



ANISHINAABE – SEVEN FIRES PROPHECY¹³

The accounts of Anishinaabe life that have been handed down by the elders say that many years ago seven major prophets came to the Anishinaabe people. They came at a time when the people were living a full and peaceful life on the northeastern coast of Turtle Island. These prophets left the people with seven predictions of what the future would bring. Each of these prophecies was called a Fire and each Fire referred to a particular era of time that would come in the future. Thus, the teachings of the seven prophets are now called the Seven Fires of the Anishinaabe.

The first prophet said to the people, “In the time of the First Fire, the Anishinaabe nation will rise up and

follow the sacred shell of the Midewiwin Lodge. The Midewiwin Lodge will serve as a rallying point for the people and its traditional ways will be the source of much strength. The sacred megis shell will lead the way to the chosen ground of the Anishinaabe”.

The second prophet told the people, “You will know the Second Fire because at this time the nation will be camped by a large body of water. In this time the direction of the sacred shell will be lost. The Midewiwin will diminish in strength. A boy will be born to point the way back to the traditional ways. He will show the direction to the stepping stones to the future of the Anishinaabe people”.

¹³ Benton-Banai, E. *The Mishomis Book*. 1988. Pg. 89-93.




The third prophet said to the people, "In the Third Fire, the Anishinaabe will find the path to their chosen ground, a land in the West to which they must move their families. This will be the land where the food grows on water".

The Fourth Fire was originally given to the people by two prophets. They came as one. They told of the coming of the light-skinned race. One of the prophets said, "You will know the future of our people by what face the light-skinned race wears. If they come wearing the face of brotherhood, then there will come a time of wonderful change for generations to come. They will bring new knowledge and articles that can be joined with the knowledge of this country. In this way two nations will join to make a mighty nation. This new

nation will be joined by two or more so that the four will form the mightiest nation of all. You will know the face of brotherhood if the light-skinned race comes carrying no weapons, if they come bearing only their knowledge and a handshake".

The other prophet said, "Beware if the light-skinned race comes wearing the face of death. You must be careful because the face of brotherhood and the face of death look very much alike. If they come carrying a weapon, beware. If they come in suffering, they could fool you. Their hearts maybe filled with greed for the riches of this land. If they are indeed your brothers, let them prove it. Do not accept them in total trust. You shall know that the face they wear is one of death if the rivers



run with poison and fish become unfit to eat. You shall know them by these many things”.

The fifth prophet said, “In the time of the Fifth Fire there will come a time of great struggle that will grip the lives of all First Peoples. At the waning of this fire there will come among the people one who holds a promise of great joy and salvation. If the people accept this promise of a new way and abandon their old teachings, then the struggle for the Fifth Fire will be with the people for many generations. The promise that comes will prove to be a false promise. All those who

accept this promise will cause the near destruction of the people”.

The prophet of the Sixth Fire said, “In the time of the Sixth Fire it will be evident that the promise of the Sixth Fire came in a false way. Those deceived by this promise will take their children away from the teachings of the elders. Grandsons and granddaughters will turn against the elders. In this way the elders will lose their reason for living; they will lose their purpose in life. At this time a new sickness will come among the people. The balance of many people will be disturbed. The cup of life will almost be spilled. The cup of life will almost become the cup of grief”.

The seventh prophet that came to the people long ago was said to be different from the other prophets. He was young and had a strange light in his eyes. He said, “In the time of the Seventh Fire a new people will emerge. They will retrace their steps to find what was left by the trail. Their steps will take them to the elders who they will ask to guide them on their journey. But many of the elders will have fallen asleep. They will awaken to this new time with nothing to offer. Some of the elders will be silent out of fear. Some of the elders will be silent because no one will ask anything of them. The New People will have to be careful in how they approach the elders. The task of the New People will not be easy. There will be a rebirth of the Anishinaabe nation and a rekindling of old flames. The Sacred Fire will again be lit.

It is at this time that the light-skinned race will be given a choice between two roads. If they choose the right road, then the Seventh Fire will light the Eighth and Final Fire – an eternal Fire of peace, love, brotherhood and sisterhood. If the light-skinned race makes the wrong choice of roads, then the destruction which they brought with them in coming to this country will come back to them and cause much suffering and death to all the Earth’s people”.

If the people of the earth could just wear the face of brotherhood, they might be able to deliver their society from the road to destruction. The two roads representing two clashing world views could come together to form one mighty nation guided by respect for all living things.