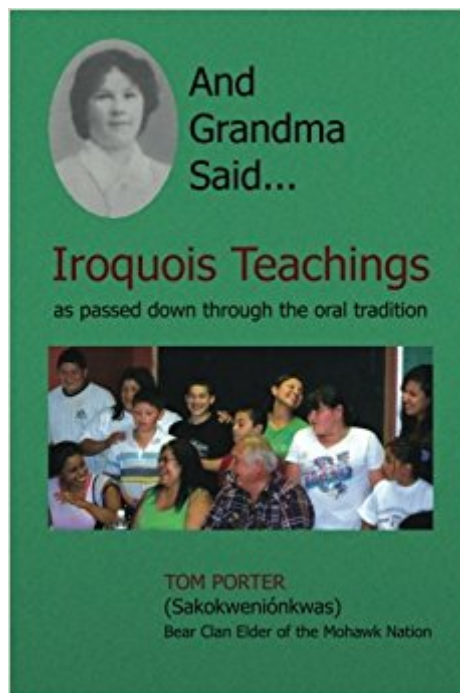




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And Grandma Said... Iroquois Teachings: As Passed Down Through The Oral Tradition



Synopsis

The Iroquois culture and traditional Longhouse spirituality has a universal appeal, a ring of truth to it that resonates not only with other indigenous people, but also with non-Native people searching for their own spiritual roots. Raised in the home of a grandmother who spoke only Mohawk, Sakokweni's nkwas (Tom Porter) was asked from a young age, to translate for his elders. After such intensive exposure to his grandparents' generation, he is able to recall in vivid detail, the stories and ceremonies of a culture hovering on the brink of extinction. After devoting most of his adult life to revitalizing the culture and language of his people, Tom finally records here, the teachings of a generation of elders who have been gone for more than twenty years. Beginning with an introduction about why he is only now beginning to write all this down, he works his way chronologically through the major events embedded in Iroquois oral history and ceremony, from the story of creation, to the beginnings of the clan system, to the four most sacred rituals, to the beginnings of democracy, brought to his people by the prophet and statesman his people refer to as the Peacemaker. Interspersed with these teachings, Tom tells us in sometimes hilarious, sometimes tragic detail, the effect of colonization on his commitment to those teachings. Like a braid, the book weaves back and forth between these major teachings, and briefer teachings on topics such as pregnancy, child-rearing and Indian tobacco, weaving the political with the spiritual. Through his recollections of "Grandma," and what she said, we also get an inside view of the life of a Mohawk man, and his struggles. Sometimes articulate and at other times inventive with his second language of English, Tom takes us on the journey with him, asking us to trade eyes, by "erasing the blackboard" to see if we "can understand what a Mohawk sees, feels, is ha

Book Information

Paperback: 466 pages

Publisher: Xlibris (July 9, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1436335655

ISBN-13: 978-1436335652

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1.2 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.7 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 20 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #324,396 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #91 in Books > Sports & Outdoors > Outdoor Recreation > Scuba #169 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > Other Religions,

Customer Reviews

In the last 5 months I have been gathering all the various writings in English of the life of the Peacemaker and the Great Law or Way of Peace that he brought to the world and first to the 5 later 6 nations that make up the Iroquois or Haudenosaunee. Once you start with that you realize that you need to also try to understand and read as much about the Iroquois Creation story and the various versions available in English. I am an old white guy 100 percent. A search of the various religions and spiritual paths led me using common sense (no visions/dreams etc.) to realize that the Peacemaker is the great Teacher/Messenger “ whatever term you use for humanity today. His tree was planted in America/Turtle Island and the roots have embraced the entire planet. I do not care to become Iroquois or be a member of a clan just as someone does not need to try to be Jewish to be a follower of Jesus. Now I know some have said the Peacemaker was just some sort of minor prophet/teacher whose mission was only to the 5 nations making up the Haudenosaunee. I myself don’t buy that. What this land would have been with 40 plus etc. nations making up the Haudenosaunee from sea to shining sea when the Europeans, my ancestors, came (Dutch via New Amsterdam/Albany and English via Dundas/Brantford) “ well let us say history would have been different. Still the Peacemaker understood all the paths of humanity and knew eventually 1st nations of this land like the Hopi, Lakota etc. will be equal members under the Great Tree planted by the Peacemaker. This will in turn inspire all humanity to eventually follow the Way of Peace brought by the Peacemaker and his two helpers Jigonsaseh and Hiawatha. The Peacemaker did not bring a religion, He brought a Way of Peace that flows with the current of the river, where men and women share equal power and rights built into the system of governance and a way of family via the clan system “ replacing fields of warfare with fields of corn. Truly the Peacemaker with his two helpers is that Pahana that the Hopi await and probably already know that. Now there are a few sources of the life of the Peacemaker that still are not available to humanity like Seth Newhouse’s 1885 handwritten in English and there is in English Jake Thomas’ recital on tape of the Great Law that also is out of circulation. This I would suppose should only be presented in a respectful location and time. Anyway, when I started to read Tom Porter’s book And Grandma Speaks, I knew right away this was a great book and a true door to understanding the Peacemaker and the environment and history from which he appeared “ whether from a white birch canoe, a white stone canoe or a white ice floe. I love this book

because it speaks to you and having seen a few Youtubes of Tom Porter speaking, you feel the warmth of his heart and really that of his grandmother. No it has not made me want to start wearing feathers and beads "that is not my culture. But it has made me thank the Creator, the Sky World and Mother Earth for the blessing of all living things that surround us in this life on this planet. Now I am still trying to understand that we have more than one spirit " at least two but that is another story.

I think that Non-Indigenous people everywhere should read Tom Porter's book. It brings to us the wisdom of the Native traditions, which have lain dormant for too long! Everytime I read how the Indigenous people governed themselves, and their way of thinking about their (and our) world I learn something new! Isn't it a pity that our forebears didn't listen sooner. Only the Quakers of the 18th century are on written record saying "Let us go speak with the Indians to see what we can learn from them". After all, no culture is so bereft of knowledge that we could not learn something new. And there is a lot to learn from Tom Porter's charmingly written book!

If you read the introduction, you'll come across the fact that this book is essentially a dictation of an oral interview....and it reads like it. Porter goes off on tangents and run on's frequently. Although the topic were interesting, it's mostly unsupported by citations and hard to read if you want it straight forward. If you like folks tales spoken around the campfire, then this would be fine for you.

Nicely written my father being Oneida would of loved to read about his ways. Yaw^go Tom Porter. I never had an idea about my ways until I read "And Grandma Said". It is a priceless book, it will certainly be handed down with many notes on it from Dodo! Oneida Wisconsin. Waiting for volume 2!

Really enjoyable and accessible way to learn about Iroquois/Mohawk traditions and culture. If you enjoyed the book, check out Tom Porter speeches on youtube. He's a really captivating speaker.

Like new.

Awesome book!!!!

Written by a Mohawk elder. He is a great storyteller and a wisdom keeper.

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