

Hinhan Kaga and Seeing the Stars - Kevin Locke - OSEU #1

In Lakota country, we have this blessing of having abundant open spaces and abundant beauty all around us. So, it's really striking. And when people come from afar, that's one of the first things they might comment upon. They might say, "Oh, this is really desolate out here." Yeah. But, you know, I think after the initial shock, then you can really see the beauty of how we, you know, in so many areas we don't have light pollution... you can just look out... you can see all the stars out there and you can, you know, talk about... and then you can tell those stories too about the stars. You know, in recent times, they've been trying to change that... rename Harney Peak. And one of the traditional names for that, they call it Hinhan Kaga... you've heard that? Owlmaker Hill.

And so, this owl maker, you know... he's... when a person dies... and it's really a long story... but just to cut to the quick... When you die, then you start that journey on that **LAKOTA WORD**, the spirit road... the Milky Way in English. And then if you look straight up at that, you know, in South Dakota, we can see that, you know. You go to places like... in New York City... I was there. I was trying to do a little program and talk about all the birds and the stars and the moon... and those kids never seen the moon before. And, you know, they'd never... all they've seen is pigeons. That's about it. They don't know anything... any of that kind of, you know.

But here we have all this. It's just amazing. So, then we look straight up on the Milky Way... kind of runs north south... but it does shift straight up over here. Then there's a real... clearly you can see the main band of the Milky Way, you know... but there's a part there where it forks... there's a fork there... and the fork just trails off. So, the brightest star there in that fork... I have no idea what that's called in English. But that's Hinhan Kaga, right? That's right there. He's right there. So Hinhan Kaga stands there and guards that fork.

And so, then when a person's coming and a person passes on and they're making that journey from afar, that Hinhan Kaga will shout out and says **LAKOTA PHRASE**. He'll say, "Who are you? Who are you?" And then as you get closer, "**LAKOTA PHRASE**" And what is your name? So then that person has to... has to give their name at that at that time. Then as soon as that person gives their name, then their reality becomes

manifest upon that person. And so, this is why you see these... in these pictures of these 19th century... how they bedecked themselves... that's how they attire themselves and the way that they want to present themselves before Hinhan Kaga. All the markings that they use... the feathers... they represent all the good deeds, the generosity, the acts of magnanimity that they've done. And so, then... and so they asked that name because he asked that name because... when they give that name out, then whoever gives that name, they'll... in their prayer... they'll announce out to all the directions... all of creation... so that they can receive that person, that name with that name.

And then throughout your life, all of creation observes you. All of creation sees you, everything is witness to your life, you see. So then, when Hinhan Kaga asked your name, then instantly Hinhan Kaga knows who you are. And then... so that... you can't stop. You can't stop because there's no stillness. Everything's in motion. And so but... Hinhan Kaga has the option of standing in place... in which case you have to go on that road that trails out to nothing. Right? Or Hinhan Kaga can step to the side and you can go on straight on that journey through eternity. See? But see, none of us knows our fate. None of us knows that.

So that's why...that's why the Lakota people would have the custom. They would maybe take a lock of hair from a departed loved one, and somebody would keep that. And then, the family will devote maybe 1, 2, 3, or 4 years to performing self-abdicating, altruistic deeds in the name of that departed loved one. Because the belief is you can... is our ties are so close, that we have the opportunity here to do these things to help our loved one in their name... continue on. See? So, things like that. But I'm... your question was about our natural environment. But you see, you can't do that in Manhattan. You see Grandson? No, I guess you can't see that...