

THE RED ROAD

Interviews with Mikistly

By Deborah Brackman

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Contact info@NosaraRetreat.com

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A SACRED JOURNEY HOME

"mikistly@yahoo.com?" I asked, verifying the address I had copied in my address book.

"It's right," he said, having scanned my writing. "Ha ha," a wild laugh punctuating his communication, "'Yes, it's right," he repeated, his dark eyes lighting up with a smile.

I was intrigued by the lightness and apparent enjoyment Mikistly exuded about this simple event, my getting his e-mail address right.

I told him I was studying healing.

"So you think that's your camino, the path of the healer?" he asked me in a thick Spanish accent, his dark eyes lighting up again.

I paused for a moment, considering as I looked across at this young man in jeans and a white tea shirt with long black hair pulled back in a ponytail, a strikingly beautiful face with a chiseled nose and dark skin.

Having run through all my doubts in my mind, I nodded yes. Mikistly laughed his wild laugh, dark eyes flashing.

"It's not an easy path - the path of healing" he began. "But if it's your way, you follow it. There are many tests along the way. It's dangerous dealing with energy. Many people will come to you with different problems, different: karmas. There are many miracles. Some people will get better, others won't. It's karma. There's nothing you can do about it. Just keep walking. When you heal people, you heal yourself. It's the same energy. There's much work. Never take in the energy from the people you heal. Always protect yourself," he said with a gesture of his hand in front of his body.

"You have to know where they end and you begin. You have to have clear boundaries. There's much work. Keep working. Keep walking the path. You're alone. It's your path. No one can go with you. You walk alone. We call it the warrior's path of healing. There are three things only to remember. It's very simple, head in the sky, hands in the work; (healing) and feet on the earth, Madre Tierra (Mother Earth)" Mikistly let out another mad laugh and continued.

"But it's good. It's about waking up each moment. Everyone is asleep, dreaming. When you're awake, life is simple, very simple. Life is beautiful. Only the mind makes problems. It sleeps. You need to want to wake up. You need to remind yourself, 'No more sleeping, wake up every moment.'"

We spoke of different things. I mentioned that my husband had died four years ago of cancer.

"That's why you're so sad?" Mikistly asked. "Why? Don't be sad. You need to smile." He made a big toothy grin. "'We're all going there. This life is just a dream, a very short dream. This city's a dream, this juice bar, you and I, a dream.'" He made a sweeping hand gesture, then again, his wild laugh.

"You can make it a good dream or a bad dream. You decide everything, you decide."

"Religions are very serious," he said frowning and making a long face. "A healer laughs. Life is so beautiful. When you're serious, life is boring. Keep walking your path."

I spoke to Mikistly about my dream of a community.

"Same dream," he said, laughing. "Now is the New Age. There's lots of energy. If you're a good person, it's easy to heal. Spirit wants community. Community is the most difficult thing, to learn to love each other. If it's easy with wife, child, husband, it's difficult with others. It's the same dream, to seed the earth, to return to Madre Tierra (Mother Earth.)"

We spoke briefly, and he was gone. When I asked about him, I was told, he's a shaman and healer, he travels all over doing sweat lodges, wherever he's called.

They showed me photographs of Mikistly's Aztec dance company. Unfortunately, I was leaving and couldn't attend their performance the following night. In a photograph, I recognized Mikistly in a headdress of dramatically plumed feathers and a black warrior's costume, his muscular legs beneath an elaborately decorated wrap. Next to him were a beautiful woman and child in a native costume.

I'd learned that a snake had been found sleeping under my mattress in my house by the sea where I'd spent the last week. Having discovered the poisonous tavova gata, the caretaker killed it with a stick.

I found myself overwhelmed with deep emotion over the death of the snake. In a dream, I had a vision of the snake surrounded my light. There was a sense the snake had sacrificed his life for me. I thought of Mikistly, the bright-eyed man, I'd encountered that day. In my heart, I felt a connection, a message waiting to be deciphered. I wrote a story about this experience.

A month later, on his way back from a Native American ceremony, Mikistly visited me. His long black hair was pulled back in a ponytail. He wore a black T-shirt and carried a women beige bag with colorfully ornamented borders. I gave him the story I had written. We sat outside on the porch as he read it. I looked out at the bright shining sun peeking through the lush green trees across from my house.

"Would you like to go for a walk?" I asked.

Mikistly agreed and we started up the hill. As we looked out over beautiful hills, studded with trees, the bay to the east, the smell of sage wafted towards us. We passed one of the last houses and continued our ascent up the hill.

"What's the meaning of the experience with the snake" I asked as we walked along a path in the hills above my house.

"The message is, wake up!" Mikistly said smiling at me as the wind danced through his hair.

In the silence that followed, I felt invited to speak from my heart about what was concerning me. I shared with him my difficulty about making decisions about my life, how I seemed to just keep wavering, going back and forth.

"A warrior looks ahead, not back. All of life is decisions. Once you've made a decision don't look back. The decision becomes your experience. A warrior learns from pain, he doesn't suffer."

On our walk in the hills, we spoke of many things.

The next evening, we went to the farmers market to sell Mikistly's crafts, feather ornaments, beaded jewelry and moccasins. Mikistly spoke of his vision of a healing place in the mountains, of his desire to buy a piece of land to begin his work.

"I know just the area. It's a sacred place with ancient pyramids. I love the cliffs, the mountains. The elders tell me a real healing place of the tradition, our Mexica tradition is needed there. That is my mission. It is my place. I feel good there. I love walking in the hills. It is a magic to watch the sun come up pink and golden over the cliffs. In the mornings, I often go pick up the garbage left by tourists at the pyramids."

"We Indians have to buy land now, even though it is the land of our ancestors. In our culture, it is considered impossible to buy land. No one can own a own land. The land is our Mother Earth. It cannot be owned. One can be a guardian of the land, but one cannot own it. But now, I need to buy land to have a place for healing."

"Why don't you work on a business plan?" I suggested, explaining the steps for creating a business as we walked towards the market

Selling wares, Mikistly spoke animatedly to passersby, seeming at home in the carnival atmosphere.

"I like making people smile," he shared, "it's good medicine."

A group of tourists walked by without looking at us.

"There are people in America where one feels there is no heart left, only money. Of course these people can be found anywhere. Look around, in many

people, there is no more spirit. Look in the eyes, they are empty. Many walk around but they are already dead."

I nodded in agreement.

On our way home, Mikistly seemed deep in thought.

"When you spoke of business before, I felt confusion. I felt the energy of lacking clarity. It was good to look at that. For me, business is business, and healing is healing. I can make business. I can sell my crafts. But healing is spirit. I can't take money for it.

"Spirit is free. I want to make a school where people who have no money can come. I want to heal the separation of having no money. All separations need to be healed. That is my vision, my mission. Money is not the problem. Clarity is the problem. Once I have clarity, the money will come. I'm praying for clarity."

The next morning Mikistly was on the phone, "I was talking to my nephew," he said, "he lives an hour away. He's been in America for a few years and works in a restaurant. He's a slave, he's crazy for the American dream. He works all the time trying to make more money. 'Why don't you stay here?' he always asks me. I don't like the American dream. I like my dream. Ha, ah! (His wild laugh again)

"Americans come to Mexico for vacation. Mexicans come to America to work. When my nephew's friends ask me what I am doing here, I tell them that I am on my vacation in America. It's very strange to them. They don't know what to make of it. But it's true, America is my vacation and also my school. The north is school. It's a hard school but good, many lessons. Mexico is my place. In Mexico I am working all the time. Always work. Waking up is work. In Mexico, in America, the path is work. I like it.

But Mexico is my place. There is more heart. Art is from the heart. That's why Mexico has so much art. A big heart."

Later that evening, walking in the hills towards the west, we watched the golden sun began to sink towards the horizon. Transfixed by the undulating fields of yellowed grass blowing in the wind, I spoke of a guru I had followed years back.

"I don't like gurus.' Mikistly said, his dark eyes lighting up with his smile. "They take energy. Everyone is a teacher and everyone is a student. You need to find your own inner guide.'

We sat on a rock.

"This is a guardian rock," Mikistly began.

My eyes drank in his face, the wild darting eyes, beautiful alive smile. I listened with absorbed presence to his words.

"One of my guides is White Horse. He's a Cheyenne medicine man. Once, my wife and I built the sweat lodge in a community. It was a beautiful place but had bad energy. There were too many drugs. I told people they couldn't use drugs when they came inside the lodge. Many laughed. They hid their drugs and took them anyway. I prayed to my guides. They said it was OK to perform the ceremony.

"There was a heavy rain. During the sweat, the clouds cleared and there was a great healing. People began to breathe, many came to life. There was a good energy. When everyone was gone, there was only one man left. Through the steam from the temazcal, I looked at his chest breathing, as I looked closer, suddenly I realized, he was White Horse, my guide! It was a vision. Thank you Great Spirit! I felt so grateful.

"A long time later, I visited friends at a nice house. There was a man in beautiful clothes. He said, 'Hi, you remember me? You did a sweat for us. I stopped taking drugs from that time. I thank you for my life. Everything changed. Things are going well.'

"I didn't remember him. He was a different person now. It was a miracle. This is my gift. It was a joy to see him changed."

I gazed off into the sky inspired by Mikistly's words; feeling my soul traveling to some distant place of cairn, both far away and yet totally present, a paradox. We fell into a deep wordless communion as we watched the hills turning rose with evening.

After a timeless silence, Mikistly spoke, "'All one can say in the end is thank you God for this life, it's so beautiful. Thank you for these teachings. Everything is connected. All nature gives signs, signals. The mother earth speaks but people don't understand. They sleep. Wake up!

"The elders tell me I speak many languages. Now I speak English. With you I understand. We have good communication. Thank you for everything. You speak slowly. I understand now, the elders are right. The language is inside. I need English for Europe. I would like to write a book some day about the tradition, a message for humanity. It can help many people."

'Maybe I will help you.' I said without thinking.

Mikistly nodded. "Maybe."

After another pause, he said, "A message for you, you need to let go of your husband. You keep him. It's not good for you, it's not good for him. Let him go. You were together before many times. And will be again together. I feel his spirit in the house. Let him go. Allow the new."

The sky became dark and the first stars came twinkling through.

Mikistly unwrapped a red cloth and took out his long dark wooden pipe on which a graceful stallion was carved. Carefully he stuffed the pipe with tobacco from a small white cloth sack and struck a match. He inhaled, letting out a ring of smoke. Nodding to me, he handed me the pipe. I inhaled, but the flame had gone out. The wind picked up just at that moment, and it was impossible to keep a match lit. Mikistly laughed,

"I understand, we are to smoke in your house, that's the message!"

Back at the house, we smoked the pipe together in a ceremony of blessing.

The next morning we began walking south. In the distance we looked out over the sacred mountain known by the original inhabitants of this place as the sleeping lady. As we walked, my attention was drawn to Mikistly's darting eyes. They shifted here and there, an animal-like quality, unfamiliar to me. It was as if he was taking everything in, accessing the territory like a wild stallion. I flashed on the finely carved black shining stallion on his pipe.

"It's an eagle!" he said, pointing towards the sky. Silently, we watched the lone eagle flying overhead and disappearing behind the clouds.

"Mexico is calling me. See, the eagle is flying south. It's a sign. I want to see the elders. There much work in Mexico. There are many ceremonies, sweat lodges to be done. It's time to return to my work, my camino. The land is coming. I feel it."

Later, as we walked down the hill, Mikistly pointed his finger at the path before us. I looked down. A large snake was crossing just in front of us.

"Amazing! Incredible," I exclaimed. "I've never seen a snake here before." I crouched down and stared at it intently.

"What kind of snake is it? Do you know?" I asked examining the intricate geometric pattern of the gracefully undulating snake.

"A Toro snake." Mikistly replied.

"Toro like bull?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied.

I would have liked to stay longer watching it, losing myself in the spiraling pattern but I had an appointment and remembered my propensity to be late. Pulling myself away, we began the walk back down the hill towards home.

"What does it mean, the snake?" I asked. "Is it a sign?"

"For me, it may mean one thing, for you another. You need to find your own meaning. You decipher your own signs." Mikistly said.

I rushed off to my appointment. When I returned home, there was a note from Mikistly:

“My nephew came for me. Thanks for everything.
Con mucho amor, luz y fuerza, (With much love, light and power)
Mikistly.”

He was on his way back to Mexico.

For some time I remained in an intense vortex of emotion that seemed to contain all emotions. Having ridden the wave, at last, it subsided and I was enveloped by a quiet stillness, a gratitude for the worlds that had opened for me. This was the second time Mikistly had disappeared, this time, leaving me to decipher the rich days of conversations, new meanings, a treasure of inner connections.

After Mikistly had gone, I could no longer sleep indoors. I took my sleeping bag and went up on the hill where we had walked and smoked his sacred pipe by the guardian rock he had introduced to me. As I slept, I was embraced by mother earth, the wind sent messages and I felt a deep peace. I began to write about my experiences. Yes, it was clear. I would help him with a book.

On my next journey south, I visited Mikistly in his town. I arrived sad and overwhelmed with the complexity of my life.

Walking in the beautiful hills of his town, red stone cliffs towering above us, turning to me, Mikistly asked softly,

"Where is your spirit:, Debora? Why do you suffer?"

I was touched by his questions, but could not bring myself to respond. I found no appropriate response from the flat empty hole in the pit of my stomach. I was dwelling in shadow lands, deserts of my being, out of touch with everything, but the dull aching pain that consumed me.

We walked a bit in silence. Then looking off into the distance, Mikistly began,

ADDICTION TO PAIN

"When we are born, we arrive with much happiness because when we are babies, life is easy and we are constantly smiling. If we are hungry, we cry and then we are fed. We sleep. We fill our physiologic needs. It's not a problem. But when we grow, we begin to be filled by many things external to ourselves. We are taught about suffering, anxieties, fears, emotions, and pain. We go on learning these things because we have good teachers. These teachers have learned it from other teachers of many generations that have taught us to suffer.

Let's talk about the pain specifically because they have taught us the only way to be happy is to suffer first. It appears contradictory, but if we observe around

us, we'll see much pain in the eyes of people. Many times, we'll see people who have everything they need to be happy, but they seek pain because in their unconscious, they have been taught that pain is the only way that exists to feel alive.

It's for that reason that we are addicted to pain, especially through religions. Even if we are not religious, we carry a conditioning from many generations that is about much pain because they have taught us to feel the pain, but they have not: taught us to feel happy.

We must break the chain so that we may return to being happy and remove from our unconscious this pain, which is a great fire. The crucified Christ with blood and tears is the symbol of that cross they've imposed on us. It's everywhere, and we've been told it's our fault.

It's been put in front of our eyes in many ways. We're conditioned to carry the bleeding cross. But if we study history, we become aware that man never spoke to us of pain. That man was only happy. Why not remember that? Why not honor him for following the path of light, peace and happiness, walking without the cross. Let's never again see him suffering because that is one more lie.

In life, everything is a ceremony, eating, sleeping, laughing. I work now in a restaurant as a cook. I am a slave, ha, ha!"His wild laugh erupted. "But cooking is a ceremony. In the day I work in the restaurant. In the night, I make my crafts. It's a time of a lot of work for me. But everything is a ceremony. I have invitations to travel leading sweat lodges and other ceremonies...next year I will go to Cuba, to Columbia, to Norway.

Now I have land in the mountains. I've started planting trees on the land. I have two pieces of land. One piece is only for ceremonies. The other is for my house. I need to get money to build my house next year. The money is coming. It's no problem. The work, in the restaurant, my crafts, everything is a ceremony."

I returned home from my journey renewed and uplifted by our talks and walks in the mountains.

Mikistly and I stayed in touch through e-mail. We had agreed to work on a book together. I had begun writing down our conversations and asking him questions that he'd answer via e-mail. A book was beginning to take form. The following year, Mikistly came back to visit me on his way to another ceremony.

"I have come to close the circle we opened last year. We have three days to complete the book. In these three days, time will stop. Everything we are doing will be about the book. This is the path of the warrior of light. It's about focus, about clarity."

The next morning, we began walking east into the hills. The grass was already dry and golden. Looking out towards the bay the panorama of trees, patches of green and golden fields were bathed in morning sun. An eagle flew overhead.

"Tell me about your tradition," I began.

"There is no such thing as my tradition and your tradition. The tradition of the world is only one. There aren't two or three worlds, there is only one. There is no separation into different parts. There is only one that embraces all the parts of the Universe, what is inside us and what is outside. So the spiritual and the material are the same. They are not two separate things, but a similar duality is shared by all things in this world, day and night, love and hate, male and female."

We continued to walk. For a while we were shaded by a canopy of branches, cooled by a chilly breeze. Emerging from the tree lined path into rays of morning sun, we stopped briefly, warmed by the golden rays.

"What was your childhood like? How did you come to the path?" I asked as we looked out over the vista of the bay to the east.

"In my childhood, I remember a big lake. We children would swim and play. There were animals and much life. It was paradise. When I was six or seven, the city came and took over. There was no more lake, no more animals, only houses. This is the pain. In different countries and places, everything is the same. This is the fight now, not to destroy mother earth.

"As a child in the country there was no television. All day there was the fire, the circle, and the elders talking. There were many stories. All the children listened. Life changed with television. The old ways were destroyed. As an adolescent, I came to alcohol and drugs. They were the way of excitement in the community.

"Many of my friends were lost in alcohol and drugs. They became delinquents. Many friends died from alcohol, drugs, and violence. I wanted to help but didn't know how I felt pain over the destruction of the community, my brothers, and my friends. People sold the land. There was no more land, no more culture, only drugs and television

"I felt lost: seeing my people in the dark. I hated the government for the persecution, the torture. Inside, a voice said, 'The culture of the community is of destruction, not of life. This isn't your culture. That's when I began looking for my roots."

MY GRANDMOTHER

"My father spoke another language, his native tongue that he spoke only at home because of the government's prohibition. My grandmother was from far away in the north. She also spoke her native language. I started feeling a connection with her. At that time I could not see but I could feel she had something I was drawn to.

"When I was twelve, I went to see her. We traveled far away, to another state where she lived. My grandmother was sleeping on the floor. One day, my mother gave her a bed. The next day when we came, the bed was gone.

'What happened to the bed?' my mother asked.

'I gave it to someone. I need to sleep on the floor to feel the connection to mother earth,' my grandmother told her.

"My grandmother was a healer. People called her a "witch." Then when they were sick, they'd come to her for healing. Many people in the community came to her for healing. For the people, she was poor. Now I understand she was rich because she needed nothing. In our tradition a healer passes on the medicine. My grandmother prepared to give someone in the family her healing staff that is symbolic of the family's seven women healers who came before her. Like everyone else, I always thought my grandmother's medicine was for my sister, that my sister would be the next healer in the family.

"One day, my sister healed a baby who almost died. She became so frightened, she said 'It's not for me,' and gave back the staff. Like my mother, she converted to Catholicism. She believed medicine, the old ways were evil.

"At 99 years old, when I was 21, my grandmother died. At the moment she went on her journey, I felt a force which came from inside through my spinal cord and throughout my whole body. That's how I knew she had died before anyone told me.

"There was a big party, coffee, food, and music. In Mexico, we have a custom, when someone dies, people bring bread. There was a whole huge room filled to the ceiling with bread. My grandmother had healed so many people, everyone she had healed came to the funeral. Then I understood she was not poor.

"When the party was finished, a nephew came to me and said, 'Hey, grandmother left one thing for you.'

"He gave me her healing staff which represents light, power and generations of healing. Each person, when they are ready to pass it on puts on the stick an object representing their special gifts and ceremonies.

"I was shocked, I couldn't believe it. I didn't want the medicine. It was too much responsibility. But in my spirit, I felt, 'yes,' and I took the staff that in our tradition represents the power to cure.

"I fought and resisted for a long time. But finally I realized my grandmother was right. The medicine was meant for me. She was smart not to give it to me unfit she died. She understood well that I would have no choice but to accept it under those circumstances.

"From that time, many things came to me, knowledge, energy and vision. My life began to change. Everything changed including the way I saw life. The staff was passed down from seven woman healers. Now I am the first male in this new generation. Maybe now, men will come as healers, I don't know. Time will tell."

"All that I know is that someday I will have to prepare someone to follow the tradition that comes from many centuries ago. My grandmother speaks to me when I am with plants and I need to know how to use them. When I ask for what ailment a particular plant is medicine, a voice tells me. I think it is hers. I'm not certain, but it always seems to me it is her voice."

We reached a forked path and Mikistly motioned to the upper path. We walked through a dense grove of green and golden hued bushes swaying in the breeze, and began our ascent up a large hill, walking south.

"How did it affect your life that your mother and sister are catholic?" I asked as we stopped for a pause and sat under the shade of a welcoming oak."

"My parents have been together for 50 years. They're always together. She's catholic, his is the old way, the way of The Great Spirit. He says, 'I don't need the church. I see,'" Mikistly said gesturing to the sky with his hand-

"But my father accepts how she is. They accept each other's ways. They have seven children," he continued laughing, "it's beautiful."

"My mother and three sisters are catholic. It's been very difficult For many years, we were enemies because of the programming of the priests who said that everything I did was demonic. For all these years, we argued about our different concepts until one day, without fighting, we talked for many hours and realized that both traditions have the same God."

We sat silently for some time enjoying the stillness, the cool breeze. I looked up through thick oak branches at patches of dappled sky, nickering light patterns, and shadow.

"What is the way of your people?" I asked.

"The Aztec path is the path of my people within the Indian tradition. Within this path, there are many branches that can be taken by people with different leanings. In the path of the Aztecs or Mexicas, each person goes looking within the whole tradition to find, what is most suited to his nature. It's like a school, but each one grows into what is particular for him. The path of the Mexica teaches the way of the warrior but each individual grows best on the path, where he has most aptitude. For example, art, dance, medicine, sweat lodges, philosophy or astrology. For me it's sacred ceremonies and medicine. That's my path."

We resumed walking through a parched barren area scorched by the sun. When we reached the limit of the upper fork, Mikistly pointed in the direction of

another dirt path. We rounded a bend. From the dense shade of another oak grove, we walked into a clearing. Soon we were on the path walking east again looking out at the distant bay.

"Who did you learn from?" I asked.

THE ELDERS

"In Aztec culture, there existed Clantokan, circles of the ancient ones. They spoke and made the decisions of the community. The elders of the circle needed to be at least 52 years old because 52 is the Aztec century. The elders in the circle had to be working in the community all their lives, to have raised families and completed all their worldly duties. After 52 years, they begin counting their ages from one, a new beginning.

"In the communities, each has a council of elders. There is one circle that represents many communities, each with one representative. For example, in Chiapas, in the circle of elders all support the Zapatistas. All of the elders in the councils, men and women alike are healers (called curanderos in Mexico).

Elders are always looking for young people to prepare, to teach them the medicine of earth, plants, and sweat lodge (temazcal), to keep the tradition alive. For young people, it's an honor to be with an elder because they are important and special as teachers. In the elder's council, they decide who will be prepared.

"One day, an elder said to me, 'Come help me cut wood for the sweat lodge.' I went with him. The first day I came to the community house, (the house where the council of elders was meeting.) An elder, who was sitting by a large flowering tree near the house said to me:

'Ah let me see your hands.' I showed them to him. 'This is your family, don't look anymore. Here's the key to the house. There's only one. You can have the key and work here. You decide,' he said.

"My spirit moved. My heart said 'yes', and I felt at peace. 'Yes, give me the key.' I said. 'Tomorrow, you open the house at 5:00 in the afternoon and clean the whole house,' he told me.

"I went and worked cleaning the house all day, day after day. The elder didn't teach me anything. I was just cleaning the house, the bathroom, tending the garden, looking after the fruit for six months. I was given many different jobs. It was my first contact with him. Many days I thought, I won't go back again. When I came in during a meeting, an elder said:

'Get out!' or 'You go get this or that...' sending me to do errands. In this way, they taught me humility, obedience, discipline, and above all, responsibility. One day, the same elder said to me, 'OK, someone else is coming to work here. Give me back the key. You come and help in the ceremonies.'

"We spent six years together and he taught me many things about medicine plants. Most important, he taught me the love for people, that is healing. Healing is love.

"Learning from this elder, after some years, I became part of a group. We were learning about plants, about medicines. One day, in a big ceremony, the elder called me. I was surprised; I had been involved in the group for only a short time. There were other people more advanced than me. I wondered why I had been called. I went to the elder. At first I was afraid, but I went anyway. As I stood in front of him, he said to me, 'You come and bend down in the middle of the circle.' I did as he asked.

'It's time you start walking everywhere, anywhere on all of mother earth. You go. It's your mission. You walk. Give the light to other people.'

'When he said this, I had a vision. I saw many people in a line waiting for me, for healing, I was leading a ceremony, healing different colored people. There were many white people. It was a beautiful vision.

"When the vision was finished, I thought, where are the white people? I live in Mexico. In the next communities are only Indians. During the ceremony, the elder gave me a powerful transmission and protection for my future journey. Fifteen days later, I was invited to a congress in the US.

"Since then, I'm always traveling. It's my work, healing going where spirit calls. It's good. I like it."

We stopped for a moment, looking out past tree covered hills and dappled fields of varying shades of gold and green and the bay beyond them.

"As you began to travel following the elders instructions, what did you share with people? What is your message?" I asked.

THE MESSAGE

"All rocks are sacred altars. Look here at the asphalt," he said pointing to a road, which encroached on the dirt path we had been following. "It is the killer of mother earth. While there is still time, we must find a way to come back to our mother earth, to bring the people back to their mother. On my path, I am looking for ways. There is no time. The time is now.

"Mother earth is a living being. She feels like we do. She has all the parts that we have in our body. Each part has one function for the continuing life of the planet. When we destroy one part of the mother earth, life is finished. When we cut one tree, all life is imbalanced. When one species of animals is destroyed, the whole earth is imbalanced.

"Even each insect has a function for the balance of mother earth. Everything is connected. There is only one body. The body is the mother earth. Every day, there is more destruction, more imbalance. The destruction of mother earth is the destruction of people's bodies.

When people smoke cigarettes, it's the same as the smoke of the atmosphere. When the rivers are polluted, it's the same as the veins, because everything that passes through mother earth, is a reflection of her parts.

"The destruction of mother earth is happening because we have lost consciousness, that she is our mother. We lost this consciousness, when white people came to America. Now, the consciousness is that mother earth is seen as money. That's the reason for the current imbalance of the planet. The only way to return to balance is to come back to the awareness of the planet as our mother earth. To love her as our mother, who gives food, love, and everything."

That afternoon, after making lunch, Mikistly and I went for a walk in the hills again. The sun was still strong as we walked past the newly constructed beige stucco luxury homes at the edge of open space. Plastic ribbons flapped in the breeze indicating plots slated for the next development. It made me sad to see, that more houses would be built here. We walked past the houses and the plots for future houses, then uphill under a lush tunnel of trees. Finally on the peak, we emerged out into open space.

"Everyone has one main element. Which is your element?" Mikistly asked.

"Maybe water?" I speculated.

"Yes you're right. I think your element is water. The serpent Quetzalcoatl is God of the earth. His apron is of serpents. The serpent is a symbol of energy, of life. It's connected with the water element. Quetzalcoatl is an energy of beauty, that's its tradition. The era of Quetzalcoatl is similar to the Aquarian age," he said.

"What about you?" I asked.

"For me now fire is the strongest. I love the fire of the sweat lodge. I enjoy working with fire."

"Tell me about the Sweat Lodge."

SWEAT LODGE (Temazcal)

"Temazcal is one of the most sacred traditions left by the grandfathers. They left it so that when there was darkness, temazcal would illuminate us, so we would never forget the light. Temazcal represents the womb of mother earth. It is to pray and to heal us, to be in touch with the four elements simultaneously and listen to their

messages, and to return to our connection to mother earth. The elders say that the stars are sweat lodges, because the fire shines. There are various types of temazcals. One could be for healing, another for preparation of warriors, or another to pray and to give the people strength.

"It is not known in time when and where sweat lodges began. They are lost in time, but all four cultures have their own form of sweat lodge. Mexico has a tradition of temazcals that goes back many thousands of years. Ruins of temazcals have been found in the pyramids."

"Now, in this time, the grandfathers and elders are saying that the temazcal needs to be made available to the people. For five hundred years, it has been hidden. Now they're saying it needs to come out. Because in this time we have lost our balance with mother earth in our body, the balance between body, spirit and mind. Temazcal is precisely to balance and integrate these.

"Inside the temazcal, we are spoken to and given messages by these different elements of mother earth. The grandfathers say the white people go to church to hear a white man speak of God. The Indians go to a sweat lodge to talk to God."

Looking back down at now miniature houses of the residential area below, we continued south, the sun made me sweat but I felt energetic and happy as I followed Mikistly's steady gait out into open space. As I looked out over the tree studded horizon, I said, "Tell me about the elements in your tradition and what each one is about."

FIRE

"In white culture, there is much pain and suffering and destruction. Nobody smiles (?), because the fire has been shut down. The fire is sacred. Now the sacred is forgotten. Everything living has the sacred fire; the trees, plants, animals, rocks, and humans. In society, it has been forgotten how sacred the fire is. In Indian culture, the fire is called grandfather fire. He represents an elder.

"Millions of years ago when life began on the planet, there was only fire. Then life began from the fire. When man and women began to exist on the planet, with the discovery of fire, evolution went faster. The Great Spirit of fire gave humanity fire.

"Woman is the guardian of the sacred fire. Because of that, women can become pregnant, because she is the guardian of the sacred fire. It is for this reason that in all ancient cultures, woman cooks. She is the keeper of the fire, the source of life, the center of the family, the center of the circle of life.

"Every day, the fire needs to be given wood so we can eat the elements. In the center of the earth is only fire. In the center of the woman is the womb. In everyone, there is this sacred fire. It's the same, within the earth and within each one of us.

"In this society, we have forgotten the existence of the sacred fire. For this reason there is much pain, violence, obesity, addiction to drugs, alcohol, pornography, consumerism, and lies. Society has forgotten about the existence of the sacred fire inside."

"Children have a big sacred fire. Because the body is little, there is a great fire. Society tries to stop the fire and begins to control it. Because big people feel the fire is too much, they want to stop it. They begin education to stop the fire. One example is television, which is fire but a fire, which robs the fire of people, especially children.

"When a child is moving, the father puts him in front of the television and stops the fire.

This is control. Because of this, children lose their force, their life energy. Society tries to stop their fire.

When a child grows, he loses the sacred fire inside and grows into a robot, an automat. He feels empty and looks in many places, but almost always mistakenly. Because something is missing inside, he looks outside. That is how it works. If something is missing inside, you look outside."

"It's important now to begin to look for the sacred fire inside. Because everybody has lost it. It's important to come back to the center of the circle where real life began. The fire has been put out in people. It's the same as putting out the fire of mother earth. We have destroyed it. Every day, we have to light the inner fire and feed it, so it doesn't go out. This is clarity. It's not complicated."

"People ask, 'How can we begin?' How beautiful it is here." Mikistly interjected, interrupting his thought, pausing to feel the silence, punctuated by a bird song. Tears ran down my cheek as I drank in the moment. Suddenly, the sound of a car radio blared from a neighboring street.

"Cars interrupt the music," Mikistly said. "Imagination is the fire. The fire is the spirit."

WATER

"We call her grandmother water because life began in mother earth with the union of sacred fire and grandmother water. Life began in oceans. Everything that exists comes from water, trees, animals, humans, minerals, vegetables. Water represents emotions.

That's how man and woman create in sex. It's very emotional. Pregnancy is emotions. Joining to find emotions together in the water of the body, the ovary and

sperm, is water and fire. When there's no fertilization in the act of love, like now, everybody has fighting in the emotions, fertilization loses its sacredness.

The veins of the body are the same as the rivers of mother earth. When we are walking and we see a polluted river, it reflects the pollution in the veins. On mother earth, day by day, rivers die and day by day people die because the blood is polluted. It's sad that it isn't possible now in many countries to drink: water of the river. It's sad now that they sell bottles of water in plastic to drink."

"Grandmother Water represents life. She is life. For that reason, the body needs simple water to live. We are manipulated with the illusion of coffee, soda, beer and many other lies, instead of drinking plain, pure water.

"I invite you to drink only water and feel the connection that grandmother water is life. Now we need to come back to simplicity. We need to clean the rivers and lakes, the ocean, the body, the blood, and the liver for balance. Because nobody makes anything, that feeds the children of the future. Grandmother Water is life and life is love."

We stopped just then at the edge of a stream, the clear water gushing and sparkling, creating iridescent rainbow patterns. Feeling gratitude for grandmother water, we drank from our plastic bottle and walked on.

GRANDFATHER WIND

"In the tradition, wind represents ideas because he carries the messages and brings them here. In big cities, the wind is polluted by smoke; this reflects the pollution of the minds of the people. It is a reflection of the society. Smog is in the mind, not in the wind, because smog begins in the mind.

Life began in the ocean. When living creatures came outside of the ocean for the first: time and came into contact with the wind, mammals evolved. And grandfather wind gave them many ideas because he has messages. Wind carries ideas to everyone. It is the connection of everything, of everyone. We only need to listen.

"In the past there were no telephones. The same communication was there. We come back to hear the wind. Wind is music. Nature is a big symphony of the parts of nature, one instrument. Climb to the rock to hear the music. Animals and insects play instruments. Wind is the conductor of the symphony. Machines disrupt the harmony. In society, there is so much noise. The ears don't hear. They forget to hear.

In the ears is balance. If we don't hear, there is no balance in the head. The crows are speaking a lot. We have to clean the ears and begin to hear. Try going to

the mountains with no radio, no television, and hear the music all day and all night. Grandfather wind, thank you for the messages, thank you."

We had been walking for some time. I was out of breath and could feel my heart pounding from the exertion. Mikistly moved to a grassy clearing and we both sat down on the earth like children. Then we hear the wind, water and fire say, 'Stop the destruction, it's your mother.' And mother earth says, 'Stop your destruction. You are my sons and daughters.'

"In this way, the change begins. Each day we have more and more people who are fighting to stop the destruction. In different countries, in different places of mother earth, she calls to warriors to stop the destruction. Race, color, and religion are not important. The only weapons are of love, of consciousness. We understand that mother earth is all and she is abundance.

"Poverty on the planet is a big lie. It's not true. Open the heart for the mother earth. She teaches each day of life, hour by hour. When life in the body is finished, the mother earth takes life back inside to create more different lives. This is the universal recycling in eternity. Thank you, mother earth for your permission to put my feet on you. Thank you for teaching me the way."

"How can things change? How can we return to this awareness of the earth as our mother?" I asked.

CONSCIOUSNESS

"The change is personal! It's inside of everyone and then it emends outside. But it's the internal work that materializes outside. It doesn't matter what you're doing right now in an outer sense. The internal work is called consciousness. Consciousness takes you towards an awakening; it leads you to wake up. When you wake up, that awareness cannot be destroyed by anything. That's the power of waking up.

"What do you mean when you speak about sleep and waking up?" I asked, still resting on the ground. Mikistly raised himself, helped me up, and we began walking north as he spoke looking out over endless mountains shaded in purples and grays.

SLEEP AND WAKING UP

"When European people came to America, the darkness began, the sleep began. When they came, because of the fanaticism of their religion, they brought their sleep. European culture is disconnected from life. In the tradition, it is said there are

four ways:

White is white man's way,
Black is black people's culture,
Yellow is oriental,
Red is Indian,
one for each continent.

The path of all the indigenous people of all the Americas is the Red Way. Now the end of a white cycle and the beginning of a red one is coming. Indians must forgive the white people for all the pain and suffering. The red time will be of peace and healing of the wounds, coming back to mother earth. There will be no more races. All will be one. I am the last Indian. My son is mixed. It's good. We are all one.

"All cultures of the Americas were cut in their evolution because of the darkness that was brought by the Europeans. That's where the disconnection began from the four elements. Now the society lives in darkness, asleep. There have been more than five hundred years in darkness.

"Long ago, the elders said, 'When the European people come, the dark night begins and one day the new sun will dawn.' This is the message for the new day, for the end of darkness and to wake up. The elders say, many sicknesses are in the air and the sky speaks of the awakening. The time is now. "

His voice was interrupted by a loud bird call.

"The bird is agreeing, saying it's time to open the eyes, open the ears, open the heart. It is the new day. Each person has to wake up. Now again, the stone speaks, the tree speaks, the sun speaks the wind speaks and mother earth speaks, 'Wake up!'

"The time for sleep is finished. Each day, we're waking up. Each day, more people are waking. They understand that the dream is finished. The big lie has less force. The culture of dreams needs more and bigger lies to prevent the people from waking up. This is the eternal war of sleeping and awakening, these two forces of evolution fighting. Good and bad don't exist, only two forces for evolution and creation."

"There are two ways to walk in life. You decide. The decision is personal. You decide to wake up. Each day, year after year for your whole life, you need to fight with yourself not to sleep, to wake up. Waking up is now! We need help from more people to wake up."

"Look for your mission to help people's awakening. Find your definition. You come here for definition, because it is the eternal war. Each day you have plenty of work. Many people need your help. Many people are tired of sleeping. It's time to wake up. Do you believe you are awake? Are you happy? There are two options, to wake up or total destruction. You decide.

"Everybody has an instant to wake up." The bird called again.

"The bird says, 'It's right'" Mikistly interjected. "And life gives us that instant. Sometime, it's hard because we don't hear the message. Sometimes, it's sickness or accidents or love. There are many ways to wake up. Many years ago I began to wake up in the midst of great pain. I had one friend who woke up drinking water. Waking up happens in different ways. You decide, what is for you. Each moment, each day, every second is waking up. Everyone has to look for signs to wake up. Each day there are many messages to wake up."

Again we heard the bird song. "You just need to be humble to hear."

That night, we sat outside looking up at the stars. Suddenly, I was overcome by a wave of exhaustion. "I need to sleep now." I said. "But before saying goodnight, tell me about dreams in your tradition."

DREAMS

"There's an entire tradition regarding dreams. For many years the indigenous culture has given much respect and education to dreams. There is an order of warriors called "ensonadores" and they prepare themselves to be able to do things while they are asleep. They can heal or make another ill while in the dream. It depends on the path the warrior chooses. I am not an "ensonador," but almost all my messages come to me in my dreams.

"Dreams are divided into three:

- those which are brought on by the unconscious
- those which are brought on by the body
- those that are brought on by the spirit.

Those which come from the spirit are the messages which come to us. These are the connections from other planes of different lives. These are the ones we must pay attention to."

The next morning, I awoke with a vague sense of anxiety. My normal life had been on hold these days during Mikistly's visit and I was beginning to feel anxious about responsibilities piling up, unanswered phone calls, looming projects incomplete. I was familiar with this state of fear that clouded my life at regular intervals.

"Tell me about fear," I said as we emerged from the chill of the house and began walking south. I took off my jacket basking in the morning rays.

FEAR

"Just as they've made us believe so much conditioning, one of them which has much power is fear. We have been conditioned to fear everything that's around us. That fear has been put in us since we were children. That is how we've grown fearful of many things, even life itself. The fear has grown within us and has cost much in our lives. It always accompanies and controls us.

"It transforms us into humans without life. And many times, when we want to do something, fear impedes us and we begin to lose our own will because the fear we carry within us has grown into a monster that drives us and doesn't allow us to be free. These fears have taken complete control of us. It is the great internal enemy which we all carry within.

"The system in which we live takes care of feeding these fears and is designed so that we can all live fearfully even of ourselves. When we look around, for example, when we see the news, we feel fear. And when we try to see ourselves or look inside ourselves, we are afraid to look, because since childhood we carry an education based on fear, which we have learned from the adults."

"That is a chain that comes from many generations back. But if we understand that these fears are lies to take away our internal strength, and if we understand that if we fear something we are opening a door so that which we fear comes to us. For example, if we are afraid we will be robbed, with our own fear we are calling the burglars."

"For this reason, we must change the perception we have of fear. Instead of considering it an enemy we must make peace with it. We must make it our friend. Nature gave us fear as an indicator of danger, for example, when we're about to cross somewhere where there's danger, we hear a voice which tells us, 'Don't go there.' We feel fear and that is real fear, an indicator of danger. That is why we must make peace with fear. That way, it becomes our friend.

"What we fear, we beget." To make friends with our fear is to accept it, let it go and not get attached to it. One day, the grandfathers told me that the only person who has no fear is a crazy person or a liar."

We stood on the top of a hill. Looking out at a vast panorama of hills, trees, and barren parcels, the bay to the east, the hills to the north and the west and patches of wispy clouds sweeping across the soft clear blue sky, Mikistly pointed past the sacred mountain, "Sleeping lady," a prominent land-mark of the south. Beyond it, we could see the distant city, often shrouded by fog.

"Tell me about the four directions." I said.

FOUR DIRECTIONS

"There are four directions. Each one has a different energy. There is a cross with four equal sides. We are in the middle. For the Indian culture, this is a symbol that represents the Universe. It represents the four elements and the four races. When Europeans came here, our cross was changed to what is known as a blood cross, depicted by the cross of Christ.

"In Christ's cross, the vertical pole representing the will of God is longer. True horizontal pole, representing the will of man is shorter. THIS means the will of God is stopping the will of man. It is from this understanding that the struggle arises in European culture. The notion God's will against man's, the separation from the earth, the duality of body and spirit, the idea of sin and so much suffering which has been inflicted on humanity during this time.

"The four directions represent the four traditions. White culture also has the knowledge in all four cultures. Before Europeans came, there was communication between my people and the four races. In the future, there will be only one race, a combination of the four.

"That's when racism will finish. Each day, more people find family of different races. More and more, the countries and religions are unimportant because thousands of years ago, there was only one race. One day, there was separation in four directions. Now is the time to come back to the family.

"The brothers and sisters that went in the past are now coming back because more families are working together. This is the power of the four directions. You are looking for your family. It's waiting for you. One day, all family will be only one. Maybe we will see. Thank you, four winds."

We kept walking in silence for a while. As we passed the guardian tree and jagged rock outcropping on our path back towards home, an attractive young couple passed arm in arm. They smiled and greeted us briefly disappearing behind a clump of trees. I noticed my own wandering images and pictures had been triggered from the past. Associations about relationship danced to the surface of my consciousness. A wave of sadness came about loss and disappointment. What was it to be a woman? How was this dynamic woven through my life, I wondered.

"Speak about women." I said, looking at Mikistly who stared out over the open sky.

WOMAN

"Woman is the best of creation. She is stronger than man. She has the power of sexuality that can control men. The power in her sex is used to control people around her.

"Men are afraid that women will wake up. He's looking to have control over her. He is afraid of women. They are fighting for control. It's very important the woman wakes up and stops controlling with sex because in this time, waking up is feminine. Woman has the responsibility to find balance in the two forces, masculine and feminine. When the woman wakes up, she helps the man to wake up.

"The woman has her hands on the change. She needs to have the consciousness of the future. It is in her hands. She wakes up to the love reality. This is the mission of women to find the love reality and help men remember that Mother Earth is woman and the Father Sky is man. They are together for the creation of life. Wake up woman. The change is yours. Thank you, women. Go ahead!"

As we climbed a steep incline, I looked down over an outcropping of verdant trees. Through an opening I noticed a cluster of houses breaking into my view of pristine nature. As if by surprise, catching an unexpected glimpse of my own house, I was suddenly reminded of my incomplete projects, my struggles around how to spend my time day to day, my uncertainty about work about and what to focus on.

"Speak about work," I said.

WORK

"Work is a blessing, when you have a work you like. When you have a work you don't like, it is a curse. There is a big difference. Few people have work they like. Most people work to be paid and suffer because of that. This contributes to the sadness of society. Look for work you like as work is a place to find happiness."

We walked for some time in silence, listening only to the bird song and the sound of the wind, the sound of our feet on the path. I became aware of deep rapport I was feeling, the wordless harmony.

"What's your understanding of friendship?" I asked.

FRIENDSHIP

"When people are sleeping, it's difficult to have friendship because before friendship exists interest. When people are awake, they understand that friendship is a great present of God. Friendship has no price and there is no interest in destroying the friendship, because the friendship is a gift of God. We took for that. It's hiding, but we need to find it little by little. All my relations thank you."

The next morning, as Mikistly and I were about to set out on our walk, my mother phoned. She shared her concern over one of my sisters. Walking towards the

south, comforted by the familiar view of the Sacred Mountain, the form of the sleeping in the distance, warmed by the sun, I pondered the bond of family.

"How do you see family?" I asked.

FAMILY

"The family is fellow travelers of the same travel. It's the same, if the travel is long or short. We are going to try to make it beautiful." Mikistly answered, surprising me with his concise answer, his unique way of seeing things.

Walking towards the north, we came to a huge ancient oak tree.

"This is a guardian tree, the guardian of this place," Mikistly said.

GUARDIANS

"All places have guardians. Many times, the guardians are invisible. The guardians are forces and spirits, keepers of the place. They have been there since a long time, because the ancestors sent them there to take care of the place. Sometimes, they are in the tree, in the rocks, in the river. They could be anywhere.

"It's important when you come to a sacred place to ask permission to enter. Speaking to the guardians with much respect feeling the force and communing with them, ask permission to enter the place because it is their home. Long before we were here, they lived in this place.

"When in a particular place, it is important to have humility and respect for all things that are there, because everything in this place is sacred. Some places have more energy, some have less. But all places are sacred. Every rock is sacred.

"Look at the land with the trees, see the difference. Look how the life force has been destroyed, the energy altered." Mikistly said, pointing to the land where houses had been built. I looked with new eyes noticing the depletion, the barren feeling, touched by the destruction of the land.

Gazing out at the hill as we walked south, Mikistly commented further.

CEREMONIES

"The colors wow! The music, it's a ceremony."

“There are so many ceremonies like giving food, giving thanks for the rain and many more things. But the big ceremony is forgotten, the ceremony of life. We have to come back to the recognition that life is a ceremony and everything around us is sacred. Everything we do is sacred, eating, walking, making love, shitting, taking a bath, and sleeping.

“One day humanity will understand that we are missing the sacred in our daily lives and it is necessary to come back to the sacred. Now is the time. The time is now. There is no more time, it is finished.”

“What can you say about time?” I asked, as we ascended a tree studded slope along an unfamiliar path which Mikistly pointed to. As he began to speak, I breathed in the fresh morning air and watched the pink clouds parting to allow the morning sun to peak through.

TIME

“Time doesn't exist when society understands everyone has a biological clock. The time that society has created is not real time. Many times in the past, days, months, and years have changed. One example was when Julius Caesar was born. New Year was changed to his birthday.

The time we live in is different in each continent. Here in America, all communities have different times, the time to plant and to hunt. It is nature that creates time in each place. There is so much chaos on the planet, because there is no respect of the time of mother earth in different places.

“It is not possible for the New Year to be the same for all places on mother earth. Winter is the end of the year, not the beginning. The spring, when everything is fertilized is the beginning of the year, not in December. Everything is manipulated with a time that does not exist. Remember we are slaves and their shackles? We've changed shackles for watches on our wrists now, everybody is a slave of time, and nobody has time. I'm sorry. Everybody is a slave.”

We walked for a seemingly endless time without talking. I could feel the subtle currents of air and the hawk flying overhead. It was as if I sensitized to the environment, falling in tune with all the earth and all life surrounding us. At some point, I noticed my stomach was growling and realized it was already lunch-time.

“I'm getting hungry. Should we go home and eat?”

Mikistly agreed.

“What: to you have to say about food?” I asked as we began walking back towards the south.

FOOD

"Food, like so many other things we've been made to believe, is another big lie. This is because, since we were children, we were taught to eat food that does not nourish us. Parents say to a baby, 'Don't cry, here's a cookie, here's a piece of candy.' Food was used to put down our emotions, to keep them inside. Because nobody taught us how to nourish ourselves, as we grow up, we continue the same process.

"It's for that reason that there are millions of fat people. Now, we eat food that doesn't nourish. We have lost the sacred power of food. One day, we will remember that the most sacred thing we have is the body and we will take care of it. We must begin to grow it ourselves without chemicals or markets or prostitution, to come back to our roots, recognizing food as simply nourishment for the body. It's necessary to return to the understanding that food is sacred."

On our way, we walked to the edge of the southern slope past the guardian tree and the rock outcropping surrounded by verdant bushes swaying in the breeze. When we reached the point, where the neighborhood began, a couple of kids played on the hill, their grandmother watching them from a distance.

"It's good, they have this experience. All their lives, these kids will remember this place, this mountain will call them." Mikistly commented.

As we continued down the hill passing the new Stucco houses, approaching my house, I asked, "What's your understanding of home?"

HOME

"I don't have a home but I have a home in every place. This is the time for the family to come back, for people to find each other. A long time ago, an elder said to me,

'Hey, you go walking around the mother earth, everywhere on the planet.'

I was very scared. I asked, 'What am I supposed to do?'

He said, 'Only you know.'

Surprised, I asked, 'Only the two of us, you and me? No other people have the knowledge?'

He laughed and said, 'Many people everywhere, day by day, more and more people. One day everybody will have the understanding.'

'Where are they?' I asked.

'Wherever you go,' he answered.

'How will I recognize them?' I asked.

'Just one smile and one look and the heart says, I am the same,' he answered.

"That time, I didn't understand, but: now, I understand because in many countries, many places, I have family. There are many families. We're looking for the same things. Each day, there are more of us. One day, we will be everyone. Thank you family for finding each other."

After lunch I had spent a couple hours at my cluttered desk after paying bills. As we began to walk again, receipts, checks, and accounts crowding my mind, I asked,

"What's your understanding about money?"

MONEY

"Money isn't good or bad. It's only energy. It serves for exchanged. There are people who suffer because they don't have money. Other people suffer because they have so much money. Money isn't the problem, but the conditioning in the mind of each person. We all have to make peace with money and understand it's not good, if's not bad. It is only money."

My mood had shifted from the expansive state of the morning. I felt like I'd had a crash landing, a nose dive, noticing my habitual concerns about the logistics of my life creeping in. There were so many neglected details to be attended to. The thought of all this made me feel overwhelmed, separate. I wondered why I couldn't remain longer in the blissful state I'd been experiencing over the last days.

"Speak of duality," I said.

TWO ENERGIES

"There exist two energies on the mother earth that are always together and never separate. These two energies produce life. When you stop and look around, there are two forces. The two forces together form everything, everything that exists on mother earth. These two forces are never separate and always produce light together. The female and the male is one example, day and night, father sun and mother earth and the list goes on.

"One big lie that is popular now is the belief that these are actually two separate energies. When we don't understand that we are a universe, then everything we believe creates separation. Separation is only in people's minds

because the universe doesn't believe in separation. Separation of man and woman doesn't exist because man has woman inside and the woman has man inside.

"Separation doesn't exist on Mother Earth because all elements have mother earth living inside their bodies. There are always two energies working together. Just look around and we'll understand this. The separation isn't reality. It's a big lie. The separation only exists in the mind. Two energies form only one.

We continued walking at the edge of a new slope. The expanse of varied tones of green and gold patch like fields was stretching out into the distance. For a while, I stared out into the vast expanse.

"Speak of life." I said.

LIFE

"Life is a gift," Mikistly began. "It's a sacred gift. It's the most sacred gift we are given. When my wife was ready to have a baby, I was there with her. I prepared everything and I prayed. I saw a circle of spirits welcoming the baby to earth. There was so much light," he said smiling, taking me with him into the intensity of his vision.

"It was so beautiful. That is how it is, how amazing birth is, a new being coming!"

"Life was given to us so we could live it every day. Since everything has a beginning and an end, so, one day it will end. That is why we must enjoy every moment, every instant of our life. One day we must give it back to the Great Spirit and to Mother Earth. The body returns to the earth and integrates to give more life. The spirit that is the fire stays lit and continues its path.

"When we understand this truth, we become aware that life is a great gift. It is only borrowed for a short time. The only thing we can take with us is the experience of having lived, to have lived in a good way or a bad way. The decision is always our own. It is because of this that we must give thanks every day, every moment. That is life.

"We must give thanks and respect to everything that is around us because everything is alive. If we open our eyes we will see that the rocks are alive, the trees, the insects, and all the inhabitants of the universe. They are connected to us and the connection is called life.

"Mother earth is full of life in each of her parts. When we understand this truth, we will no longer fear death because death doesn't exist.

"What do you mean when you say death doesn't exist?" I asked. "Tell me about your understanding of death."

DEATH

"My name, Mikistly, means death. When I was little, my mother was scared. So many times I told her someone we knew was dead. I could see it. I don't know now, this is my gift. I would tell her and she would call and find out; they were dead. I was scared too. I didn't understand.

"Now I understand there is no death, just travelling. My oldest brother, Halmar died a few years ago. He was a painter. From early childhood, he was always painting beautiful pictures. He lived in his art. But he drank too much alcohol.

I was in Peru at a ceremony. I felt when he died. I had a dream. I woke up feeling an incredible sadness, I was crying. I called my mother. She told me he had died. Later, in a Huichol ceremony, I took peyote and I heard the beautiful guitar music of my brother Halmar. He had played such amazing music. I looked and there he was sitting, peacefully playing his guitar. I felt so much pain about his death. I cried out to him, 'Why did you go?'

'I'm fine; I didn't go,' he said. 'You and me, we will always be brothers, always.'

"He came to say goodbye. It was important for me. I knew he was OK, I felt at peace. I understood we would always be connected, we would always be brothers. The day my brother died, my wife got pregnant. It's beautiful. As people go, new ones come.

"Death is a part of life. When the body integrates with mother earth, it also integrates into another form of life. The spirit never dies. It is always alive. For this reason we should sing to eternal life and try to live in the best possible way as if every minute were the last minute we were alive.

"When the day comes to give over this body, we can give it with perfect peace and without fear. In the tradition, death is only a rest to renew ideas. It would be so good to be able to feel, 'life, I owe you nothing, life, you owe me nothing.' and to be able to continue on this path into eternity."

We walked west and came to a Junction of trails into this region of open space. Mikistly paused for a moment as if silently sensing into his decision and chose one I was unfamiliar with. We walked on for some time without speaking. Emerging from a thicket of over grown bushes, we were greeted by the setting sun, red rays illuminated the hills forming a halo around a guardian oak. Looking out at the rolling hills, I said, "Speak about your land."

LAND

“One big message is for all warriors to come back to the land, back to the basic roots of the earth where the consciousness of life is in perfect harmony. On the earth, some years ago, many people have received the call to be keepers of the land. In this time, it’s very important we come back to our roots and work on the land. Because the call is strong, many people in different countries looking for land, not for prostitution of the land, no, but to create a harmony again.

“Each day, more and more people are looking to live in the mountains, in the jungle, and the beach as keepers of the land to begin to heal the destruction. It is the next step to find harmony. There exist thousands of communities on the planet, and each day there are coming more and more. The dreams of many people are becoming a reality.

“For a long time, I’d been walking the path. I had nothing, only my backpack and my medicine. Once I had a dream and in my dream, the elders said to me, ‘Go to Mexico and look for your land. You go to the mountains to find the place.’

“I began looking for a place in the mountains. Many messages guided me. I found a beautiful place. The owners were willing to sell it to me. I had one problem. I didn’t have enough money.

‘Where is the money to buy the land?’ I asked.

“I had another dream. In my dream the Elders said to me,

‘Don’t worry, no problem, money will come.’

“Yes, it’s correct. The money came from different sources. It was easy to purchase the land. We need humility to hear the messages. Everything comes to us.

“One night, I had another dream. In my dream, the elders said to me, ‘Your work is to create a place for healing where you can receive brothers and sisters from the four directions and ceremonies of the four traditions, where many people can come for healing.’

“Now I have confidence and I am working on the dream. Day by day, the dream is more of a reality.

“The land is us. We need to take it back to create harmony, to plant the seeds of our own food. This is a powerful healing. Thank you, Grandfathers!”

We walked on a ways above a clearing. A soft breeze caressed my face as I stood looking over the tree-covered mountains to the west.

“Tell me the vision of your place,” I said.

“The vision is of a place where people who want to wake up to consciousness through traditional Indian medicine can come. People, who want to wake up and

help other people to wake up. The preparation will be mainly inside the sacred traditions, traditional medicines and sacred ceremonies for the balance of our Mother Earth.

“There will also be a school for everyone who wants to learn the traditions of the grandfathers without giving importance to color, religion, or country, only the heart. To invite brothers and sisters from other countries to learn and cure, so they can help other people in their countries. “

As we walked we came upon an unfamiliar landscape. We explored the rocky craters balancing on rocky inclines that must be something like what one would find on the moon. I was roused by an unknown sound and looked up to see a large brown bird flying gracefully overhead. Lost in a trance like reverie, absorbed in the gesture of the wings, the mystery of movement, I recalled something I had been told.

“What are the prophecies of your people about the coming time?” I asked Mikistly as we both stared out at the form of the bird spiraling off into the distance.

THE PROPHECIES

"The prophecies of the red tradition say there is now a change of energies at a cosmic level which will influence everything. It's the time of the indigenous tradition that will bring a change for all humanity. This change happens every 2000 years when it is time to shift the spiritual leadership of humanity of one of the four traditions to another. The past era was white. For 2000 years, they directed the course of humanity. That era has already come to an end.

"Now, it's the turn of the red tradition to direct humanity towards harmony and a return to mother earth. This era is known among my people as the era of Quetzalcoatl. It will be marked by awakening consciousness and the integration of the four traditions. It's a time of truth and unity between all the races. We are only one."

We continued walking emerging from the moon-like landscape out over a large plateau. My eyes were drawn to a grove of gnarled trees, folded in upon each other. Bright green leaves grew from the branches framing the grove in a wreath of foliage.

"What about the wounds of the past, the separation, the conquest of the native peoples in America?" I asked, staring at the strange tree formation."

FORGIVENESS

"I had an experience once of going back to a past life in which I was a medicine man, healing Indians wounded by white men. It was unbelievably terrible. I saw everything, so much blood, terrible wounds, people torn apart. It was incredibly painful to experience. I cried and cried, I lost all sense of time. It was so real, so vivid."

"Reliving that time, I cleared much pain. I let go of a load I had been carrying on my back for so long. Finally, I was free from it. I felt much lighter. Friends told me I looked years younger. "It was from that life that I hated white man. I realized that I needed to clear that hatred, that it was a burden I was still carrying. This life I have come to heal those old wounds with forgiveness. This time I have come to bring healing to white men, to all people, to heal all separations.

"It's hard to see past lives, Strange that what we remember from them is so painful." Mikistly continued."

"Yes, why is that do you think?" I asked, remembering that in my healing school, past life experiences are so often associated with pain.

"It's because of trauma. It stays with us until it is cleared. We need to learn the lessons around pain. Until we remember and clear it, it remains. We need to work to free ourselves from all these old traumas we carry from many lives. This life is short. It's only one step. There are many steps, many lives. We come back again and again.

"To understand the prophecy, it's important to know that approximately every two thousand years, the energy of mother earth changes. If we understand that mother earth is a living being and that every part that we have in our bodies, she has also for instance, the minerals we have in our bodies, she also has. Let us also remember that 75% of our earth is water and 75% of our bodies are also water. We have a nose with two nostrils. At one moment we breathe through one nostril, then through another. Mother earth also has two nostrils. One of these is the mountain range of Tibet; the other is the mountain range of the Andes.

"Approximately every two thousand years, the breathing of the mother earth changes. Now we are at this time. The breathing ends in Tibet and begins in the Andes. It's for this reason that the energy is changing. Now begins the tradition of the indigenous people of the Andes.

"It's for this reason that the indigenous tradition takes its turn and the responsibility to let humanity know the path. This is why some years back the Tibetans came to America to hand over the responsibility to the grandfathers of the red tradition in a big ceremony with many elders of different countries. This was done in the sacred city of Teotihuacan.

"Now, in this time, it is the responsibility of all indigenous people of the Americas to help humanity to make that change. It's for this reason that many people white, yellow, and black are setting their eyes on the Americas at indigenous cultures - Many elders' councils have understood this and have opened the doors to all the people that are looking for that change. And every day we see many white people who are getting closer to the indigenous tradition to learn from our culture.

"But, in many tribes, there's a lot of resentment primarily against the whites because they invaded the Americas and killed many people and squelched the indigenous culture. Many indigenous people carry with them this resentment because it is in their genes: We have carried it in our genes for more than 500 years. From that time a war began, and to this day that war continues.

"It is very important to forgive our white brothers and accept them, to try to teach them the sacred path, to make peace with ourselves and to understand that we are brothers and that we are the same. We must understand that the only thing that is different is the color of our skins. As we have walked we have seen many white people whose hearts are indigenous and they walk the sacred path with much intensity.

"We have seen others who do not respect it, but those don't matter. What is most important is to heal ourselves, to cleanse the hearts, so that one day the four races can dance together in perfect harmony. That is the vision of the elders and it is written in the prophecies."

We walked for a seemingly endless time without speaking. Mikistly's words were resonating deep within me. I was tired but continued walking, following his pace. Finally he stopped. We had come to the top of a peak and looked down upon a winding path stretching before us, disappearing behind a rock outcropping.

"How has the path affected your life?" I asked.

IL CAMINO

"The path is my life. They are one and the same. For many years now, my life is made of my path. Just by walking it, everything comes to me from different sources. I enjoy it tremendously. If I have to make a decision of where to go, I let my path take me, and it always turns out well.

"I'm very happy that the path has chosen me to work in the light and every day I learn more things of life. It gives me much happiness to know that I am helping a good cause. The strength always comes to continue on this path which the Great Spirit has destined as my mission.

"I didn't choose it. It chose me, and for many years I suffered because I didn't want it. I wanted to be normal. But I had to accept it because I had no options. It was the mission and the mission had no options.

"But now, I enjoy it immensely and I know that it is the only true joy that's worth while in this world. I try to follow through with all my defects. There are many things for different types but it's the same path: The healing of the spirit, body and mind. That's the mission of everyone.

"It is the only joy there is, walking our path. There are millions of ways. As many as there are people but only one is for me. Many times we follow other people. They tell us that it's our path. But we don't see that each of us has our own path. It's for this reason that we have to ask inside,

"What is my path?"

"The path is always with us. It is not separate from who we are. We only need to see where we're going. The only joy that exists is to be on the path and walk it every day of our life because it's the only thing we have in this life. Everything else is illusion. We are only alive for an instant (one instant in life.) And when we die, the path continues because it's eternal and the spirit knows that. For the spirit speaks and tells us, 'Look for your path and continue to follow.'

"Do you believe you're on your path? Are you happy? If you aren't happy, look for your path."

Time had indeed stopped. We had come to the end of our three days. The material for the book was complete.

I brought Mikistly to the bus. He was on the way to another ceremony where I would meet him in a few days. At the end of the ceremony Mikistly adopted me as his sister.

We spent long hours with our friend Carlos talking, translating, and speaking of the book. Mikistly dictated this dedication:

This book was written with much love and with the help of the ancestors and it was done with all my heart. I give thanks to The Great Spirit or God or whatever name he goes by, to the Mother Earth, thanking her for all the love she gives us daily, to the four elements, to the Red Road, to the sacred traditions of the Americas and to the warrior brothers who fill these pages with light, Deborah and Carlos, and especially to all the children of the planet.

It's been a month now since Mikistly left. His words, his message is with me. I walk the hills we walked together. They are now parched and golden. Everything I have learned and studied up to now is reflected in Mikistly's message. He lives these truths, walks this path. I feel a longing to visit him and have decided to follow the call. I am on my way to Mexico now, to experience for myself the sacred ceremonies. I will visit the place in the mountains Mikistly is creating according to the vision of the elders, this place where people of all directions can come together to share and to learn about returning to our Mother Earth, the sacred path, a journey home.