

# **ART OF PEACE: TEIOTIOKWAONHASTON/DEYODYOGWAQHAHS: DGH (ENCIRCLES EVERYTHING) FIRST COUNCIL FIRE**

**Text written, researched, and compiled by Elizabeth Doxtater**

Art of Peace: through December 9, 2016  
DeVos Art Museum  
Northern Michigan University

Generous support for this exhibition has been provided by the Center for Native American Studies, the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, School of Education, Leadership and Public Service, History Department, Academic Information Services and UNITED conference. Additional support provided by the John X. and June A. Jamrich Endowment.



**NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY**



**DEVOSART  
MUSEUM**

[www.nmu.edu/devos](http://www.nmu.edu/devos)

## **TEIOTIOKWAONHASTON/DEYODYOGWAQHAHS: DGH (ENCIRCLES EVERYTHING) FIRST COUNCIL FIRE**

When the Great Law was ratified, the nations joined together, and they uproot-ed a White Pine. This pine was chosen because its long leaves (pine needles) grow in groups of five and stay green all year round, thus reminding the people that the 'peace' does not rest. They threw their weapons of war into the pit, and the weapons were carried away by an underground river. An eagle was placed on top of the tree. The eagle sees the furthest and flies the highest of all of the birds. The eagle's job would be to warn the people of ensuing danger.

They extended this 'law' to anyone who followed the roots back to take shelter under the tree. Each chief was given duties, and each clan mother was given powers that come with a matriarchy to choose and (if needed) depose chiefs. In the diorama, the clan mothers face outward to welcome the people, signifying the need to return to the teachings. There is a basket at their feet to symbolize their duties. The chiefs would be adorned with deer antlers to symbolize leader-ship, negotiating skills, and strength. They are to have the patience and a skin '7 spans thick' so that sharp words will not affect their decisions nor provoke them to anger, thus disturbing the peace.

There would be 50 chiefs in total; their nationhood was identified by the configuration of large feathers on their headdress:

- 9 – Kanien'keha:ka – Mohawk chiefs – three upright
- 9 – Onenote'a:ka – Oneida chiefs – two upright, one down
- 14 – Ononta'keha:ka – Onondaga chiefs – one up, one down
- 10 – Kaionkeha':ka – Cayuga chiefs – one down
- 8 – Shotinontowane'a:ka – Seneca chiefs – one upright

(Approximately since 1723) 1 – Tuscarora chief/representative.  
The Tuscarora headdress can be decorated with small feathers but had no large feathers.

The number of chiefs may have reflected the number of villages at the time of the Great Law Peace, Power and Righteousness.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

This is how I understand the guiding principles of the Great Law:

### **PEACE:**

A healthy body and a healthy mind. In order to achieve this, there has to be cohesion between thoughts, words and actions. We are supposed to love one another and ourselves. Even though we can still be cautious and have clear, healthy boundaries, we are supposed to be able to walk on the earth without fear.

### **POWER:**

Non-violent unity. Cohesion on an individual basis, a conscious effort to have your breath, your thoughts, your actions all exist in unity. We then are able to promote unity in our homes and villages.

### **RIGHTEOUSNESS:**

This pertains to justice, which can also be connected to forgiveness on a personal basis. We can choose to live in shame, fear and even guilt. If we can develop strategies to help (ourselves) achieve a level of understanding of each of these, perhaps we can truly begin to realize a way of being that helps us to 'carry the peace.'

### **THANKSGIVING**

These are the words of thanksgiving that come before all else:  
We gather our minds together to send greetings and thanks for all of the people.  
We give thanks to each other for our peace. With one mind we send greetings and thanks. Now our minds are one.

We gather our minds together to send greetings and thanks to our Mother the Earth, for giving us all that we need to sustain...and continue life. With one mind we send greetings and thanks. Now our minds are one.

We gather our minds together to send greetings and thanks to the waters for continuing your duty, and helping to provide life to all living things. With our mind, we send greetings and thanks. Now our minds are one.

We gather our minds together to send greetings and thanks to the plants. You continue your special duties. With one mind we send greetings and thanks. Now our minds are one.

We gather our minds together to send greetings and thanks to the plants that we grow and harvest, our substance, corn, beans and squash. You continue your duty to sustain us. With one mind we send greetings and thanks. Now our minds are one.

We gather to send greetings and thanks to the strawberries and other fruit plants. You continue your duty. With one mind we send greetings and thanks. Now our minds are one.

We gather our minds together to send greetings and thanks to the medicine plant life. You continue to fulfill your duty as medicine. With one mind we send greetings and thanks. Now our minds are one.

We gather our minds together to send greetings and thanks to the deer and all the four-legged animal life. You continue to fulfill your duties. With one mind we send greetings and thanks. Now our minds are one.

We gather our minds together to send greetings and thanks to the maple and all of the trees. You continue your duties. With one mind we send greetings and thanks. Now our minds are one.

We gather our minds together to send greetings and thanks to the eagle and all of the winged life. You were given the songs to lift the spirits. You continue your duty. With one mind we send greetings and thanks. Now our minds are one.

We gather our minds together to send greetings and thanks to the Four Sky Dwellers/the Four Winds that come from the Four Directions. You continue your duty to bring the change of the seasons and to help the earth. With one mind, we send our greetings and thanks to the Four Sky Dwellers. Now our minds are one.

We gather our minds together to send greetings and thanks to our Grandfathers the Thunder Beings. You continue your duty to bring the rains that renew life. You bring the Lightning that has a special duty. With one mind, we send our greetings and thanks to Thunder Beings. Now our minds are one.

We gather our minds together to send greetings and thanks to our Eldest Brother, the Sun. Each day you bring light and warmth. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to our Eldest Brother, the Sun. Now our minds are one.

We gather our minds together to send greetings and thanks to our Grandmother Moon. You continue your duty to work with the waters to continue life. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to our Grandmother Moon. Now our minds are one.

We gather our minds together to send greetings and thanks to the Stars. We see you in the night; you have a special duty. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to Stars. Now our minds are one.

We gather our minds together to send greetings and thanks to the ones who have shared your knowledge. We acknowledge that the teachings that we still practice, we have because of you. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to these ones. Now our minds are one.

The Creator: We gather our minds together to send greetings and thanks to the Creator for everything. We give thanks for our breath, our life, the gifts from all of Creation. With one mind we send greetings and thanks to you, Creator.

**‘Now our minds are one.’**