

An interview with spiritual leader of California: Robertjohn Knapp

Story and photos by Danny Beaton
Turtle Clan, Mohawk Nation,
Ontario, Canada
www.dannybeaton.ca

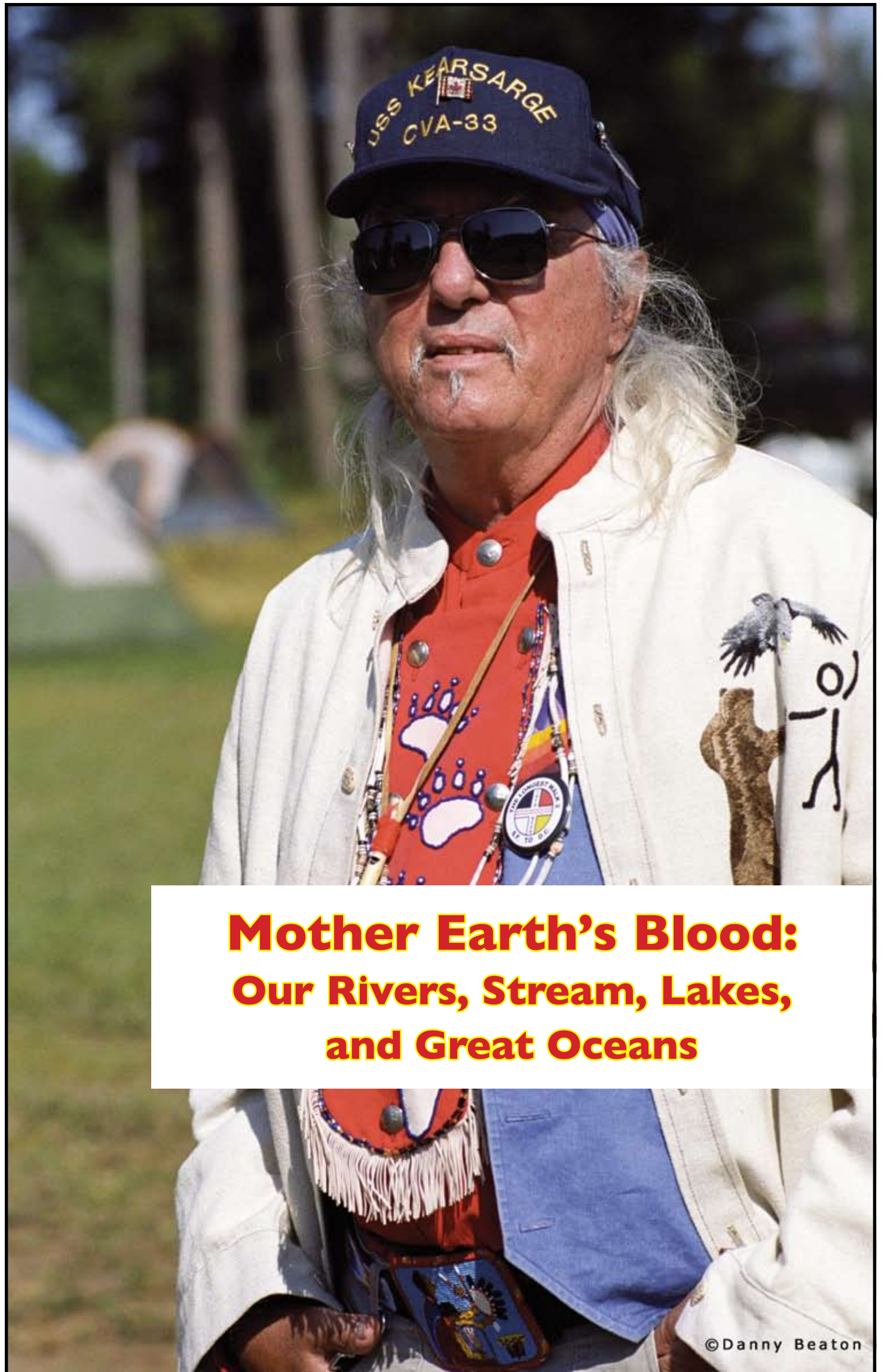
The definition of a warrior . . . there are two of them that I know of. One I heard in the longhouse when Leon was alive. It's the one about a man who carries the bag of bones on his back and the bag of bones is actually his ancestors. He's the one who's carrying on the traditions. It's got nothing to do with fighting anymore. The other definition of a warrior is the one who knows himself. It's not about guns, bows, or arrows. When the Peacemaker came, he came without the warriors' society because he formed the Clan system. The Peacemaker did away with the warriors in our way of life. All this was said in our longhouse.

There is so much to say. Everything is made in two forces. The forces are male and female, and the water is the female. For many, many years . . . maybe 2,000 years, we have become anti-feminine.

If you follow the light, everything is to the fire. When you make a prayer to the Spirit world, we are told to burn the tobacco. But, when you make a prayer to the physical world, that's how you use the water. You pray with the water. I don't know what that word [pray] means except "to talk." If you want to talk to the natural world, you use water, Mother Earth's Blood. If you want to talk to the spirit world, you use fire, and that's how they work together. If you look at a tree you see the feminine part of the tree is that which is in the earth, in Mother Earth. The upper part of the tree is that which is in the sun which is the fire. A tree can't grow without both. And so, there is a balance. There can't be one without the other.

So why do we dump everything into the water? Why do we dirty our water? It's almost like we are anti-feminine, anti-Mother Earth, anti-woman. We all know we can get away with hurting each other. If you look at women and mothers, we abuse the heck out of them as men. To me, [we are] one in the same. You can't have one without the other. Like water is not more important than fire, and fire is not more important than water. There has to be balance.

Women are coming into their own, and we have to honour them instead



Mother Earth's Blood: Our Rivers, Stream, Lakes, and Great Oceans

Robertjohn Knapp, Spiritual Leader, Seneca/ Tobatoloma at Bear River, Wisconsin
Photo by Danny Beaton

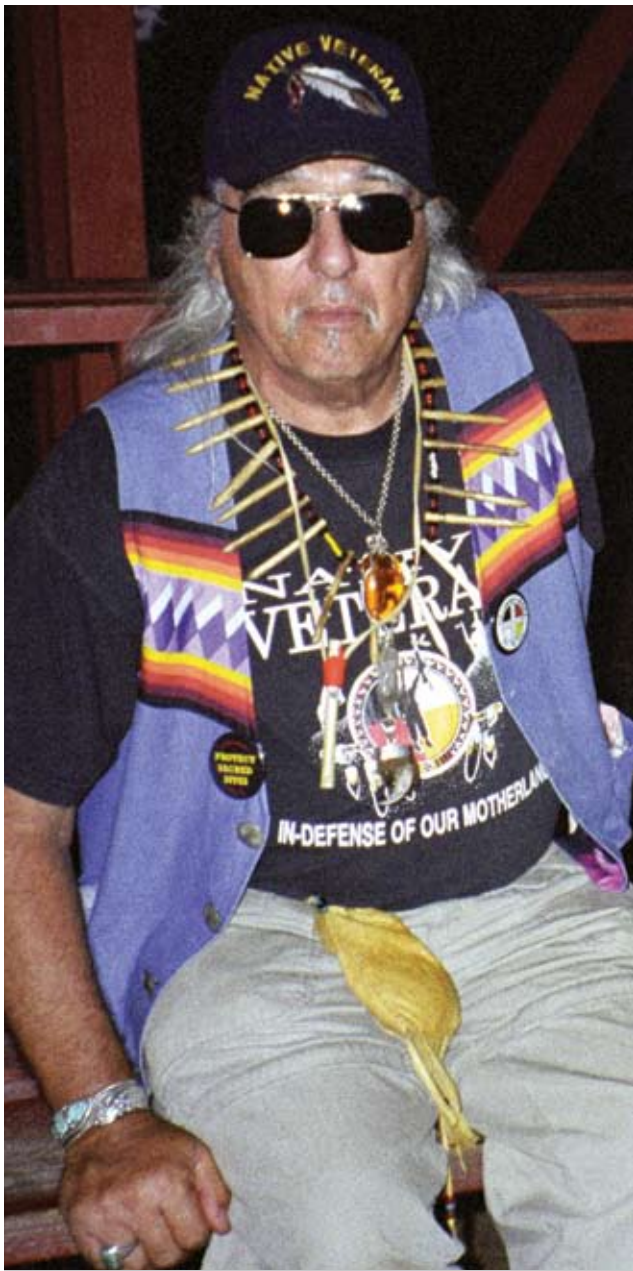
of hurting them. Especially true with the water. If you look up in the sky, you see the fire with all the stars. What's holding the fire up is the darkness; that's the feminine. Water, we now know, is throughout the universe. We are born in the darkness; we are born in the womb. Even the genitalia on male and female: one is in the dark,

one is in the light. We can see how things work. It's not to say one is one way or another; there is balance: male and female. And when we have balance, then we promote life. In that way there is balance.

I just built a sweat lodge in Salt Lake City in Utah at the veteran's hospital, and the day before I went, I

took my little girl and we went to listen to one of the top oceanographers in the world. Basically he is saying the ocean is dead; it might have 10% life left in it. Canada has already put out a bill to change their fisheries and canneries because there is not going

Cont on next page



Cont. from previous page

to be any fish left. The USA has only got one fishery left up in Alaska, and it is going to collapse. All fish that we get in restaurants are coming from Africa. The pH level of the ocean is way off. There will be no more life in the ocean soon. Only green and yellowy slime is what we will eat.

Lots of people know what's going on, but they are not doing anything about it. People are just accepting the facts. The scientist said the only way to stop it is to stop fishing and protect our waters at all costs. Stop abusing the waters; give them a chance to come back. All nations. He said scientists cannot even leave their instruments for research on the ocean floor because all these trawlers are

scraping the ocean floor so bad every two days. He showed many photographs. The fishing industry is levelling the ocean floor. There's only one island in the Pacific that has any healthy coral left because there are no people around. This is out by Easter Island someplace. People are the ones who are killing the ocean's coral reefs. We are the only ones who can save them.

There is a great lake in the Soviet Union called the Ura Lake. It's as big as our Great Lakes, but the Russians have killed it because they have put so many chemicals in it to make plastic, etc. Commercial products killed the world's biggest lake. You have these catastrophes going on all over. China has destroyed their biggest river; the Yangtze is black. Look at the great places where fresh water is coming out like the Amazon River. We are polluting our own life force. We are doing it.

Less than one half of one per cent of all water is drinkable. Think about that. And we are coming up with a couple more billion people. Our ice caps are melting; so, when our land mass gets flooded and our oceans are dead, we have broken the food chain. We are in a super crisis. Those people who survive off the ocean are going to come inland to survive. It don't look good. When my daughter and I left Harvey MIT and University—my daughter is only 11 years old—she said to me, "Daddy, I'm scared." I said, "Every student in that school should be scared," and I said, "I'm sorry for your future."

Here's the thing. I spoke to the scientist after, and he said there's not a damn thing we can do. There are too many people, and we're eating too much. That was his response. We are just gorging ourselves.

With the water, it carries your message. What is your message? If you want the Earth to know you care, then you have to start disciplining yourself to do that. But we are caught up in hurting one another. We are all hurting, so we hurt each other. We are going to suffer the consequences. We are going to suffer, not the water. It's called H₂O: two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen. Hydrogen and oxygen [by themselves] are explosive materials. Here we have this balance in this liquid: explosive material that promotes life. Maybe water was before the stars. Maybe before the "big bang."

They say there was a mist throughout the universes, and that mist coagulated. It gathered

itself, and this was the Creator. I think the mist was water: hydrogen and oxygen. The sun (the fire) came from the water. That's what I see. We should be in awe at the universe, how it shows itself. Nothing can live without it. Minerals come from exploding star material—where's that come from?

Let's get back to water. This is life force we are talking about. Here we are, messing with it. We think we can quit smoking just before we get cancer; we deceive ourselves. That's what we are doing with water. We will stop polluting it just before our destruction. The worst thing we can do is lie to ourselves, deceive ourselves. Everything needs water. If the Creator made it, it's alive. Everything alive needs water.

I think in some way, the water is the Creator. It's a consciousness that's in absolutely everything. We call it humidity, steam, ice, shower, snow, rain. If you look at it, it's healing stuff and of water. We should have a special reference to it, not [just] call it water, because it's too good. It's too sacred. We just look at it, and we don't give it its proper respect and care. We humans don't give the water its proper value. Balance is the thing that is critical. When water and fire come together, there is life and balance.

Water plus fire equals life. When you cook your food, water and fire come together, and then you have life. When man and woman come together, then you have life. One without the other: no life. They say all the planets had water at one time.

So, the water carries our message, and our message is what's in our heart and mind. Water leaves our heart and mind via our breath, our exhaling, and that goes into our air. We need clean air for the water to travel on. The air carries the water to the trees; the trees carry that message to the Earth. That which we walk on, the Earth, knows us. Our Mother. If we don't talk to these forces, they won't know us. If we don't know the life forces, then we will be afraid of each other—and that which you are afraid of, you will destroy.

Just think of what we have done and are doing.



L to R: Arnold Thomas, Shoshone Healer, Chief Vince Johnson, Onodaga Chief, Robert John Knaoo, Seneca/Tobatoloma Spiritual Leader. Photo by Danny Beaton