

APPENDIX B

The Cradleboard

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Adapted from Jamie Sams'
The Thirteen Original Clan Mothers

By Karan Watson for

WEPAN's Tenth-Year Celebration

One evening as Setting Sun Woman watched the rising of the evening star, Wata-jis, she saw a spiritual canoe moving on a river of fog, coming toward earth. The canoe settled near her feet. She peered over the side of the canoe and discovered a child laced inside a cradleboard peering back at her. The baby smiled and looked directly into Setting Sun Woman's eyes. Realizing that this was no ordinary child, she said "Thank you for being."

The child replied, "I am the child of tomorrow. I am Wata-jis, the evening star, your sister. I am wrapped in this cradleboard of creation. If you are willing to carry me on your back, you will begin to understand the many purposes of your Earth Walk."

Setting Sun Woman carefully lifted the Cradleboard of Creation and pulled the harness on. The child settled securely on her back. She said, "Wata-jis, thank you for coming to be my teacher. What do you want me to do now?"

Wata-jis said, "We are going to play a game, mother, you must carry me on the forest and mountain trail." So they began to travel over the trail, and as Setting Sun Woman walked, the child would move in many ways. Therefore, Setting Sun Woman was constantly adjusting her stride and weight to compensate for the child's position.

After some time Wata-jis giggled and said to Setting Sun Woman, "Do you notice that you cannot see me but that my weight is like a reminder, always present but not seen? I am like the children of the future, not seen yet, but ever present. What senses must you use when you cannot see me?"

"I must hear your voice, feel your weight, smell your fragrance, and allow my body to align with your rhythms, anticipating your movements so that we can walk in balance as I carry your cradleboard."

Wata-jis said, "Those are the same abilities that human children of Earth must develop in order to prepare for the future, mother. They must sense the weight of the future generations' needs in order to find harmony and balance now. If they waste resources, time, or energy now, there will not be an abundant future for the generations yet unborn. There must be no separation between the mother and the cradleboard, the present and the future. Everyone alive today must take responsibility for the needs of the next seven generations."

WEPAN understands its responsibility for keeping the cradleboard snug.

