

Nevertheless, as has been stated earlier, this is a good book, a valuable contribution, and a welcome addition to the Native Studies library.

Ben K. Jukpor
Department of Classical and
Modern Languages
Brandon University
Brandon, Manitoba
Canada, R7A 6A9

Fletcher, Alice C.: *The Hako: Song, Pipe and Unity in a Pawnee Calumet Ceremony*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996. (Reprint of 1904 edition.) ISBN 0-8032-6889-0 Paper USA \$16.95.

In his journal of 1672, the explorer Marquette noted that the feathered stem which he called a "calumet" is "the most mysterious thing in the world. The sceptres of our kings are not so much respected, for the Indians have such a reverence for it that one may call it the god of peace and war, the arbiter of life and death... one with this calumet may venture among his enemies, and in the hottest battles they lay down their arms before this sacred pipe" (p.279).

Alice Fletcher had observed a calumet ceremony, the *wawan*, among the Omaha but was unable to document it before the priest who knew the songs and texts had died. *The Hako* describes instead the Pawnee version of this powerful intertribal ceremony. Fletcher was fortunate in working with Tahirussawichi, a Pawnee priest "who is the authority for the text and explanation of the ceremony," (p.14) and James R. Murie an "educated" Pawnee whose own ethnographic writings were brought together in 1989 by Douglas Parks as *Ceremonies of the Pawnee*.

Alice Fletcher understood that the calumet could be read as a text whose symbolic language transcended the particularities of individual tribal languages. Like manuscripts, calumets were often copied. Their power lay in the symbolic relationships they stood for, not in their physical existence as particular objects. Indeed, "Every article belonging to the ceremony and the position and movements of those who conducted the rites had a special significance" (p.23). Together, these ceremonial objects are referred to as "hakkow" or Hako, which Tahirussawichi and Murie translated as "a breathing mouth of wood," a reference both to the drum used in ceremonial songs and to all the other ceremonial objects including the feathered stems

themselves (p.17). As Tahirussawichi told Fletcher and Murie, in the Hako, "Everything speaks... so we say Hako—the voice of all these things" (p.18).

The ceremony consists of twenty related rituals, "each complete in itself, but all so related to each other as to form an unbroken sequence from the beginning of the rites to the end" (p.282). Together, this medley of rituals established reciprocal relations between different clans or tribes, using a metaphor of extended kinship. It was initiated by a man of considerable means, referred to as "the Father." He and a large party of relatives began by visiting another group called "the Children," whose leader was called "the Son." While an immediate purpose of the ceremony was "to benefit certain individuals by bringing them children," its larger function was to maintain peaceful relations between different clans or tribes "by establishing a bond between two distinct groups of persons... to insure between them friendship and peace" (p.280).

Fletcher observed that in addition to its social and religious significance, the ceremony "became a means of exchange of commodities between tribes" (p.281). Gifts brought by Fathers to Children "were taken by the latter to some other tribe, when they in turn became Fathers" (p.281). Like other Native American institutions such as the Potlatch, the Hako supported an intertribal network of exchange. It is almost certainly pre-Columbian in origin. Something like it may very well have been a factor in the distribution of Native American trade items known archaeologically from Mississippian times and perhaps even back to Hopewell.

Most of the text in this remarkable book is devoted to a detailed rendition of the twenty multi-part rituals that make up the Hako. Tahirussawichi, speaking in his capacity as Ku'rahus, "a man of years who has been instructed in the meaning and use of sacred objects as well as their ceremonies," introduces each episode of the text. While his explanations are mediated by the voices of Fletcher and Murie, there is no doubt that the interpretation is that of Tahirussawichi himself. This is a work of multiple authorship but it strongly reflects the knowledge of a Native American intellectual. Two out of the three authors are Pawnees. Alice Fletcher's contribution is most clearly seen in what she calls an analytical recapitulation. "Each ritual," she writes, "contains one general thought, which is elaborated by songs and attendant acts" (p.282). Without "the steadying force of the written record," she writes, "we are impressed, on the one hand, by the intellectual power displayed in the construction, and, on the other, by the sharply defined beliefs fundamental to the ceremony" (p.282).

In thinking about this book, I imagined what our knowledge of Native American ceremonial language would have been like without it. *The Hako* is a reference document to which both Native and non-Native students can turn for inspiration and enlightenment. The explanations given by Tahirus-

sawichi are themselves poetic statements. Take, for instance, the following passage in which he explains a text from the middle of the ceremony. I have rendered his words in poetic form.

Mother Earth hears the call;
 she moves, she awakens, she arises
 she feels the breath of the new-born Dawn.
 The leaves and the grass stir;
 all things move with the breath of the new day;
 everywhere life is renewed.
 This is very mysterious;
 we are speaking of something very sacred;
 although it happens every day (p.125).

The Hako is a book to be studied carefully. It speaks of something very sacred which, perhaps, no longer happens every day. Fletcher and Murie understood the importance of studied repetition in Native American ceremonial poetics. They understood that ceremonial objects like the *Hako's* feathered stems function as manuscripts in a symbolic and intertribal vocabulary that is independent of any particular spoken language. They recognized a complementarity of male and female, sky and earth in the semiotics of these objects. Bison Books, an imprint of the University of Nebraska Press, is to be congratulated for making this remarkable collaborative work once again available to a more general public.

Robin Ridington
 RR 2, Site 44-C16
 Galiano, British Columbia
 Canada, V0N 1P0

Reference

Murie, James R.

1981 *Ceremonies of the Pawnee*. Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge Number 27. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Grant, Agnes: *No End of Grief: Indian Residential Schools in Canada*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: Pemmican Publications Inc., 1996, ISBN 0-921827-53-9.

Those readers looking for "facts and figures" concerning Indians and education will be sorely disappointed by this book. Instead it is about the