, which is a description meaning the heart of mother earth or of everything that lives. We come from there and this is where we will return. The Lakota survived a great deluge by climbing the highest point and were able to survive. They talked about when the earth was on fire and how this place was created with fire and water. The story of the Black Hills goes back to the origin of our people. Unlike when scientist today claim that we came across the Beiring Strait fifteen thousand years ago. When you have someone who tells you that the spirit of the Lakota has been here over 250 million years which goes back before the dinosaur age or the time before, and predates what the scientist are have just recently discovered. There are seven especially sacred points in the Black Hills that are relevant to our culture, four of them I have visited, the three others we

suspect can be found east of Rapid, south of Redshirt table, and west of Custer. No one in recent history has made the attempt to find them except a few of medicine men who went to Redshirt table and discovered the a place, I know where the geological location is but I haven't gone there yet. These are the places that are the other seven points. All I can say from the experience and stories I've had and being able to go back and check the origins of the Lakota words that we can begin to put our history together. Which has always been there but somewhere in the past 100 years we lost a lot of this, I believe this was caused by western thoughts and ideas of what is sacred. Those sacred places I mentioned included a place in the south side of the Black Hills known as Maskakako, this place would tell the history or what will happen during a coming year. Spring when the thunders returned, they would hit this area known as the Maskakako (white cliff which has been etched) that is the word for this area know as Hells Canyon. The last time when anyone had any conservation of what took place there was in 1890 when my relatives Whitelance and Iron Hail were camped nearby, the first lightning or storm came and all that night on the cliff you could see little sparks or electricity type sparks where occasionally lightning would hit. This went on for several hours and the next morning they went over there and a whole mural was etched out by the lightning bolts. Other than the other pieces of history or future that was etched out was a large buffalo bull sitting there with some arrows or bullets coming at him. Someone interpreted that as Sitting Bull who would be killed and that year he was. That was the last time my grandfather attended this to see the future. Today it is used more as a wild horse sanctuary, Marlboro cigarettes come there to make their promotional trailers. But it is in this area that before a sundance begins a



tree had to be found, and usually the sundancing began right around the summer solstice when the spirit trail or milky way would line above the Black Hills, there is a fork in the trail and when that fork appears it is time the sundancing to begin. This fork tells us of the tree that needs to be used, and this tree always has a fork. Today sundances are held during the summer and a cotton wood tree which forks off in the middle is used. The fork of the tree is determined to be that place of the spirit trail. On one side of the limb the medicine man would tie the rawhide shape of a buffalo and below that or on the otherside the rawhide shape of a human form, in the center of that fork is usually tied cherry branches. The sundance tree is prepared that way, a young girl would come and hit that tree and after the prayer to the four powers or directions made by the medicine man. The tree is cut down and as best as the people can they carry it without letting it touch the ground. The purpose of the prayer is to ask our brother of the root nation to give his life and interpret our prayers that would come from all the powers around us. After that is done the tree is ready and brought back into the circle and placed in the pit. This is blessed with prayers and a buffalo heart is put inside the hole, the tree is then stood up, and the people who offered prayers or pledges or vows for several reasons, would tie their colors and tobacco ties which are were primarily for the tree. The tobacco is made out of the membrane of the red willow. The tree is now ready to be used for four days and in some cases it remains standing until the next year and given a proper disposal. What I have said is the basic or most common way to set up a tree that would interpret the messages that would come from above or from the four directions. It is said that the two limbs that extend beyond the fork when viewed properly it touches the two sacred sites among the Black Hills. Ptesohehocloleca or

gray buffalo horn also known as Devils Tower is one such place, where sundances are held. The other is the Pesla or the Bald Head Butte more recently it has been known as Bear Butte and before the sundance, usually one goes through several days or nights alone on a hilltop or someplace in the wilderness. This is done in the spring when sage grows at least several inches. Every one of these places around the Black Hills, and one area west is called Inigage, you find this on the map in Wyoming, it is said this was where the first purification ceremony was conducted. Bear Butte is also well known for people going up for vision quest and offering a wopila or request for help on that mountain. These are the areas most commonly know today. Many are not on the map, and when we lost many of our old people who can tell these stories we also lost the sight of the three other places, we know it is there. I've had the experience of having it more or less being told to me by the spirits through different ceremonies. It is important to remember that these stories are not always told today and many are lost. I was lead to a the final event in a ten year history of what became known as the Big Foot People's Memorial Ride "Sintanka Oyate Wicakisuyapi" or better known as Sitanka<sup>SPT.</sup> Wokiksuye" the idea for this was not mine although I interpreted it through different alters and medicine men. I was able to put together that whole ten year part of, at least my life that I devoted to bringing this about. There has never been any further instructions, but he last one was to take a buffalo heart to Hearney Peak on the last day of summer and on that day Hearney Peak becomes the exact center of the known universe. It is amazing how at least the Lakota understood this and that before there was the hubble space craft or observatory which measures how big the universe is, the Lakota knew about it and at that time the Hearney Peak is the direct



center. Cante Wama Cognaka is basically what that meant, I described earlier that when the sundance tree is stood up, a buffalo heart is placed in there so that one can create life through that tree, to receive understanding, blessings, many different forms of requests that were made were answered at the sundance. To put a buffalo heart up there at that time was some what difficult because we had to do a ride on horseback and the reason for this is a long story in its' self. We were able to do this. This history is very long and it took a ten year process and many prayers and invocations to the powers that be. Some of this understanding came back , I guess and I'm not quite sure but the reason for going through this ritual we understood has not been done in the past 200 years or so but that was one of the ceremonies that had to be done by my ancestors. By doing, part of the vision and part of the dream was that to recreate life and to keep the Black Hills as sacred as we can, we have to give a buffalo heart which represents the heart of the earth. We had to do this to keep our culture and our understanding of the sacredness of the Black Hills alive. After doing this it became very emotional for me because even on horse back going up Hearney Peak we encountered hikers and right at the highest point there were people climbing all over and tourist who did not understand the sacredness of the Black Hills. It was difficult to conduct a ceremony up there with 500 people watching and asking questions with no understanding of what was going on. Of course no help was given to us by the park service or by the existing powers who had control over the Black Hills which is unfortunate that we came to that. Again when you understand life as I am beginning to, that is one of the things you have to tolerate and the other is the traffic that goes in and out of Mt. Rushmore. The audacity of a nation to sculpt a natural rock

formation into something of their own heros and their own people's images who helped destroy this whole continent. When one looks at it that way of course politics invariably comes in and who owns the Black Hills and who has title to that. There is no such thing as title or ownership of sacred areas, we as Lakota understood that we were put as stewards of this land. Through deciet and lies a title was created and fell into the hands of the United States empire. The sacredness of the Black Hills has never been understood even by the Christian churches who continue to rip apart places in the Black Hills to build their own alters, sanctuaries, trying to replicate something that is sacred and that type cannot be compared to the most sacred place in the world. Many people do not understand this however we are able to at least put together all of the understanding that we have into proper perspective with hopes that our white brothers or the general public can begin to understand a little bit about what life is. These seven sacred sites are land marks with other places in between where one can find areas where a greater form of communication can be had if the proper procedures are followed. I do not know this but there is a whole process that onw goes through. Unfortunalety the Black Hills today is a landmark where tourists go and a place where gold, uranuim and tackanite is extracted for profit. People pay to walk on sacred ground and when one sees it that way it is very emotional, for me it is a place that I hold great respect for. Occasionally I like to ride in the Black Hills on horseback and you can feel the presence of something that is beyond description and it is hard for someone to comprehend this.

The tipi that the Lakota lived in, acts as the book of history and of our fathers and where they came from and acts as our laws. Those seven laws that were given to us with a pipe which was brough to us by a woman who



gave us directions on how to use and live by this pipe. The tipi also represents the seven sacred sites around the Black Hills. The Lakota views the tipi as an organic living body that we are privileged to use. When assembled reminds us of where we came from and how to make the proper connection to the spirit world. It is a physical abode at the bottom and at the top it is a spiritual abode, the connection or vortex in the middle reminds us that when we die we go through that vortex or opening into another world. Recently scientist are figuring out that there is movement in the universe and life begins with an explosion of some sort. This creation continues into the farthest reaches of the universe to infinity, but there is a time when all this energy is expended and it cannot go anymore and everything that is created by this explosion begins to reverse itself. As it implodes and everything that is created is taken back and made into minute forms and that continues for billions of years until everything that the explosion created is taken back or condensed and it comes to this one spot in the center and it reaches a point when it cannot implode anymore it explodes into another life form and another world is started. Some sort of matter similar to the sun would be created along with new stones and life forms or species will begin. We've known about this for centuries we have known this life which we enjoy for a brief moment, then we return to where we came from. The tipi explains all of this, it is constructed by tying together three poles which forms a tripod or pyramid that goes up but it does not end at the point where the poles are tied it extends out into the creation of another pyramid which is upside down and the bottom part at that time is ready now. Our ancestors used to tell us that this tipi initially when put together like this describes the past, the present, and the future, and that all of us has this (past, present, future). Then seven poles are

added, three poles are first put and depending on where this tipi is going to stand the first pole is right next to the three poles, that one pole being on the southeast part of the circle that will be created. The other is on the northeast side and one on the northwest side these were the three poles that would go up first. The first pole that would go up would be next to the one that is on the southeast side and it comes below the three poles and it would point in the direction of north. The second pole would then go underneath that first one and this would also point north. The third one would go up and it would point towards the northeast, and then you would start the process on the other side right next to the pole that is on the northwest side, the fourth one would be put next to it so the top points toward the southeast and the fifth one would go next to that and will point to the southeast. The sixth one would go up and it would point toward the northwest. This is formed in this way and we also have a lift pole or the covering usually a buffalo hide long time ago, but today canvas is used, this is tied to the place where it is going to go into the center and it is lifted and tied at the center of the poles to be covered. The people or whoever puts up the tipi would cover up the ten poles down which is the covering of the tipi. As I said the top part cannot be covered, but in the spirit world there is no such thing as top or down, only a circle is formed. Each of these seven poles represents the seven sites around the Black Hills, they also represent our seven fathers or seven brothers. "Tetonwa", "Miniwankata" The Spirit Lake, "Ihankto" Yankton, "Ihanktowan" Yanktonai, the "Wakpekute" Shooters Among the Leaves, "Wakpeto" Born in the Leaves, "Sissetowan" the Fish Bone, these are the seven nations that form the Waceti Sakowin. Within the Tetonwa there are seven others, I am an Oglala and part hunkpapa and hokewoju but there are the



Sihasapa, Oohenunpa, Itazepcu, these are the nations within the teton. As an Oglala there are seven smaller bands; Kiyaska, Oyukpe, Wajazi, It Sisa, Piyabeye, Oyukpan.

Within the Kiyaska there are four societies, I happen to be part of the Tokala or Kit Fox Society, so from the beginning as a young man, my grandfather Iron Hail used to tell me the role of the Tokala. My grandfather has a granddaughter by the name of Celane Beard who described more in detail my grandfather's name which is Wapaha Ska or Whitelance, it's one of those societies that used to put a white lance down on the ground when they encounter an enemy and the warriors would not leave until the leader of that society would come and pick up that white lance. That's how my grandfather was named and Iron Hail's father was named Whitelance who gave that name to my grandfather. Iron Hail was given his name based on his deeds in battle, the bullets that were fired at him like iron hail that he rode against the enemy which was the U.S. cavalry, he lived to tell about it. These were the names of two of eleven brothers, Whitelance happens to be the name of my mother's father, who died before I was born. He was lame and his guts fell out at the Massacre of Wounded Knee, he survived with Iron Hail, after losing their brothers, mother, and their children. Whitelance married into the Oglala and married a WakiyanGi woman (Brown Thunder) later interpreted as Yellow Thunder and Ghost Horse out of that family. This is how I came about, mostly I am Oglala and some Hokewoju. The society that I became part of was hereditary, long time ago my grandfather would tell me what it means to be Tokala. Tokala have to take a vow that they will do the most difficult tasks and keep the children, elderly, sickly, and women protected. The laws that were given to us with the pipe, were basically seven and in Lakota it means Wacatognaki to carry the needs or the welfare of the people in your heart. One should be generous, and helpful. Another law is Wowo Unsila which means to have pity on all things that move, or to honor those, or constant concern for all living things. Third law is Wowo YoniHa to have respect and honor those that you respect



which is all things that move. Fourth law is Wacitanka to have a great mind or to be tolerant and patient. Each species of life is considered a nation and they are related in one way to another form, we need every form of life in order to exist because it gives support to others and all have an intricate part in the creation of life. To be patient means basically to show respect to all other nations. If you can't understand that language you have to learn through observation of how that specie of life works, it could be a little gnat or insect or a certain specie of bird or animal, they all have a reason to be here and you should respect and pity them. You should be tolerant, all of these were explained as the laws. The fifth law is Wowaw'ala state of silence, or in the proper context is to be humble or to seek humility we must humble ourselves at all times we have no right to be arrogant we have no right to do those thing against others. The sixth law is basically described as Wohetike' to be courageous and have fortitude and learn how to descipline ourselves and to be guided by some strict set of principles. The seventh is Woksape or understanding of all these laws and how to live with that and how to practice these every moment of your life. Woksape, wisdom is very hard to achieve esp. in 1996 not every single Lakota can live accordingly because there are things that are beyond our control and there are many things that we do not understand but we try. And if we do understand we will gain wisdom. Only those who lived a long time and have gone through the four stages of life, when they become a child again they have achieved that wisdom and once this is achieved they are able to return to the spirit world. These are the seven laws that my grandfather always talked about and as a Tokala I have to live by that understanding. Never to fear because fear is only a weak part of you and must overcome this through understanding. The only fear is not to live according to these laws, and as a trained Tokala I was prepared for that as a very young man and over the years I have learned to live by these laws. Occasionally I become impatient, angry, arrogant, and perhaps even half

fear of different things that happen. All of these laws when practiced makes a person a well balanced well rounded individual with understanding of the spiritual life as well as the physical needs of the nation and your ownself. When you live as a Tokala there is no such thing as civil rights or individual rights, that is very wrong to try and preserve everything for yourself and let your ego take over and your pride and arrogance and anger control you. Tokala must never do these things but sometimes we forget, it is a very difficult way of life. The seven laws that the tipi poles represent, not only the seven brother but the seven sisters or the seven young women who left this world from the land mark known as devils tower. They went into the heavens and sat next to their brothers, and today it became known as the plaidus that you find northeast quadrant of the the night skies. The rituals of course all have been documented in many different ways. There is a Hunka ceremony, making of relatives, Purification ceremony, Sundance ceremony, Tossing of the Ball, all of these amount to seven of them and many books were written about these. The humble tipi acts as our history book because it tells us where we come from, and tells us of the seven girls who became stars and who are in the universe now and who govern those seven laws. The Wopesa'kowin and then seven sacred sites around the Black Hills and the seven rituals that each of these seven sacred sites have as their own. When these seven poles point up into the heavens they are the sites that you find right above the Black Hills and the tipi points to that. There is a trail that crosses from south to north of the Black Hills and when the spirit trail appear over these it is time for the sundance. The sundance is a reenactment, a time to worship, to pay homage to the people who were here before us who have since become spirits. So by spilling our blood and giving our flesh back to the earth the people may live, the spirits may again begin to work with us. Unlike christianity where they eat the flesh and drink the blood of one person, each person dances esp. the man who gives



thanks by giving their blood and flesh back to the earth. It is also said that whenever you pray, you do this for the people and that all nations have strength every facet of life around us from the tree and those animals to the things that crawl. Esp. the buffalo because before we were two legged we were four legged. Today the buffalo is called tatanka which means "own large", when we discuss the buffalo that way we are the grandsons of tantaka, he owns us we don't own him. When the buffalo dies or can no longer live then the humans will follow, esp. the Lakota our whole understanding of life and those laws were brought to us by a spirit who became a buffalo. It's interesting to note here that when you borrow from Greek mythology with the hump of Taurus as he looks down at us from the universe, the hump of the bull is plaidues. It gives us these laws because he/she own us. In a spiritula sense we still look to the buffalo, in every ceremony the buffalo skull is used because it means the connection of one of us that have passed on. We use the skull to remind us of who we are and what we will become. The rawhide peice that is put in the tree in the shape of the buffalo was put there because we were once buffalo. And we as buffalo still use that spirit trail that runs across the universe and the Black Hills which is important to us as Lakota. After the great flood one of the major players of the Lakotas were lost we invoked the spirit of the west the power of the west that we were told to look for our brothers and go about in a counter clockwise manner start from the east and look around at the Black Hills. Our ancestors did and they were discovered around the coast and what is known as the gulf of Mexico. Some of the families lived there and other returned by the sea coast. The story of this is purely novel and the historians who have traced these people from the Columbia river valley to the Black Hills is totally eroneous. History made up. The Lakota have always been here, at some point after discovering after talking to the spirits can be assured that the Lakota came from the Black Hills and that they have always been here. The tracks on the bearing straité might have

headed the other way and the garden of Eden was found in Georgia. To us the garden of eden is the Black Hills, it is a place where the green things can be found, it serves as sanctuary it is where we go when we leave this world. All of this have been talked about in early european history as we know it the language that were used eventually became part of the new testament, the place called Kuma in the biyo of Naples the cybil of Kuma of what became known as the oracles of the dead was most recently developed but prior to that the cybil there takes the people who want to communicate with the spirit of their relatives. They go to a place in a mountain underground, in that particular place there was a room called hell, hatus and the river flows through it. And in that particular place the spirit of the dead people were consulted and that is one of the reasons I when christianity first came here around the maskakako area and the devils tower. To us there is no such thing as the devil or satan in the Lakota belief, we as humans we have the potential to create life and the power to create evil and it is said wherever the four powers cross it is sacred and we as individuals, there is that energy inside of us which can create as well. As a tokala there is no such thing as evil only when we create it. In our minds if we begin to hate or become jealous then evil is created. There are spirits who we create that can respond to that in a negative way and when this happens evil is created and so when this happens we learn not to create it. That is why those seven laws are very important for us to do things that are good for people. Christianity on the other hand and the religions that were brought here from Europe all created evil, the old testament, the new testament, the bible. The so called savior or jesus was tempted by the devil when he went on a vision quest. It seems that every time a christian opens his book he is reminded that there is evil. That is the kind of religion that was brought here. When columbus came he brought the devil with him. The most powerful places which have been sited 5000 years ago in some of the journeys that were made here of



earnest crator they went across a great body of water and well into the main land a place known to the blessed people as turtle island, they discovered the entrance into heaven was found 35 hundred years ago. These are written as part of the books at that time and are currently being discovered. Perhaps the Black Hills is not the only one but it is what we knew, it's been said 35 hundred years ago that King Author during his time made that journey from the crator into heaven. He talked about the blessed people who lived around the black hills area or who lived in heaven, well they are talking about me and my ancestors all the natural people who lived around the Black Hills, when one condsiders how important the Hills are it goes back at least 3 thousand years before columbus was found on our shores. Many of these stories have been covered up in many ways, later the people who lived around the entrance into heaven were decribed as purgatory in the new testament. Our stories about the black hills talked about this as an island. The turtle who serves as an island. Maskakako also is where individual visions were shown and tells a prophecy but tells an individual who would go on the west side of the cliff they would stand there and if they were fortunate enough if the thunders came, the next morning they would turn and see their vision etched out on the wall. It is also a place where the history or legends were contained. The story of Inyan and Iktomni were contained here. Inyan was a giant who lived in a mossy area where there was alot of animals around. Iktomni of course was a spider, through trickery and deciet could obtain information or give out information in a way that would enhance his own position in a nation. Iktomni is that sense was regarded as a very powerful person and to this date in a spiritual sense had their own alter. The spiders which Iktomni is named after are very powerful esp. in the form of healing and doing work for the medicine people. The giant and iktomni argued about who made the world. Iktomni told inyan that when he made the world he stuck this most ugly piece of junk in one corner of the

sky and now he discovered that it might be Inyan that was placed in that corner just to take up the space to complete the Universe. Well, Inyan claims that he made the world that it was through his power and what he usually ate came out in such a way that the growth of the nation could be seen. I guess what he was implying is that he made everything, he argued with Iktomni. When the Lakotas talk about a wise person, man or woman, a very old sage person is considered a very wise old brother regardless of whether or not he was the oldest or not because he had the wisdom and Inyan considered himself to be the big brother of Iktomni. The argument went on and Iktomni finally said that he would show him who made this world, by walking across the water and at that time he will know. He then spun a web above the water and went across that. Inyan on the other hand decided that Iktomni might be telling the truth and that he should be careful. When Iktomni reached the other side, he challenged Inyan to do the same. Well Inyan took only a few steps in the mud and sank. This is just a story and I've heard several versions when I was growing up. That era existed at a time of Lakota History when giants lived among us, and at times we were the giants. Our people were very tall, perhaps even 15 to 30 ft. tall. It was only in recent discovery by National Geographic in that area where the argument took place about who did the writing up in the hills. Prior to all of this as a child I learned that Inyan did this with the help of the powers that be. Maskakako was not just a place where Inyan and Iktomni displayed their handiwork, but was also a place of strong spirituality of understanding of life started to this day it is considered to be very powerful. Unfortunately we are unable to practice there and what we would like to do is some sort of ceremony. It's an area where many of the fossilized remains of human and animal still exist. Further east you will find the current mammoth site where creatures lived at one time and as the earth changed they were solidified. This idea that the geography of the area contains some historical event and still remains intact from the time



some of these sites were chosen for events to take place. Geology as a scientific way proves one thing that the stories that have been talked about are very real. The study of man in that area still is very a much part of our understanding of our creations story. The story of Lemoria or subteranian people who lived underground because of the wild beasts who lived on the ground and were able to eat the people, and for that reason the human race remained underground for a while. It matches many of the stories throughout the world about how life was in the subterianean world, the whole system of caverns in the black hills were described as a place where the people lived. These might have been the predecessor of today's humans, whatever they were we always conjured up the pictures of a white man with a beard and lone cloth and carrying a big stick and history was able to twist facts around and made it as if the Lakota people came here. Our stories talked about the giants and when the springs or the current version of the elves existed in that area. They were able to survive on the nutrients and vegetation, and understanding this these are some the spirits that would come and go back and forth between this world and that world. The understanding of the little people have always been here with us. In the natural springs not only in the hills but the the surrounding area there were little villages that were discovered. The interesting part lies within the hill and the whole system of cavers were used in the time of the paleo where they were used by Lakotas, the stories told by my elders all relate to the times and eras in which through science we are beginning to find out the validity of some of these stories. Earlier I talked about Wamakanska which means the earth that moves. The word is derived from the area of the land where the body is put underground and decoposes and this makes up the earth that moves. When the spirits come they come from this ground and there are certain symbols that go with that alter and each is known only to the medicine man who holds this. On different occasions we find stones of various sizes who appear and when

they do, they might be part of some human or animal form which was fossilized. These bones that we find all over the country of dinosaurs have also played a major role in the understanding of our past, it is the spirit of these people who once they return to that part of life of stone or dust the spirits are still there. Since we ate the different kinds of animals for food and even today parts of those animals are within us and we are part of some other animal. The spirit of that body still has the connection of the animal within them. This is important to know when a prayer is said because we have to know that we are all related. You find many of these stones kept in museums throughout the world. Understanding a little bit about how life is after we die and after the animals lived and died and their remains have become part of the earth and turned into something similar to stone that each of these individuals can relate their story. It is only a matter of placing them in the proper condition in an environment and these creatures of long ago that they are able to relate some of that history. Unfortunately modern science don't see it that way, they see bones or inanimate objects that have solidified into stone and they are useless, this very disturbing to me to see all the remains being dug up and moved to other places. This world is coming to a very quick ending when we realize that everything that is considered sacred is not sacred to a whole race of people who don't see life as we do as Lakota, there is nothing wrong with that for you to believe in what you do. We rely so much on new technology and discoveries that the science has made that there is no connection to the former lives of animals that were part of a greater being, person, the creators intent on how to develop a world and how to develop a whole system where each animal is dependent on some other animal to survive and that animal knowing full well that he could be part of another animal that is greater or maybe his parts can be taken apart and buried and used in different parts of the country. This whole continent or the great turtle island esp. the center of this island is the black hills, from coast to coast the



black hills is almost the direct center. In fact there is a little town called Union Center which claims to be the exact center. In June the Black Hills becomes the exact center. For reasons unknown to me all of the events that take place in or around the Black Hills is totally confusing, theres court cases being held on who owns what animals or what bones and who access to them, to find out through science how old this planet is and all that. I see this more as the arrogance of man trying to be greater than something that much more powerful. Through science we can achieve some understanding, but these are done merely for research. For me as a practioner of a spiritual way of life there are ways that I can capture a moment time ( thousands or millions of years ago) or era can be brought to us through ceremony, it would be much more simple if all of us could believe that way unfortunately that doesn't happen. Today what we find is the Black Hills being torn apart for minerals and resources although she needs these things to survive. Instead of creating we are beginning to destroy the very being that gave us life.