



The Flowering Tree

The Voice of the Good Medicine Society

Special Edition I: Introduction to the Good Medicine Society

This special issue of *The Flowering Tree* is a collection of articles which were written by our late Teacher, Eli Gatoga (1916-1983), that tell about the Good Medicine Society and its goals. For the purpose of clarity, minor adjustments to grammar and form have been made in the text since the original special newsletter was printed in 1983.

Eli was initiated into the teachings of Good Medicine over fifty years ago by Grandmother Qualli Kiloki, a Cherokee Medicine Woman of the Old Settler Band who lived in the Ozarks of Arkansas. With the dawning of the Aquarian Age, the Age of Waya the Trickster Coyote, Eli began to share the teachings of the Medicine Way with all he found who were seeking a more natural, spiritual way of life.

Eli felt that being an Indian is not a matter of skin color or bloodline. He therefore offered his Teachings to anyone who thinks like an Indian and wishes to be *Wiaki*, a Real Person. It was his

vision that one day the People of Earth would again find mortal, mental, and spiritual balance, realizing their place on the Great Tree of Life, through the practice and teachings of the Medicine Way. It is the goal of the Good Medicine Society to help bring this vision into reality.

After the death of our Teacher, we began publication of our newsletter, *The Flowering Tree*. Through it, we hope to establish and maintain contact with all who are interested in the Natural Way – the *Good Medicine Way*.

“The Indian made an effort to know of spiritual things
from his own observations of nature,
because all truth can be found in Nature.
There is a spiritual beauty in the realization
that all the world has been deliberately made or created,
and is in perfect balance ecologically,
and that is not by chance.

Lastly this knowing is based upon spiritual revelation of the truth to the individual.
When it happens for you, you then KNOW... and no one else can tell you otherwise.”

Eli Gatoga, Cherokee (*The Philosophy of Good Medicine*)

Good Medicine

The word "Medicine" contains the root stem "medic." This stem originated in the old Welsh word "methig," meaning "health." The term "Good Medicine" therefore means no more than "good health." I am sure we can all agree upon the desirability of having good health.

The Society for Good Medicine, or good health, was set up about the year 500 A.D. among all the American Indian tribes by the Man Who Walked the Americas, Bjorne Isaacson.

After his missions to the tribes of North America, including those in the East, North, the Great Plains, Northwest, West Coast, and including the "Pai" peoples of the Southwest, he went into Mexico and South America, and set up medicine societies among the Toltec, Mayan, and Incan civilizations. Although every tribe had their own name for the Teacher, he is best known as "Quetzalcoatl," the name given him by the Toltecs.

Originally, the medicine societies had four degrees to include mortal, mental, and spiritual medicine teachings and practices. But what is the Good Medicine Society today? Very few things remain without change for over fifteen hundred years, and neither did the Medicine Societies.

Today, in some tribes, Medicine People use only a form of magic, without practice of physical healing techniques. To some, especially the young present-day Indian, Good Medicine is purely spiritual.

In some tribes today, a medicine person is one who has demonstrated a certain magical ability or a greater spirituality. In other tribes, the Medicine Society has become a hereditary "Medicine Clan."

"What is Good Medicine...

Good Medicine means
a Positive Spiritual Life.

Good Medicine means realizing
that there is more to life
than meets the eye.

Belief in Good Medicine is one answer
to the need that People in Nature find
for expressing their humbleness
to all that surrounds them."

Adolf Hungry Wolf, Blackfoot

A Message of Interest

At the time of the coming of the whiteman, the Indian Medicine People were skilled doctors, as attested to by many Army doctors. It was said many times in official documents that their skills in healing surpassed that of the Army doctors and surgeons. In the field of drug medicine, a knowledge of the majority of medicinal herbs was given to the white doctor by his Indian contemporary.

In or about 1860, an Army doctor reported to Washington, "We will never be able to control these savages unless we can force them to live in square houses and eliminate their Medicine Men."

Under the pressure of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the various restrictive State laws, and the opposition of the entire whiteman's medical profession, the old-time Medicine People, in danger of their lives, began to give up the practice of healing, and to revert to the priesthood role of spiritual counseling and practice only.

Today there is a revival of interest in the simple life-style of the original people of Turtle Island, as well as in their knowledge of natural medicine and healing practices. Men and women of all walks of life are being given the opportunity to learn and practice this style of holistic medicine, which leads toward a well balanced, happy life.

The Human Body

The human body is the most complicated and complex form of life on Earth. The instinctive recognition of this fact causes a false assumption by many people that there is a wide gap between human and animal races.

The Indian, on the other hand, has always recognized that the animals, while lower on the tree of life than the humans, are nevertheless of the same life. He regarded them as his little brothers and sisters, and considered himself to be responsible for their welfare.

It is easy for the Indian to recognize the animal-ness of his body and its needs. The study of anatomy as presented in our Medicine course is designed to be an introductory subject.

Some of the topics discussed in this course were not used by the old-time Indians, as their technology had not progressed to this point. Modern Medicine People have found many of the discoveries of modern research are important to their understanding of the human body and their healing work.

The Indian has never been slow to accept good from another culture. New theories and practices which are found to be helpful in the understanding and practical application of healing methods have been accepted as they fit in with the basic premises of Indian Medicine.

Nutrition From Our Medicine Wheel

THE INDIANS HAD A SINGULAR WAY OF LOOKING AT LIFE that reflected their sense of purpose and ability to handle life's problems effectively. Their Medicine Wheel, as they looked about them, consisted of everything they could actually see. On a flat plane, one's Medicine Wheel is a circle approximately eight miles in diameter.

According to the Indian point-of-view, nothing outside your Medicine Wheel should affect you, for you cannot do anything about it anyway. Only those things which you are actually able to deal with in person are able to affect you in any real way. Knowing this, the Indian was able to rid his mind of unnecessary thoughts or worries, and keep himself centered on what was really happening in his environment. Where we are concerned with mental health and nutrition, this philosophy becomes vitally important today.

We must adapt to Nature within our own Medicine Wheels. If we do not like the elements of our Medicine Wheel, we then have a starting point to do something about it. We can either adapt or change. If we live in a city, for example, and do not like the bad air or impure water, we may buy pure drinking water, sacrifice our sense of smell and need for pure oxygen, and go on living there. Or we can move, perhaps having to sacrifice part of our accustomed lifestyle or luxuries — but at least we can do something about it.

We can only deal with what is happening right now, and make changes in our lives according to the reality of the present. Otherwise we live in a dream world, shutting out the realities of the ever present NOW and nothing is accomplished. We do not grow or affect our surroundings in a positive way.

As we change our Medicine Wheels, the chemical composition of our environment changes. If you move to a higher altitude, your lung size, muscles, heart, and rib cage will actually expand to allow for new breathing requirements. In fact, if you move 100 feet in elevation, or 100 miles north or south, after 21 days, the body adapts. It actually changes chemically and physically.

If you take a look at the people of different areas of the world, you will see that they have diets that correspond to their environments, especially if they live in harmony with their environment...

The Eskimos of the North eat an abundance of meat. The fat they eat serves to keep them warm by providing extra energy and building an extra layer of fat to insulate their bodies. As you

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progress farther south, you enter the “meat and potatoes” region of Canada and the northern United States. Here the diet is sufficient to provide the extra energy needed for warmth, without the extra fat layer needed for the Eskimo’s protection.

In the latitudes of the mid-western states, you will find a fairly balanced diet of meat, potatoes, and various vegetables, and as you go further south the people tend more toward the “beans and cornbread” diet of Arkansas and Mississippi.

Here the climate is warmer and it is important to keep the blood a little thinner, and the body a slight bit leaner, for comfort and health. There is less meat eaten. In fact, there is less available land for food crops and livestock grazing down south. We just naturally find ourselves eating more corn and beans and greens here in Arkansas than we did up in the Minnesota and Illinois region. They grow well here, they feel good, and that’s what you find in the grocery stores!

In the Tropics, you will find the people subsist mainly on fruits and vegetables with very little, if any, meat.

So you can see that your diet should be very much dependent upon your surroundings. With the advent of mass transportation, packaging, and preserving methods, however, foods are now being brought from all over the world to the local supermarket.

For best health, and to be in harmony with your own environment, you should only eat those foods which can grow in the environment in which you have lived for the past 21 days. In other words, you should not eat cheese if you don’t live in a state that has dairy products in abundance. In California, in the desert, green beans will not – cannot – grow. If you live there, or visit there, don’t eat them! If you find them in the store, you can be sure they were brought in from some other part of the country, and they are meant to nourish the people who live there.

The land, the food, and the people have a certain chemical make-up that are compatible, and Nature’s ways should not be changed, lest we sacrifice our health and well-being.

Where we are concerned with the medicinal properties of foods and food substances, we must be especially concerned with where and how they were grown. Herbal guides don’t usually take this into consideration.

A listing of ten or more herbs may be recommended for a specific symptom or condition. Or, one guide may state that “thousands of plants have antiseptic value, and many have active antibiotic ingredients.” Another lists: “Anemia – Alfalfa, Barberry, Comfrey, Dandelion, Fenugreek, Kelp, St. John’s Wort, Yellow Dock.” The question becomes, “Which do I use?” You may decide to use the first on the list, or the one you have in your stock of herbs, or the one that the herbal shop carries, or even the first that catches your fancy.

The secret to choosing is this. You must use the herbs or foods that will grow in the person’s own Medicine Wheel, if you want to effectively help him or her. If the only foods you have on hand are those that were store-bought, at least be sure that the climate and conditions required to grow the particular herb or food are also that which the patient has been influenced (“grown”) by.

After you have determined which herbs to use, the secret of combining them so that none cancels the others out and each one complements the other may be applied, as discussed in our monograph, “Compounding Herbal Preparations,” in the herbal section of our studies of mortal medicine.

We know that soon will come a time when it will be hard to find our food, unless we have grown it ourselves, or have stored it. It may be that land will be unproductive for a while, necessitating the storing of previously grown foods.

If you are planning a food storage program, and will be buying foods in quantity to keep for the coming “crunch,” please be sure that you buy foods that will be compatible with your body – foods that have or could be grown in the area in which you will live. This will insure your best health, if you have to depend on these for survival for a time.

When dealing with medicinal herbs, get to know your environment. Talk to the older persons in your community, and ask them what grows around there. Find out what they used. They may even be able to give you helpful hints as to what foods grow wild in the area, with which to supplement your diet.

THE TEACHINGS OF THE MEDICINE WHEEL apply to all facets of life. Its importance in nutrition is a very real and vital issue to be considered if you would attain and retain good health.

Signposts

One of the surest proofs of the coming destruction of the Establishment is to be found in the old Wisdom Saying, "Whom the Gods would destroy, they first make mad."

As we look around at the faces—the tense, drawn, anxious, stress-filled faces—of the people of this time; and as we consider their unthought actions, or reactions; and as we hear and evaluate the words that fall from their lips; we are constantly reminded that the whole world stands on the brink of utter insanity. Just a slight influence (so slight as to normally not be felt) will push any one of the majority of these people over the edge.

Perhaps the old Wisdom Saying should be reversed and thus make more truth: "Those who go mad, the Gods must destroy." This would mean that the people themselves are responsible for their own destruction by driving themselves into madness.

The Wise will constantly examine themselves, their actions, their speech, and their ideas for evidence of a departure from reality, for this is the beginning of true insanity.

Why are these people approaching the brink of disaster? We believe it to be due to their unnatural way of living. This includes not only the strain of city life—the dog-eat-dog environment in which they live—but the unnaturalness in clothing and housing and the low ebbing of their life force as they breathe each other's exhalations. It is also due, to a great extent, to the poisons in their foods, air, and water, and those being administered to them by doctors.

One of the ways to detect incipient insanity or irrationality is the examination of one's ideas. Should a wise man find within himself aberrations from the normal, good, and natural mortal and mental health which he should enjoy, he should depart from the environment causing these aberrations until such time as he is healed.

Our Modern Schools

Many times, I have been charged with being an opponent of the public school. I don't quite agree with this. I have helped raise seven children and I have sent six of them to the public school through the high school level. I have found that, like everything else, there are good schools and there are bad schools.

As I grow older, through the span of half a century, I see our freedoms rapidly melting away. It is this I object to. I live in a state, which in common with all the other states, allows you no freedom of choice in this area. The law says you must send your child to school—no exceptions. [* See note below.] If you have a good school, you are in luck! But what are you going to do if you have a bad one?...

The schools lead public opinion, with a loud finger-pointing at you, the parent! But, is this true? Between the ages of 6 to 18, your child has been under the control and teaching of the public school.

His daily schedule runs something like this, five days per week: Up at 7:00. Get ready for breakfast and school. 7:30, catch school bus, gone all day. Return on school bus sometime between 3:30 and 5:00 p.m. 5:30-6:00, supper. 7:00, begin homework assignment. 9:00, finish homework. 9:30-10:00, go to bed.

Most of the time, the child's weekends are not free. There are assigned homework and time-consuming projects, school socials, and school activities at which his presence is almost commanded. How many hours does this leave you to spend with your child for character-building conversation? Compare your available time against that of the school, if you would see who really determines the character training received by your child! Is it you or the school?

If your child turns out to be a success, the school will proudly point to their fulfillment of the assumed duty of character training. But if your child goes "bad," look out, parents, you may be charged with "shirking your responsibility" toward your children!

Nobody points out the fewness of the meager hours you had with your child or the fact that your home family training may not harmonize with the character-training [or lack of it] received at school.

What a step forward it will be when you, the parent, can determine your child's education toward a goal, instead of a "general" education, dedicated to destroying initiative and educational freedom in order to create a "rubber stamp" model (?) citizen (?).

* As of December 1993, we believe parents have the option of home schooling in all 50 states. In Arkansas, although we pay tax to the public schools, textbooks must be paid for by the home schooling family, and we are not allowed to use or buy old textbooks from the local school, even if they're no longer used.

Pesticides

Many lethal pesticides such as chlordane, kepone, DDT, Alderin, and Benomyl have for many years been banned for use in the United States because of the danger to human life. What you may not know, is that the factories producing these deadly chemicals are working full blast producing them for shipment overseas, and selling them to small countries who have no law against their use.

Many of these small countries use them in the production of such staple foods as coffee, bananas, grapes, peppers, onions, and grains of various sorts. Many of these small countries are exporting foods to the United States heavily laced with the residue of these pesticides. There is no government agency responsible for checking for the presence of these poisons.

Have you noticed that your coffee nowadays doesn't taste like it used to?



The Give Away

All animals and all plants understand Nature's plan, called "The Give Away." Plants know and accept the fact that some day their bodies, fruits, or roots may become food for animals when it is time. Animals and fishes know that the plants give-away to them that they may exist, and that someday in their own time, they will be the victims of "The Give Away" so that other fishes and animals may eat.

The Native American well understood this. Only mankind, with his man-made philosophies, fails to understand this great law of Nature. Only such a man rails against providence when his turn to "Give Away" comes.

There are thousands of people who are against hunting and fishing because they are against killing. Many have taken a stand against the farmer, homesteader, pioneer, and modern-day Indian who find nothing wrong in eating the small animals they have raised for food.

No one enjoys butchering animals. There is always a feeling about it that disturbs any person with normal sensitivities. Yet, Nature has made it a law that some must die that others may live [be they plants or animals]. The lower must die that the higher may live, if you will.

Our course then is clear. We must re-assume our old position as big brother/caretaker of all our younger plants and animal brothers when they depend on us. Then when comes the time of their "Give Away," let us dispatch them to the Happy Hunting Ground with skill, compassion, kindness, and reverence. Then as we eat of their flesh we are participants in, and gain a greater respect for, life in all its forms.

When faced with the rightness of the question, "Should we butcher our animals?" – I can only answer I have never read, seen, or heard anything to indicate that our Indian forefathers were against the practice. I also must answer the hunting and fishing question in the same light. I believe in the right of hunting and fishing for food.

"The teachings of the Medicine Wheel apply to all facets of life. Its importance in nutrition is a very real and vital issue to be considered if you would attain and retain good health."

*All that exists (everything) is an energy pattern.
The basic energy pattern
— earth, oceans, trees, rocks, clouds, stars, galaxies, even time itself —
is a manifestation of the Great Spirit
so vast as to be unknowable to the human mind.*

*There is only ONE energy source.
The Great Spirit Father creates this energy
at the point which bridges the gap between infinite slowness or absolute zero,
and infinite velocity with its infinitesimal minuteness of particle.
Leaving this point through the gate of absolute zero,
matter enters the round of planes
in the cold realms of interstellar, intergalactic subatomic space
on the physical plane, wherein all matter resides.*

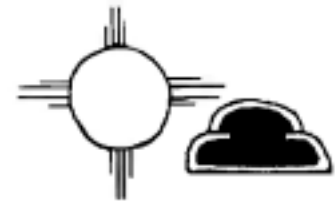
*Individual spiritual energy,
leaving through the gate of infinite velocity, or total energy,
forms the spiritual or mental plane of existence.
The creation of this mental plane
also instantaneously creates the “form” concept,
or causes creation on this physical plane
wherein reside all material objects, even the world itself.*

*This mighty blazing torrent of form-giving thought
or creative thought, as it appears on this material plane,
thrusting out from our closest celestial body, the Sun,
Creator of all things in our solar system,
we deem the Active, Energizing principle,
and we refer to it as The Father, the Great Spirit.*

*But all things MUST have their opposite in order to exist.
Neither can light exist without darkness;
nor cold without heat; nor good without bad.
So too, this releasing of infinite energy
through the gate of infinite velocity
had its effect on the material plane of proto-matter
released through the gate of infinite zero.
There was a blazing instantaneous combination of energy and matter
so that there is now neither infinite energy nor infinite matter.
All things are a combination of somewhere in the between-ness of the two.*

*The opposite to the Father, then, is his counterpart, the Great Mother,
and their combination created receptive life,
which we see in the star-spread leaf hands of plant, tree, and flower;
in the wide-spread pleading of the yellow prairies; the restless oceans;
all evolving even as we with our young minds and bodies
— all offspring of the Mighty Ones —
a Mystery of the Two which is a Perfect One.*

*And even as the Sun is the embodiment of all energy in our solar system,
so is our Earth Mother the embodiment of the Great Creative Mother principle.*



We do not subscribe to the principle of an asexual God, nor to the “neuter” God, nor to the hermaphroditic God, nor to the coldly intellectual “one God who is intelligence” principle. We have always held to the principle of the duality of the universe, the Perfect Circle of the Celestial Family.



***“For best health,
and to be in
harmony with
your own
environment,
you should only
eat those foods
which can grow
in the
environment in
which you have
lived for the past
21 days.”***

Hear Me Now

Hear the words the old men told me

*Listen to the words of wisdom
Listen to the Ancient Beings
Through the Voices of the old ones
Hear the old ones talking to you
Hear their voices in the stillness
In the silence of the forest
In the murmur of the waters
Rippling, happy, laughing waters
In the laughter of the Coyote
Singing, dancing in the moonlight
The Old Ones now are talking to you
Through the Voices of all Nature*

*Hear, now, go into the forest
Walk alone through Nature's pathways
By oceans, deserts, plains or mountains
Look unto the distant mountain
Look unto the distant sunset
At the gold and red and purple
Observe the darking, tall cloud masses
Gathering in ominous warning
Can you not observe the warning?
See the dark clouds of destruction?
Feeling Mother Nature's anger
With Her children of all nations
Feeling Mother Nature's anger
At Her constant desecrations
Exploitations and pollutions*

*Soon shall She strike out in fury
As we slap the stinging insect
First at one and then the other
Then She shall destroy the nation
Of mosquitoes, which do plague Her
Those who do not love the Mother*

*Here me, Now, the Old Ones tell us
Hear me, you, who have forgotten
Like the Old Ways of your fathers
Secure, you think, in new-found wisdom
Deadly wisdom of possessions
Possessions gained through competition
Fighting, hating, never loving
This the worldly way of living*

*Listen, now, to what we tell you
Think and meditate about it
Smoke the pipe of peace about it
Ask the Council of the Elders
Ask them what they think about it
Then go study Mother Nature
Are these things all based on nature?
All truth must be based on nature
Nature's true, all else is falsehood*

*Go then high upon a mountain
To a place secure and holy
And there pray unto the Father
That he fill your heart with wisdom
Fill your heart with understanding
Of the Teachings of the wise men
Who are spirits sent from Heaven
Sent to lead you and instruct you
In the Pathways of the Ancients
Leading upward, ever upward
To the holy tops of mountains
Upward to the stars of morning
Blazing land of Quetzalcoatl
Dwelling there in all his glory*



Drawings by Smokey Bird, 1983