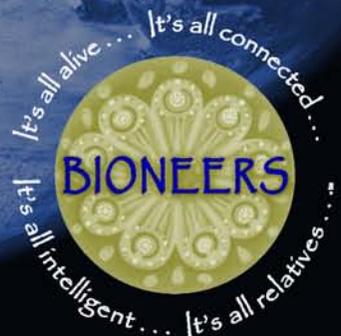


# LIVE from dharamsala the grandmothers speak



2 way satellite spacebridge dialogue with  
the international council of 13 indigenous grandmothers  
at the bioneers conference 2006



# the international council of 13 indigenous grandmothers

In the fall of 2004, at the invitation of the Center for Sacred Studies, thirteen indigenous grandmothers from all over the world—the Arctic Circle; North, South, and Central America; Africa; and Asia, met at a retreat center in upstate New York and formed an alliance.



## mission statement

We, the International Council of Thirteen Indigenous Grandmothers represent a global alliance of prayer, education, and healing for our Mother Earth, all Her inhabitants, all the children, and for the next seven generations to come. We are deeply concerned with the unprecedented destruction of our Mother Earth and the destruction of indigenous ways of life. We believe the teachings of our ancestors will light our way through an uncertain future. We look to further our vision through the realization of projects that protect our diverse culture: land, medicines, language and ceremonial ways of prayer and through projects that educate and nurture the children.

[www.grandmotherscouncil.com](http://www.grandmotherscouncil.com)  
[www.forthenext7generations.com](http://www.forthenext7generations.com)

### **Margaret Behan**

Arapaho/Cheyenne  
Montana, USA

### **Rita Pitka Blumenstein**

Yup'ik  
Arctic Circle, USA

### **Aama Bombo / Buddhi Maya Lama**

Tamang  
Nepal

### **Julieta Casimiro**

Mazatec  
Huautla de Jimenez, Mexico

### **Flordemayo**

Mayan  
Highlands of Central America / New Mexico

### **Maria Alice Campos Freire**

Amazonian Rainforest, Brazil

### **Tsering Dolma Gyaltong**

Tibetan

### **Beatrice Long Visitor Holy Dance**

Oglala Lakota  
Black Hills, South Dakota, USA

### **Rita Long Visitor Holy Dance**

Oglala Lakota  
Black Hills, South Dakota, USA

### **Agnes Baker Pilgrim**

Takelma Siletz  
Grants Pass, Oregon, USA

### **Mona Polacca**

Hopi / Havasupai / Tewa  
Arizona, USA

### **Clara Shinobu Iura**

Amazonian Rainforest, Brazil

### **Bernadette Rebienot**

Omyene  
Gabon, Africa

# the international council of 13 indigenous grandmothers

## artic circle



**Rita Pitka Blumenstein**  
Yupik • Alaska

*The past is not a burden; it is a scaffold which brought us to this day. We are free to be who we are—to create our own life out of our past and out of the present. We are our ancestors. When we heal ourselves, we also heal our ancestors, our grandmothers, our grandfathers and our children. When we heal ourselves, we heal Mother Earth.*

Yupik mother, grandmother, great grandmother, wife, aunt, sister, friend, tribal elder. Born on a fishing boat and raised in Tununak, Alaska, Rita attended a Montessori school in Seattle for four years. She raised two children and worked at many hospitals delivering babies as a doctor's aide in Bethel and Nome. She has traveled and taught basket weaving, song, dance and cultural issue classes world-wide, earning money for Native American Colleges. Rita has participated in many healing conferences where her teachings of the "Talking Circle" were recorded and published. Rita is currently employed with South Central Foundation as a tribal doctor using plant and energy medicine.

## north america



**Mona Polacca**  
Hopi/Havasupai • Arizona

*Indigenous people have come through a time of great struggle, a time of darkness. Like the butterfly in the cocoon, in a place of darkness, the creature breaks down into a fluid and then a change, a transformation, takes place. When it is ready and in its own time, it begins to move and develop a form that stretches and breaks away from this cocoon and emerges into this world, into life, as a beautiful creature. We grandmothers, we have emerged from that darkness, see this beauty, see each other and reach out to the world with open arms, with love, hope, compassion, faith and charity.*

Hopi/Havasupai /Tewa elder, Mona Polacca, is working on her PhD at the Interdisciplinary Justice Studies department of Arizona State University. She has worked on issues of Native American alcoholism, domestic violence and mental health for the elderly native peoples.

# the international council of 13 indigenous grandmothers

north america



**Agnes Baker-Pilgrim**  
Takelma Siletz  
Oregon

*We grandmothers have come from far and wide to speak the knowledge we hold inside. In many languages we have been told it is time to make the right changes for our families, for the lands we love. We can be the voice for the voiceless. We are at the threshold. We are going to see change. If we can create the vision in our heart, it will spread. As bringers of light, we have no choice but to join together. As women of wisdom we cannot be divided. When the condor meets the eagle—thunderbirds come home.*

Oldest living female member of the Rogue River Indians, Takelma Band, originally from Southern Oregon, Agnes was chosen by her tribe as a “Living Legend.” Agnes is an ambassador for our Mother Earth. She is a spiritual elder of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz and granddaughter of Chief George Harney, the first elected chief of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz. She is a world renowned spiritual leader, elder and mentor to the Native American Student Union of Southern Oregon University, and keeper of the Sacred Salmon Ceremony.



**Margaret Behan**  
Red Spider Woman  
Cheyenne-Arapaho  
Montana

*If we want to see changes first of all we need to be in peace inside ourselves, and then we need to be patient with the ones that have not yet arrived in that place of peace.*

Arapahoe-Cheyenne (#003300), fifth generation of the Sand Creek Massacre. As a child, Margaret attended the Catholic Mission and Government Boarding Schools. Margaret is a Cheyenne traditional war dancer. She has served as a dance leader in Oklahoma and in powwows across the U.S. A sculptress for 24 years, she creates clay figurines that have won her many honors, including shows at Eastern New Mexico University, University of Wisconsin, Santa Fe Indian Market and the Gallup Inter-Tribal Ceremonial. Margaret is an accomplished and published author, poet and playwright, and licensed Substance Abuse Counselor. She has presented workshops and retreats for women, adult children of alcoholics and co-dependents. Currently researching generational trauma, her interest is in cross-cultural Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome—trauma of loss and grief, danger and fear, hatred and chaos.

# the international council of 13 indigenous grandmothers

north america



**Rita Long-Visitor Holy Dance**  
Oglala Lakota  
South Dakota

*We elderly women need to talk about things with sincerity and seriousness. We need to think about many things. What are we going to say? We need to think before we say anything and keep it positive and constructive.*

Lakota keeper of the traditional ways, great grandmother, Native American Church elder, beadworker.

## **From Beatrice and Rita Long-Visitor Holy Dance (sisters)**

*We are here with a prayer for our generation, for our grandchildren who are suffering, and for our children's grandchildren. How are we going to survive. The only way to survive is through prayer.*



**Beatrice Long-Visitor Holy Dance**  
Oglala Lakota  
South Dakota

*It was the work of the Creator to bring the 13 grandmothers together with their knowledge of prayer and healing that they are sharing. The grandmothers are gathering to pray and discuss the problems of the world: sickness, poverty, war and the negativity flourishing throughout the world. That is why the Great Spirit has called us together—to help heal our first grandmother, the Earth.*

Lakota keeper of the traditional ways, great grandmother, Native American Church elder, sundancer, healthworker for people with diabetes.

# the international council of 13 indigenous grandmothers

latin america



**Flordemayo**  
Mayan  
Residing in New Mexico

*In this time of movement, where celestial doors have opened, we must do what we have been asked to do. We are standing in the movement and the vibration of a sacred prophecy. The prophecy tells us that consciousness is preparing the spirit of the feminine, the spirit of the grandmothers. It is in the prophecy that we shall walk into the light united from the four directions.*

Mayan elder born in a small village on the Nicaragua/ Honduras border. Flordemayo's father was a local shaman and Flordemayo's mother was a midwife and a healer. As her children grew, Flordemayo began to work as a healer/curandera. Flordemayo is a sundancer who considers her Mayan heritage a keystone of her work. She works with Don Alejandro Oxlaj, a head of the Mayan Council of Elders, who convened the first Gathering of Indigenous Priests and Elders of America in 1994. She is currently on the board of directors of the Institute of Natural and Traditional Knowledge in San Juan, New Mexico.



**Julieta Casimiro**  
Mazatec • Oaxaca, Mexico

*We need to keep hope alive. It is like a never-ending story. In my village there is violence but what is happening in my village is happening in the world. At this moment, we need our faith. We need to make that faith stronger so we can continue doing our spiritual work and continue helping others.*

Mazatec elder and curandera from Huautla de Jimenez, Oaxaca, Mexico, Mama Julia carries the tradition of healing and ceremonies with the use of sacred plants in the pre-hispanic Teonanactl, "Ninos Santos" way.

# the international council of 13 indigenous grandmothers

latin america



**Maria Alice Campos Freire**  
Mapia • Brazil

Maria Alice tells of an old man, an old shaman in the last year of his life...

*In the last year of his life, he did not eat anything, not even drink water, only divine medicine. All the time he was listening to sounds, divine sounds. He called one of our sisters and asked her to write down messages he received for the women. He said the women would transmute first and then the men—so, women, be courageous. Never doubt, this task, but take it in your hands.*

Madrinha of the Santo Daime Church, Mapiá, Brazil. Maria Alice is a healer with Amazonian plant medicine and flower essences. Founder of Centro Medicina da Floresta. Madrinha of the Umbanda ceremonies. Principal advocate for the preservation of the indigenous rain forest heritage.



**Clara Shinobu Iura**  
Mapia • Brazil

*In these times we live in, when killing seems almost natural, we are here in prayer so that we can illuminate a consciousness for this planet that is in agony. Inside our hearts, I believe each of us present in this council feels great hope. This is a seed being planted.*

Born in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Clara studied philosophy at the University of Sao Paulo. Through her experiences of clairvoyance and mediumship, she was initiated through many teachings, from macrobiotics to Umbanda. After helping with the curing of Padrinho Sebastiao, spiritual leader of one of the Santo Daime's largest churches, she was invited to live and work in Céu do Mapiá, his community located in the heart of the Amazon forest. Since 1999, she has directed the Santa Casa de Saúde (Holy House of Health) with Padrinho Manoel Corrente, Céu do Mapiá's holistic healing center.

## the international council of 13 indigenous grandmothers

asia



**Aama Bombo**  
Tamang • Nepal

Buddhi Maya Lama, known also as Aama Bombo (Mother Shaman), was born in the remote village of Melong in the Eastern part of the Bagmati Zone in Nepal, 65 years ago. Her father was a renowned shaman in the Nepalese Tamang tradition. Aama became a shaman in a manner contrary to the Tamang tradition since women are not traditionally supposed to practice shamanism. In the early days, her father restricted her in every way from practicing shamanism. However, when her father died at the age of eighty, his spirits and other gods and spirits started visiting and teaching her to be a shaman, against the prevailing cultural values of Tamang society. Today, Aama has achieved notoriety in Nepal. She treats (heals) around 100 patients every morning at her house in Boudhnath, near Kathmandu. Patients come to visit her from around the country, as well as from India and Tibet. She does not discriminate against those she heals, treating the poorest of the poor as well as the Royal Family of Nepal with equal dedication and respect.

*I'd like to talk about problems in the world and what the sources of these problems are. I am Tibetan, so I will speak about the situation in Tibet, which affects all of us. Tibetans took very good care of the land, but now it is becoming a place where radioactive waste from products all over the world are being buried. It is a danger for everyone.*



**Tsering Dolma Gyathong**  
Tibetan residing in  
Canada & Dharamsala • India

Tsering Dolma was born in Tibet in 1929. Because of the Communist invasion of Tibet, she escaped along with her family from Tibet in 1958 to India. In 1972, she and her family of four children came to Canada as refugees. She later returned to India and became one of the founding members who revived the Tibetan Women's Association (TWA). During the next ten years, she served as an executive member of TWA and established over 30 branch offices worldwide. In 1995, Tsering Dolma attended the Fourth World Women's Conference held in Beijing, China. She faced many threats and dangers as she, along with others, openly criticized the Chinese government and its treatment of the Tibetan people and especially Tibetan women. She now resides in Toronto and remains as an advisor to the TWA.

## the international council of 13 indigenous grandmothers

africa



**Bernadette Rebienot**  
Omyene • Gabon • Africa

*Nothing happens in my country without consulting the women. Our wise people, our elders, they are like libraries. We consult them whenever we need to make large decisions. Every five years, in my country, it is the women who make a peace march. It is the grandmothers who for one month go into the forest to prepare for this peace march. They fast, they pray and invoke the ancestors. When the grandmothers speak, the president listens.*

Born in Libreville, Gabon of the Omyene linguistic community, widow and mother of ten, grandmother of twenty-three. Before retiring, Bernadette worked as an educator and school administrator. Bernadette has participated in numerous national and international conferences on Traditional Medicine. She is a healer, master of the Iboga Bwiti Rite and master of Women's Initiations. Bernadette has offered initiations and consultations for the past thirty years. She has been President of the Association of Traditional Medicine Practitioners for Gabonese Health (U.T.S.G.) since 1994..

*"As bringers of light we have no choice but to join together. As women of wisdom we cannot be divided. When the condor meets the eagle, thunderbirds come home."*

*-Agnes Baker-Pilgrim*

