

THE CULTURAL CONSERVANCY

Co-sponsoring organization of the

KOHOLA PROJECT

a project committed to
*"honoring the collective healing wisdom of the
First Peoples of Mother Earth."*

The Gift Of The NATIVE AMERICAN HEALING POLE

from the
PACIFIC ISLANDERS' CULTURAL ASSOCIATION



Project sponsored by the Pacific Islander's Cultural Association (PICA), also cosponsored by the Interfaith Center at the Presidio, the California Indian Museum, One Earth One People Peace Vision, and in special honor of the Muwekma Ohlone Indian Tribe. This project has been a result of volunteer, grassroots efforts and donations are welcome to any of the above organizations.

As the representative of The Cultural Conservancy, a Native American nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting traditional cultures and their ancestral lands and as a relocated mixed-blood Indian person (my heritage is from the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians in North Dakota), I gratefully acknowledge the beautiful gift of the Healing Pole by the Pacific Islander's Cultural Association (PICA) to the Native peoples of North America, particularly honoring the California Indians of the San Francisco Bay Area, the Muwekma Ohlone.

Even though I and thousands of other Native Americans live, and in many cases were born, in the San Francisco Bay Area, we are still guests of the Ohlone peoples. The very bones and spirits of the Ohlone ancestors are still present in this sacred Earth. As guests, we need to educate ourselves about the true history of this land and its native people, respect the traditions of these local indigenous people, and acknowledge the dynamic, contemporary culture of the Ohlone descendants, who are alive and well today as our guides, friends, and allies.

Speaking on behalf of The Cultural Conservancy and for Joe Myers (Pomo) of the California Indian Museum, currently the only two Native American organizations residing at the Presidio National Park (where the Healing Poles are being carved), we deeply appreciate PICA's gift of the great Healing Pole. As a symbol of our respect and gratitude to the Muwekma Ohlone Indians of the San Francisco Bay Area, we are participating in this gift giving to the Muwekma Ohlone by also offering bundles of traditional sacred herbs, which represent the healing powers of the Earth. We also offer the partnership and cooperation of our respective organizations and will honor the Muwekma Ohlone in making the final decision regarding the permanent home of the Native American Healing Pole.

The significance of this gift giving is to honor and restore the reciprocal relationship between the Ohlone and their home environment at the Presidio of San Francisco. The Ohlones were thoughtful caretakers of their homelands of the Bay Area. For thousands of years they sustainably managed the plants, animals, birds, fish, fruits and herbs of this bountiful land.

The fact that the Kohola Healing Pole Project is taking place during this historic conversion of a military base to a national park, makes this project even more meaningful. As we respect the traditional knowledge and practices of the Ohlone, we learn to participate in a cooperative effort to restore the balance between the land and its original inhabitants.

This project is being accomplished by a community grassroots effort—literally thousands of volunteer hours have been contributed by all of the members and families of the sponsoring and cosponsoring organizations. This cross-cultural cooperative effort has already begun a healing process among the people involved and our respective cultures. We have opened a door to a dialogue that will continue to grow and deepen.

A HISTORY OF THE HEALING POLE

REPORT FROM THE POLE'S TRIP TO THE NATIVE AMERICAN YOUTH AND ELDERS GATHERING

At Ahwahnee, California, Yosemite Valley

May 21 - 25, 1997

On behalf of the Pacific Islanders Cultural Association (PICA) and the Kohola Project (Hawaiian word for "whale" or "seeking the light"), members of the Cultural Conservancy traveled with the 60 foot, 1,000 year old carved Cedar pole as an offering to the indigenous peoples of North America represented at the annual Native American Youth & Elders Gathering. This pole is one of several that are being carved for the purposes of healing wounds and representing peace and unity between all peoples.

Members of the Cultural Conservancy traveled to Ahwanhee, California on Tuesday, May 20th, 1997, where we met with the Traditional Circle of Elders hosted by Jay Johnson and the Mariposa Indian Council. The main Gathering was at the Wassama Roundhouse, a traditional California Indian village and sacred site in Yosemite Valley. On the morning of the 21st, before sunrise, we formed a circle and lit a sacred fire. The Elders opened the Gathering by giving a traditional blessing. An Ojibwe Elder reminded us to always sit in a circle and to never break the circle, because it represents the bond we have with life and our community.

Representatives and Elders from around the world came together to share their experiences and concerns about preserving their traditional cultures within the context of the future. Some of the tribes represented were the Miwok, Chaukchancee, Ahwhahneechee, Pomo, and Yurok from California; the Tewa Pueblo, Apache, Seminole, Navajo, Nakota, Dakota, Onandaga, Iroquois, Anishinabe, Haida, Mayan, Aztec, and Australian Aborigine. One of the main purposes of the Gathering was to share concerns about the health and well being of indigenous Youth and future generations. Mr. David Risling of the Hoopa/Yurok/Karuk tribes spoke and reminded the Youth of the ancestral teachings of the Americas: "To honor all Creation."

The Elders and Youth were invited to contribute a prayer or symbol to be carved on the ancient pole. About 70 Youth (ages 6 months to 18 years old) gathered around the pole, reverently said their prayers, and outlined their hand prints or symbols on it. Each person signed his/her name and tribal affiliation and added any comment they would like to offer. Below are two Youth's comments on the significance of their hand prints:

"In our beliefs, the hand print is a symbol of opening a door for a spiritual strength and knowledge for all the people. And that

all the people may be blessed and come together as one nation."

—O'Ta-ka Red Hawk Lincoln (Yuki/Wailaki, northern California)

"The hand print represents my prayer for the water. The water that we drink, clean up with, swim in. I give thanks for the water."

—Gaehnow Printup (Tuscorora Beaver Clan, NY State)

An elder from the northern Cheyenne tribe shared the meaning of the symbol of the hand: "In the old days, Indian people met each other by raising one hand. The hand is where we are connected to each other, it is a way of greeting each other by *feeling* the energy of each other. We didn't need to say anything, we were sensitive to each other's heart energy."

The host of the Gathering was Jay Johnson and the Miwok tribe from the Yosemite area. The issues of his tribe and his relation to his ancestral land typify the problems and concerns of many Indian communities throughout the Americas and the world.

The article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* on Sunday, May 18th expresses these issues:

"Nearly all his life, Johnson has lived and worked amid the granite splendor of Yosemite Valley and his roots go deeper still. He is bound to this land in a way few others can claim. He is Ahwahneechee, his people were here long before it was a national park. Nearly a century and a half later, Johnson is still here. He is the lone holdout, the last Ahwahneechee, to have spent a lifetime in his ancestral home. 'Yes,' he says softly, as if uttering the words might make them all too true. 'I am the last one.'" Jay continues, "All we are asking for is a small piece of land where we can continue our culture."

The Circle of Elders were greatly appreciative of this tangible effort to honor the sacred healing wisdom of indigenous peoples. A very special thank you was sent to the whole Kohola Project community and to Jon Larson in particular for his generous contribution on behalf of indigenous cultural preservation.



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SATURDAY, AUGUST 16, 1997

Sacred Poles, Healing Power



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL MACOR/THE CHRONICLE

Immense sculpted trees top Pacific Island festival

Ancient cedar logs from Alaska carved into sacred healing poles will take center stage at the 3rd Annual Aloha Festival sponsored by the Pacific Islanders Cultural Association at the Presidio this weekend. Melissa Nelson, top, president of the Cultural Conservancy, co-sponsor of the event, inspects a Polynesian pole depicting a humpback whale. The Bay Area's Pacific Islander community, to honor the Bay Area's first inhabitants, the

Muwekma Ohlone, will ceremonially present the pole to their descendants. Shane Eagleton, above, carves religious-spirit symbols from the Ojibwe/Turtle Mountain Chippewa tribe into another log, one of four that will be on display. The pole ceremony is scheduled for tomorrow morning, the second day of the free public festival, which opens at 10 a.m. today at San Francisco's Crissy Field.

The Kohola Project Native American Healing Pole

Story of the Symbols

The following are direct quotes from the Native American Youth & Elders who offered a symbol for the pole to be dedicated to the First Peoples of California and all of North America at the annual Native American Youth and Elders Gathering in Ahwanee, California on May 21-25, 1997. Additionally, many symbols have been contributed by the Native American cosponsoring organizations and their families, native networks, and tribes.

IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER BY FAMILY NAME

(if you contributed a symbol for the Healing Pole and your name is not listed below, please contact The Cultural Conservancy. Also, if you are listed below and would like to add or change any of the information, please contact us. Miigwetch!)

Bibiana Ancheta (Tulalip Tribes)

Symbol: Right Hand

Special Significance: *"Show peacefulness between all."*

Comments: *"The symbol of my hand will show my prayer for the success for all and peace between all the brothers and sisters."*

Ace Bengochia (Paiute)

Symbol: Handprint (15)

M. J. Bengochia (Paiute)

Symbol: Water Bird of Peyote Bird (54)

Special Significance: Water Spirit - Giver of Life

John Burrough (Mono / Chukchansi)

Symbol: Eagle

Comments: Table Mountain People

Pia Burrough (Mono / Chukchansi)

Symbol: Right Hand

Comments: Table Mountain People

Sandy Chapman

Symbol: Miwok Sign

Special Significance: "Three Legged Runner"

Comments: This represents Awaneechee, the people of the Big Valley, Yosemite.

Vernon Dalson (Pomo)

Robert Daniels

Symbol: Handprint

Special Significance: *"to help our people"*

Mitchell M. David (Pauite / Apache)

Symbol: Bear Claw

Special Significance or Purpose: Power or Pahauichy

Demetrian (Mono)

Symbol: Bear Claw (102)

Special Significance: "Honor the Bear."

Frank Flores (Mono)

Symbol: Handprint

Guy Francis (Quileute / U'pik)

Symbol: Handprint

Ben Gray (Wailaki / Conncow)

Symbol: The Moon

Special Significance: Grandmother Moon

Comments: "It is beautiful!"

Mikael James Green (Seneca)

Symbol: Bear

Special Significance: Strong

Comments: "I did a bear print."

Amy Hutchins (Mono / Chukchansi)

Symbol: Right Hand

Comments: Big Sandy People

Kristail Johns (Puyallup)

Symbol: hand

Special Significance: a prayer

Comments: "That my family will be well for life and get taken care of."

Loni Jones (Chukchansi / Mono)

Symbol: Dream Catcher (101)

Special Significance: "To keep Native American peoples' dreams alive."

Colin Kingfisher (Northern Cheyenne Elder)

Symbol: Hand Prayer (301)

Special Significance: A Prayer for Peace + Preservation of Ceremony. Life + Continuation of Ancient Ways of Nurturing + Acknowledging Spirit.

Imogene Louise (Californian Indian Elder)

Symbol: Trillostar Medal

Special Significance: Star-Flower Unity

Robert Woableza La Batte, (Dakota Storyteller)

Symbol: Thunderbird

Special Significance: Found among most Plains Indians

Symbol: Universal Law of Innocence and Truth

Special Significance: Connection between Heaven and Earth which Native Americans put on the door of their tipis or homes.

Symbol: Universal Law of Spiritual Protection

Special Significance: Many tribes' symbol of family. Sometimes sewed on children's clothes for balance of masculine and feminine qualities.

Symbol: Universal Law of Free Will

Special Significance: A symbol associated with power of forgiveness.

Symbol: The Universal Law of Life, the Connection Between the Creator and the Human Being.

Special Significance: Used for grounding your divine presence on Mother Earth.

Symbol: Spiritual Law of Choice

Special Significance: Associated with Corn Woman's Earth-healing energies.

Symbol: Spiritual Law of Freedom of Humanity

Special Significance: We have the right to choose or change our path in life.

Symbol: Universal Law of Symmetry

Special Significance: Represents the separation of humankind from the rest of creation and is associated with realigning the mind, body, spirit and heart with the rest of creation.

Symbol: Spiritual Law of Equality

Special Significance: Use this symbol to begin to have respect for all life on Earth.

Alan Leventhal (representing the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe)

Symbol: Pen and Ink Choris from Mission Dolores, 1816

Special Significance: It's a celebration of life considering the transformation of Ohlone society.

Joaquin Lewis (Mono)

Symbol: Turtle

Special Significance: Sobriety

O'ta-ka Red Hawk Lincoln (Yuki / Wailaki)

Symbol: Right Handprint

Special Significance: Opening of Spiritual Life

Comments: *"In our beliefs the handprint is a symbol of opening a door for spiritual strength and knowledge to all the people. And that all the people may be blessed and come together as one nation. To All My Relations."*

Jennifer Malone (Wukchummi / Tachi in Tulare County)

Symbol: Handprint

Comments: *"A stronger life for our future generations enjoy the air, water, trees. Take care of our elders, enjoy them while they are here. Love the young ones; love yourself."*

Lois Martin (California Indian)

Symbol: Miwok Sign

Special Significance: "Three Legged Runner"

Comments: This represents Awaneechee, the people of the Big Valley, Yosemite.

Natasha Medel (Yuki/Wappo)

Symbol: Right Hand Print (8)

Special Significance: *"So I can show my kids later."*

Comments: *I think that this is a really neat experience.*

Sharyn Miller-Jones (Mono / Chukchansi / Pomo)

Symbol: Left Hand

Dana Mitchell (California Indian)

Symbol: Bear Clan

Comments: Acorns, Oaks, 4 Directions, Bear

John B. Mitchell (Penobscot)

Symbol: Unity of Family (103)

Special Significance : Unity of Family

Comments: *"This symbol is used for family. It depicts the sacred unity of family."*

Roman Morales (Yaqui)

Symbol: Handprint / Family Seal (44)

Comments: *"Pray for family unity and respect."*

Sharciso Morales (Yaqui)

Symbol: Left hand

Special Significance: "To be remembered."

Damon Morta (Wailaki)

Symbol: Handprint (17)

Clarence Mosla (Miwok)

Symbol: Handprint (37)

Special Significance: "Blessing for family."

Glen P Nelson Jr. (Paiute/Pima)

Symbol: Hand Print (10 & 11)

Special Significance: *"To have strength."*

Comments: #10 is my son + #11 is my own. I'm the father.

Melissa Nelson (Ojibwe - Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa)

Symbol: The Cultural Conservancy logo

Special Significance: Symbol of Unity between Above and Below, Inside and Outside;

Harmony of Circles; Spiral Connection

Comments: Contributed by Melissa Nelson on behalf of the Native American and the Native Hawaiian board of directors.

Symbol: Spirit of the Lodge

Special Significance: Happy Home

Symbol: "The Clear Sky Loves to Hear Me Sing"

Special Significance: Connection between people and the sky.

Symbol: Sacred Tree

Special Significance: Appreciation of the Plant World.

Symbol: Sacred Stone and Tree

Symbol: Manidoo Religious Spirit of the Anishinaabeg

Comments: The horizontal figure is the Waabam Manidoo, the East Spirit, and the vertical figure is the Zhaawams Manidoo, the South Spirit.

Symbol: "He Who Talks and He Who Listens"

Special Significance: The importance of listening to one another.

Jerry Neves (Mono / Chukchansi)

Symbol: Handprint

Gaehnew Printup (Tuscarora - Beaver Clan)

Symbol: Handprint (57)

Comments: *"The handprint represents my prayer for the water. the water that we drink, we clean up with, we swim in. I give thanks for the water."*

Ruchatnut Printup (Tuscarora - Turtle Clan)

Symbol: Tree of Peace (58)

Comments: *"The symbol represents the White Pine Tree of Peace of the Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy. The White Pine represents everlasting peace and good mind symbolized by the evergreen White Pine. The eagle represents watching over this great peace to warn and help guide the people away from anything that might bring harm to this peace. The 4 white roots represents this peace going in the 4 directions all around the mother earth so anyone that wants to seek this great peace only needs to follow thses white roots and they will be sheltered and comforted under the branches of this great peace. The turtle represents Turtle Island, the earth mother of which this great peace has been planted."*

Balente Pubigee Jr. (Quileute)

Symbol: Handprint

Grover Stephen Ramirez (Maidu)

Comments: *"I liked doing this project and I hope to show my children some day."*

Renee Riley (Mono)

Symbol: My Hand

Lie Rockwell - Wande (Onondaga / Iroquois)

Symbol: Iroquois Confederacy

Special Significance: Wampam

Gloria Rodriguez (Mono / Chukchansi)

Symbol: Right Hand

Comments: Table Mountain People

Mason Wayne Sandoval (Mono / Chukchansi / Ga-Shaw-wa)

Symbol: (53)

Comments: *"Keep our young generation strong and on the Red Road. The way of Indian life, the only way!"*

Melanie Sampu Sandoval (Mono / Chukchansi / Ga-Shaw-wa)

Symbol: (52)

Comments: *"Keep our young generation strong and on the Red Road. The way of Indian life, the only way."*

Charles Sargosa (Miwok / Chukchansi)

Symbol: Flicker Band of Southern Miwok (64)

Special Significance: Family unity

Clint Shenandoah (Onondagaa Nation)

Symbol: Hian Wentah' (5 Nations Belt) Wampam (47)

Special Significance: Great Law of Peace

Comments: *"This symbol signifies the unification of the Houdenoshounee and to uphold the Great Peace that was sent by the creator (God). This symbol is at least 200 years old."*

Halley Smith (Mono / Chukchansi)

Symbol: Eagle Feathers

Special Significance: Symbolizes Eagle Spirit

Darcy Thundershield (Miwok / Chukchansi / Sioux / Mono)

Symbol: Handprint (43)

Special Significance: mother, cats, father, family

Comments: "A good thing to have."

Chris Vaglino (Pit River/ Pomo)

Symbol: Handprint

Terin Watanabe (Makah)

Symbol: Handprint

Special Significance: A Prayer

Comments: "I thought the log was very beautiful. I prayed that our native people will come together in peace, and that there will be no more wars, and that our next generation will become very successful."

For more information contact:

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