

# Lukanka

Lukanka is a Miskito word for “thoughts”



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Editor in Chief  
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In this issue of the *Fourth World Journal* we stretch across the globe examining patterns of Ainu culture, Lakota language in context, indigenous women’s health disparities in Canada, the Uyghur Meshrep (Moral School), United Nations efforts to enable indigenous peoples participation in that organization, structural repression of indigenous peoples in Canadian schools, and the role of non-governmental organization advocacy of issues concerning indigenous peoples in the international arena. Our authors are from Canada, India, Uyghuristan (Xinjiang China), and the United States. As these scholars deliver their observations and analysis of cultural renewal, international politics, institutional bigotry, and techniques for restoring knowledge from the past it is noteworthy to recognize that their work is presented in a global vacuum. By this I mean that much of the urbanized and industrial world is completely ignorant of the scholarship represented by authors such as these. The global political, cultural, strategic, and environmental context is rapidly changing—demanding a keen eye to the past, present, and future simultaneously. Without such a perspective it is impossible to comprehend the significance of these scholarly observations.

The *Fourth World Journal* uniquely presents scholarship from different knowledge systems for the uninitiated outside and for many indigenous cultures to obtain new tools and new perspectives that enhance human knowledge. It is increasingly apparent that state-centric societies would like to value scholarship from indigenous knowledge systems. But, it is also apparent that these societies are laboring under enormous institutional and societal obstacles: academics and other scholars who cannot budge from their own rather narrow perspective (progressivism, positivist and objectivism) to inspect hundreds of other sciences that have been in existence for millennia. Were the state-centric scholars to become more curious, they would discover that the world is vibrating with ancient and evolving knowledge systems that can benefit the wider human community. When one hears a state-centric scholars say: “the knowledge of traditional societies is lost” it is apparent they blind themselves to recognizing and learning new modes of thought as well as knowledge beyond their mental access. This must change for the sake of all humanity and for the sake of state-centric societies in particular.

**Dr. Hasu Ghosh, Professor Cecilia Benoit and Dr. Ivy Lynn Bourgeault** offer the peer reviewed article, *Health Service Needs for Urban Indigenous Women with Co-Occurring Health Concerns*, discussing the barriers and unequal service access and use experienced by indigenous peoples in Canada’s urban settings. The article reflects findings by the three researchers from the first phase of their study

involving interviews of “service providers and decision makers” in the health system. The study examines the services to those experiencing co-occurrence of two or more chronic physical and mental health conditions. The research followed methods of community based studies working directly with indigenous peoples. Narrative analysis inspecting themes resulting from interviews allowed for wide ranging documentation of barriers of racism, discrimination, and complications from unsafe housing, economic deprivation, government legal barrier, and ultimately the greater vulnerability of indigenous women due to these factors. The researchers bring to bear on their study techniques and an indigenous knowledge base to generate new insights demonstrating the importance of culturally appropriate approaches to research problems specific to indigenous people.

Ms. **Smriti Sabbarwal**, a doctoral candidate at the Centre for International Politics, Organization and Disarmament at Jawaharlal Nehru University in India contributes her peer reviewed article *Indigenous Peoples’ Concerns for Environment: Examining the Role of Non-Governmental Organizations*. Ms. Sabbarwal undertakes a focused examination of how non-governmental organizations engage the environmental concerns of indigenous peoples at the international level—observing that while there are important outcomes from NGO activities, “much needs to be done to incorporate the real indigenous voices at the international level.”

The peer reviewed article, *Structural Oppressions facing Indigenous Students in Canadian Education*, is contributed by the scholarly team of **Dr. Anita Olsen Harper** and **Professor Shirley Thompson** who examine the limiting effects of colonization on the education of indigenous peoples in Canada. They call for the development of educational systems that

advance the self-determination and thus alter the oppression imposed by settler state societies. Harper and Thompson seek to expand awareness of the barriers to learning and personal growth by detailing the adverse effects of colonization and its oppression on the learning and lives of indigenous peoples reliant on the Canadian educational system. They offer a formulation of education to achieve *minopimaatisiwin* or the “good life” in Anishinaabe—the language of peoples in central and southeastern Canada. Their analysis brings to the fore a strong argument for achieving *minopimaatisiwin* in many different cultures.

In *Fourth World Nations in the United Nations?* Editor in Chief **Dr. Rudolph Rysér** examines the United Nation’s General Assembly President’s consultations with indigenous representatives and states’ government representatives in 2016 on the question of how to “enable indigenous peoples participation in the United Nations.” Dr. Rysér details the proposals from six indigenous nations, five states and fifteen non-governmental organizations submitting responses to the General Assembly President’s request for consultations. Quoting the General Assembly President’s four member advisory panel report, Rysér compares the positions of states’ governments to the positions taken by indigenous nations and indigenous NGOs.

CWIS Senior Fellow **Dr. Sawut Pawan** and his colleagues **Rahile Dawut** and **Saadet Kurban** at Xinjiang University in Urumqi City, Uyghur Autonomous Region, China paint a joyful narrative of the Uyghur Meshrep (Moral School) in *Uyghur Meshrep Culture and Its Social Function*. The Uyghur Meshrep is foundational to Uyghur beliefs, ceremonies, rituals, and livelihood. Dr. Pawan compliments the narrative with images from the celebrative, ceremonial and ritual life of Uyghur people as the reader is taken through

a narrative that brings to life in Uyghur Autonomous region in western China.

The book reviews in the edition of *Fourth World Journal* describe cultural restoration and the applicability of pre-colonial knowledge systems among the Lakota and the Ainu reported by authors intimately connected to their subjects. The nineteenth century “oral literature” of Lakota *wiꞤaša wakan* (Holy Man) Miwakan Yuhala is the subject of **Wilson Manyfinger’s** review of **Delphine Red Shirt’s** book, *George Sword’s Warrior Narrative, Compositional Processes in Lakota Oral Tradition*. Manyfinger’s review reveals the powerful work of this Lakota author as she reports her experience and findings researching the actual meaning of old Lakota oral expression describing the Sun Dance. Contributor **Bertha**

**Miller** joyfully reviews **Ann-Elise Lewallen’s** new volume *The Fabric of Indigeneity: Ainu identity, Gender, and Settler Colonialism in Japan*. Miller gives focus to the role of Ainu women engaged in resistance to Japanese colonization of their original territory *Youn Mosir* (the Ainu term for their territory, dubbed Hokkaido by the Japanese) and the restoration of Ainu knowledge, history, and culture through the weaving of cloth and clothing based on ancient motifs.

We are grateful to the contributors in this issue for their extraordinary insights and explorations of cultural knowledge. They demonstrate the strength and power of that knowledge as essential to obtaining a full appreciation and understanding of the importance of all human knowledge. ■

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