

# Consciousness, indigenous activism, climate change

*MNS 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: Shodo Spring's Notes for Ecology & Climate presentation.*

We were all, probably, trained in the old colonial assumptions as so obvious they're never mentioned:

- We're in charge, (humans or white people or white male property owners...)
- Everything else is here for our use,
- If you don't "develop" a land you must yield it to someone who will. The Doctrine of Discovery – but it's still happening, with Line 3, Thacker Pass, Fairy Creek, and all the rest as our current examples. They have the "right" to take it by force, including enslavement and genocide.
- Finally, nobody can help us except humans, including technology.

We don't consciously think those things, but I catch myself in them whenever I look at the local invasive plants at the farm. As a member of the biggest invasive species on earth, I think it's my business to interfere with the others.

Here are some alternative assumptions – you'll probably agree.

- We're not the only ones here. (Humans, let alone industrial humans.)
  - The whole earth is alive and conscious.
  - As family members, we are responsible to the earth.
- Maybe less obvious, but common to many cultures, and necessary if anything is to change:
- Consciousness is the structure on which everything hangs, the most powerful force there is.
  - Prayer and ceremony change things.

If you look at the indigenous environmental movement, it combines things:

community and traditional ways

prayer and ceremony

direct action

building ways of living sustainably in this time

legal work, including innovative concepts such as Treaty People and rights of nature.

LandBack

(while dealing with incredible present and generational trauma)

They welcome nonnative people, and have clear expectations of us. They are looking for accomplices, not just allies: take action.

Once I led a walk along the Keystone XL route. That is where I started learning from Native people, and made connections that have helped me ever since.

A while later, the Mountains and Waters Alliance appeared and I named it. The point of the Alliance is to ally with everything that is not human, and we ask them for help. We unlearn the habits of ownership and colonialism, we un-become wetiko (the cannibal monster), and we study with indigenous people and with plants and animals, all our relatives. We train ourselves and we allow ourselves to

be trained.

It turns out I don't have a lot to say about climate change. The corporate owners and governments of the world have agreed that it will continue, because our way of life is not negotiable. But we will not get to keep our way of life. Electric cars depend on lithium batteries, and lithium mining is another disaster. The Green New Deal doesn't work. Carbon trading protects the capitalists. We have to walk out of the old, comfortable way of life, into something new. And though we have to do it, we will not be alone.

“There has to be more wild land that is unmined, unhiked, unrafted, unphotographed, unclimbed, unlogged, and uninhabited than there is land under cultivation, filled with habitation, dedicated to recreation, or otherwise put to use by humans.” Because wild spaces are the vitality of the world, including the nutritional value of our cultivated food.

Closing words

From Martin Prechtel:

When we are truly conquered, we become conquerors and dangerous purveyors of the same violent sickness that ran us over. But our Indigenous Souls never surrendered, signing only the Agreement with the Holy in Nature, with that Holy life-giving Thing that is in the Ground. Give our Indigenous Souls a throne in your Home of known Origins, feed the Holy in Nature, grow food, and learn from what's in the ground how to unconquer the earth, our bodies, souls, and minds by keeping the seeds of culture alive.