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A History of the True People - The Cherokee Indians - Chapter 1

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The Cherokee Indians
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Foreword

What I am going to do in this book is to tell you the history of the Cherokees the way the old Cherokees tell it, in their words and from their point of view, as much as I can. This isn't the kind of history you get in most books. It is a traditional history or oral history of the Cherokee people. The first thing I should say before I get into my account is that I'm not an expert in Cherokee traditional history. There are a lot of elderly men who know a lot more than I do about the subject. I'm just giving this talk for Indian kids here in Michigan because there is no one else around here to explain it. If you really want a solid understanding, you should go to Oklahoma or North Carolina and talk to people older than I am, who are more knowledgeable. Secondly, I am not going to go into as much detail here in this book as if I were writing a complete history. It would be too long. I am going to give you just a sketch of Cherokee traditional history.

The other thing I want to say is that I wouldn't like this book to be read by whites who are not acquainted with the Indians. Some of the prophecies I recount say some kind of strong things against whites and I don't want to hurt anybody's feelings. Now whites who have been around Indians are used to these kinds of prophecies so it won't hurt their feelings. But I would prefer that whites who are not acquainted with the Indians did not first read about those prophecies in a book which I have written. With that preface let me just start right into what I know.
In the Olden Days
If I understand what the old people tell me, in the beginning God made the Indian and he placed him in the middle of this island underneath the center of the sun. From this original Indian comes all the Indians in North America. As that group of Indians in the middle of the island of North America increased and the land became overcrowded, different groups migrated out, looking for new hunting grounds and garden spots. Over the years, as the different groups migrated to all parts of the island, their language changed. By the time Europeans came here there were a lot of different peoples speaking many languages in this island of North America, but all stemming from the original Indian God created. One of the groups that came out of the middle of the island headed east and finally ended up in the northeastern part of the present day United States, probably around modern New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. After several thousand years, the Cherokees separated out of that bunch and moved off to the south and became, at that time, a separate people; probably around 5,000 years ago. In fact, the word Cherokee is said by the old people in North Carolina to have come from a word in the Cherokee language, ani dots salagi, which means they come out of a bunch. That was the beginning of the Cherokee people.

According to what I understand, there were seven nations in the north of the Iroquoian speaking people, as modern students of language call us. The Cherokees were the seventh of those seven nations in that area, but they were all independent peoples. The Cherokees were just a single tribe of that group of tribes that had formerly been one people. The Cherokees were living right on the eastern seacoast at that time, probably about where Maryland and Virginia are now.

The Cherokees lived a simple life in that early time. They had two things to live on mainly. One was the corn and the other was the deer. All the Cherokee ceremonies, if you look deeply are related to the corn
and the deer. The ritual focuses on the corn and deer and on the elements of nature, the relationship of the fire to the earth to the thunder and so forth. There is a story of how the Cherokees got the corn and the deer, a sacred story about the creation. In the old days you couldn't hear that story unless you went at night into a sweat house and listened to it and then took a sweat bath in the morning. This was done in the winter time. In fact, it used to be the rule to tell those stories only in the winter time. The longest nights of the year, December 21, 22, 23, and 24 are the best nights for telling sacred stories. In the old days they used to take a young man into the sweat house, tell him these sacred stories all night, all take a sweat bath at first light, and then go to the creek to pray. So I do not feel I ought to tell this sacred story in complete form, I'll just tell it in broad outline.

In the beginning there was a man and woman living on this island and they were called in Cherokee, the Hunter and the Corn Woman. The Hunter had charge of the game animals. There was a cave on the north side of Black Mountain near modern Asheville, North Carolina where he kept the game. When he wanted any meat to eat, he just rolled a rock away from the cave entrance. The game would come out and he would kill what he wanted. Then, the Hunter would block off the cave entrance again. The Corn Woman would just rub her thighs and corn would fall at her feet. That's mainly what the first couple, and later the Cherokees, lived on in the old days.

That couple only had one son. They tried to have more children but they couldn't. As the little boy grew up he was lonesome, he wanted a brother. One time the Corn Woman had this on her mind as she was washing some game. She had butchered it and was washing the blood off in the creek near their house. There was a little eddie in the water that sucked up that blood and then turned into a whirlpool. A little boy stepped out of the whirlpool and became the twin brother of their little boy. The boys
behaved pretty well until they got to the age when boys get mischievous. The young fellow who came out of the blood and water turned bad.

The hunters stood up to follow their tracks when he went to go hunt. They followed him up to the cave and saw him roll away the rock and kill the game and take it home. The boys tried to roll the rock away and when they did, all the animals came running out. They shot at a deer and hit it right on the tail. They broke its tail so that now all the deers' tails stand up. All the other game got away and ran all over the island. Because of that, now the Indians have to hunt for the wild game. The boys went on back home after that. When their father saw all the game running around loose, he went up to the cave. When he saw that the boys had let all the game out, he got pretty mad but the damage was done.

The brothers were watching their mother one day and they saw her rub her thighs and the corn fall to her feet. The bad little boy said, "Our mother is a witch and we should kill her." He talked the other little boy into it. They waylaid in the bushes outside the house and when their mother came out they shot her. When she was dying she said, "Pull my body around the house seven times." They did as she asked before she died. Where her drops of blood fell corn sprang up. Now, the Indians have to grow the corn instead of having a woman rub her thighs, just like they have to hunt for the game instead of getting it from the cave. This was all because of the bad things those two little boys did.

The Hunter left after the death of his wife. He lives in the sky now and we call him the Thunder. Cherokee hunters still pray to him for luck in hunting. After their mother's death the boys had a few more adventures. In time they went west and finally found their father and lived with him in the western sky. Nowadays they call those two little
boys the Thunder and the Lightning. That's the story of how the Cherokees got the corn and the deer. The Cherokees lived on other game and wild plants too, but the corn and the deer were their staples.

In the beginning, the Cherokees were more natural people, more innocent, so they had a simple law to go by. They didn't have a law to keep the peace because they were just naturally peaceful. They lived a simple life and they were innocent. They had seven things to help them in those days. They had the fire, they had water, they had stones and rattles, they had songs and dreams, and they had the plants to help them.

The way the Cherokees received help from the plants is another sacred story. I will just tell it briefly for you as I did the first one. They say that the animals were getting put out with the Cherokees because, by that time, Cherokees had invented bows and arrows and they were killing off a lot of the game. In those days animals could talk just like human beings so each animal held a council to consider what to do. The bears had a council and they said, "The Cherokees are killing too many of us bears so we are going to have to do something to stop them." One of them said, "Why don't we make a bow and arrow like the Cherokees and fight them back?" Then another said, "How are we going to do that?" One bear spoke up and said, "I will sacrifice myself so you can make a bowstring out of my innards." So the bears made a bow, but when they tried to shoot the bow, they couldn't do it because they had such long claws. One bear cut off his claws and he could shoot the bow all right. The chief of the bears spoke up and said, "Wait a minute, we can't go around killing ourselves to get bowstrings or cutting off our claws. We will starve to death. We need our claws for digging." He said, "That's not going to work. Maybe we ought to get all the animals together to decide what to do." All the animals got together and they decided that the best thing to do was for them to call disease, different illnesses,
to the Indians. That would kind of thin them down a little bit. So the deer spoke up and said, "I will give him rhematism." Then each animal spoke up and said what particular disease it would inflict on the Cherokees. The animals had the power to do that and still have the power to do that to the Cherokees. Then the animals adjourned their joint council with that course of action in mind.

Now the plants heard about what the animals had decided and since they were always friendly with the Cherokees, they decided that they would help the Cherokees out. The plants decided that for each disease the animals brought to the Cherokees, there would be a plant which would offer itself to cure the disease. That's what the Cherokees had from the beginning. A doctor can go into the woods and it will come to him what plant to use. Sometimes there won't be any wind and you will see a plant move and that will be the plant for you to use to cure that particular disease. As I say, it was a simple law in those days with the seven things to help - fire, water, stones, rattles, songs, dreams, and plants.

As time went on, the Cherokees had to move away from the seacoast. Some old people said that monsters came up out of the sea and drove the Cherokees away and others said the country became overcrowded. The version I hold true is that a Cherokee in that time had a vision that something was going to come off the sea, maybe off the foam, that was going to be injurious to the Cherokees. That man was a respected doctor of the Cherokee people so he told them about his vision. The vision also said that the Cherokees should move inland in order to avoid that future trouble. Well you can't always get the Cherokees to listen when you tell them to do something, so God had to cause the land to sink in that section. If you look on the map, you will see Chesapeake Bay in that region and I figure that is where the
the land sunk or the sea rose. Some elders say that the Cherokees lived on islands off the east coast and the islands sunk, but either way, whether they were living on islands or on the coast, the land sank and the sea rose and the Cherokees started moving west.

Each of the seven clans of the Cherokees marched separately and each camped to itself on the journey. Before long they found themselves in mountain country where there was hardly any good land for gardens and there was very little game. It was cold in those mountains and the winters were hard. The Cherokees wandered in those mountains for four years. Sometimes they would come to a big river and they would have to weave grape vines to make a bridge. One time they came to a place where they say there was a town in which the people lived in houses with flat roofs. The Cherokees had never seen flat roofs on houses before. They didn't know who lived there. They just steered around that village.

Finally the chiefs appointed seven doctors to help them find their way out of the mountains. The seven doctors made medicine and told the people which way to go. The Cherokees came out of those mountains onto the upper part of the Ohio River. The Ohio River has a pretty good valley and the mountains are fairly low around there. They put the fire down at a place now called Moundsville, West Virginia, which is not very far south of Pittsburg on the Ohio - West Virginia border. This is where they put down their head fire when they came out of the mountains. Then the Cherokees spread out down the river to about where Portsmouth is now and all up the side streams. That area has nice valleys with good garden spots. There was lots of game there in those days. It is hilly country and there are many plants in the woods. It is not too cold in the winter, not like the mountain country they had wandered in. They lived good then and they still had those seven helpful things and the corn and deer, as they had had when they lived on the seacoast.
The western part of the new Cherokee settlements overlapped with a nation who were the grandfathers of the modern Quapaws, Kaws, Osages, Poncas, and Omahas. They lived further west on down the Ohio River. Although their settlements overlapped with the Cherokees in that Ohio valley area, the two peoples lived pretty peacefully together.

It must have been about 2,000 B.C. when the Cherokees made that journey to the Ohio country. They lived there for several hundred years and they began to develop, as the white people would say. They began to build mounds. If you go to Moundsville, West Virginia where the Cherokees put down their head fire, you will see a great big mound there right in the middle of the town. It is all fenced off now. Southern Ohio is full of big burial mounds and mounds made in the shape of different animals, birds, and reptiles. In fact, my grandfather said the Cherokees made what they call the Great Serpent Mound in southern Ohio. It was used at the solstices, June 21 and December 21, the longest and shortest days of the year. If you have ever seen that mound, you know it looks like a big snake swallowing something round. The snake represents darkness and he has got the sun in his mouth. He hasn't swallowed it, he just has it in his mouth. The Cherokees would help darkness keep the sun in check and they would help the sun keep the darkness in check, so that there was some kind of balance. They would dance along the top of the ridge that is made like a snake coiled around. There is a Cherokee dance like that now.

It is clear that the Cherokees were developing their arts and crafts then. You can see their beautiful artwork in museums in Ohio now. Since they were starting to develop and get smarter, the Creator got a little worried. He figured the Cherokees needed a stronger law. That's when He
gave out the first real law to the Cherokees, maybe about 500 or 1,000 B.C. He called that law the Four Mothers Law and it was given not only to the Cherokees but to all Indians, because they were all beginning to develop. It was a law of peace and harmony, peace among one another and between all the different tribes. Before that time, that law was just taken for granted. It wasn't really a law because all the Indians just kept the peace and didn't think anything about it. But when God saw that they were getting smart, He figured He better lay down the Four Mothers Law so the Cherokees wouldn't get out of line. He also added onto the seven things they had to help them in order to keep that law strong. That's when He gave the pipe and tobacco and taught the Cherokees how to "fix" the tobacco for the pipe. Those mounds in southern Ohio are just filled with all kinds of beautiful pipes.

One of the agents God used in the bringing of the Four Mothers Law was a man called Cornsilk. They say he came up the Ohio River from the south in a boat. There was a whole lot of boats with him and they were filled with people carrying flowers. He preached the peace and reinforced the law. He taught the Cherokees how to use the pipe and tobacco. He taught them the prayers to say to fix the tobacco with medicine so it would make peace among the people. He made prophecies. He said that as long as the Indians held to God's law they would live the good life. However, if they strayed off the white path of peace then a new nationality would come here to North America. They would overcrowd the country and life would become hard. Then everybody, both newcomers and the Indians, would have to work to live. Most of the Indians didn't understand what he was talking about. North America was like a Garden of Eden in those days and life was easy for the Indians then; the soil was fruitful and the wild game was thick over the land. Most of them couldn't imagine what
Indian Migrations
4000 B.C. - 1700 A.D.

1. Original Cherokee area in Va., Md., and Del.
2. Mountain wilderness
3. Head fire at Moundsville, W. Va.
4. Great Serpent Mound
5. First resting place near Roanoake, Va.
6. Second resting place at Elizabethtown, Tenn.
7. Third resting place at Tellico Plains, Tenn.
8. Delaware migration
9. Kentucky (Catawba) River
10. Falls of Ohio
11. Wabash (Osage) River
12. Cahokia Mounds
13. Muskegee Creeks
14. Coushatta
15. Eufaula Creeks (Etowah)
16. Uchees
17. Guale
18. Catawbas
20. Lumbee
21. Tuscarora
22. Cumberland Gap
23. Chillicothe & Red Paint Creek (1780's)
24. Battle of Blue Licks (1783) (Lickin River)
25. Battle of Fallen Timbers (1794)
26. Tecumseh's home village (1811)
27. Iroquois
28. Sioux
29. Osage
30. St. Francis River (1811)
"work" was. Even the few Indians who had an idea what he meant thought he just meant more effort. They didn't understand he meant more than than - wages, time schedules, bosses, permits, licenses, training, and all the loss of freedom that Indians don't like in these days.

Cornstalk died in that upper region of the Ohio River. He was buried in what is called the Seip Mound, in English. My grandfather showed me the place where he was buried. When archeologists were digging in that mound they unearthed a sculpture of a head which is probably a likeness of the Cornstalk.

God said that the Four Mothers Law was to last a thousand years. And it did last a thousand years. The Cherokees did live in peace and keep that law among themselves and with other peoples. They also had the seven things from the beginning, plus the pipe and tobacco, to help them. But after about 1,000 years, they broke the law. What happened was that the Delawares were migrating to the sea. As near as I can figure, the Delawares started out from about Sault Ste. Marie and migrated south. They stopped somewhere half-way between modern Toledo and Dayton, Ohio. They were going to turn east and then go to the sea. Well, when they got that far south, in order to turn east they had to go through the northern edge of Cherokee country. They went to the Cherokees and asked their permission to pass through their country to get to the sea (the Delawares finally ended up in New Jersey and were on the coast when the Europeans came.) The Cherokees said that the Delawares would disturb their settlements and kill off too much game so they couldn't go through the Cherokee country. The Delawares stayed put for a little while and then they started on east anyhow. That's when the Cherokees broke the Four Mothers Law and attacked them.
The Delawares went to the Five Nations of the Iroquois in New York and to the Wyandottes in Ontario and made an alliance against the Cherokees. There were thus seven nations allied against the Cherokees, and, in those days, these seven nations were big nations. In that time all the Algonkian speaking people were part of the Delawares. These modern Algonkians had not yet separated out. The Delawares are the grandfathers of all those people. There were no Shawnees or Mohican or Sauks or Potawatomies then. All those tribes called Central Algonkians and all those tribes in New England were part of the Delawares then. They were a big nation. A war was started between those allied seven nations and the Cherokees which lasted 70 years. If you go to Ohio, you will see that those old settlements have big walls around them. Sometimes they would be built up on a bluff surrounded by a big earthen wall. The Cherokees probably went down to the bottoms to farm and hunt but their houses were inside the walls. The war went on for 70 years and the old people say that the trails ran with blood in that time.

The first people to move away from that trouble were the Catawbas who were living on the Kentucky River south and west of the Cherokees. They moved off to the southeast and finally ended up in central North Carolina and South Carolina.

Next those people who were the grandfathers of the Osages, Poncas, etc., started moving south and west down the Ohio River. They put their fires down at the falls of the Ohio near modern Louisville and on the Wabash. In Cherokee they call the Wabash, the Osage River. They lived there in peace for several hundred years, but finally the northern tribes hit them again. When I was a boy, my grandfather showed me an island right above the falls of the Ohio where hundreds of those Indians were slaughtered by the northern tribes. They picked up again and started
moving west. The Muscogee Creeks moved south to get out of the way. They finally buttressed against a great city on the Mississippi near modern St. Louis. There was a great mound in that city, on which a temple stood, that is bigger than any of the pyramids of Egypt. The Cherokees call it the Chief's House. It is still standing and is called Cahokia Mound now. According to the old Cherokees, relatives of the Caddo Indians lived in that great city; I guess the Arikara and the Skidi Pawnee. This grandfather tribe of the Osages, Poncas, etc. crossed the Mississippi and continued west up the Missouri River, pushing the Arikara and Pawnee ahead of them. They finally settled down on the Missouri. They had made a long journey over many hundreds of years to escape that terrible war in the Ohio country.

After 70 years of war the Cherokees finally wore down, too, and started moving south. Their first resting place was right about present day Roanoake, Virginia. They settled near some peaks which are called the Peaks of the Otter. If you look at Roanoake on the map you will see that it is straight south of Moundsville, across the rough West Virginia mountain country. The Cherokees couldn't hunt or farm anywhere until they crossed over those big mountains and came out in the upper part of the Roanoake valley. That's where they put down their fire. The war had slacked off, but it didn't stop, so after the Cherokees lived there for awhile, they pulled up stakes again and this time they headed southwest. The valleys run from northeast to southwest in that part of the country. They pulled out of that first resting place which was called in Cherokee, Ani gaiyuligeyi, Ancient People's Place. The second resting place was in northeastern Tennessee at a place the white people call Watauga Old Fields, close to modern Elizabeth City, Tennessee. In Cherokee it is
called Nona tlooguyi, Cypress Tree Standing. They lived there a long time but still that war kept up because the northern tribes kept hitting the Cherokees in the back pushing them south. From Cypress Tree Standing one bunch took out and went southwest down the Tennessee valley and put their fire at a place called Dalikwa or Tellico Plains in English (that's where the name of the town of Tahlequah comes from in Oklahoma.) That was the third resting place in the migration of the Cherokees. Then a big bunch took out of Cypress Tree Standing and went up a river that runs from south to north called the French Broad River. It starts in North Carolina, runs north and cuts a big gap through the mountains, then comes into the headwaters of the Tennessee River. So this group went straight south into the North Carolina mountains. When they got about to where Asheville, North Carolina is now, they broke into two bunches. One bunch went west and then broke into two bunches. They put one fire down at a place they call Nikwasi which is at modern Franklin, North Carolina, (the big mound is still there) and the other bunch put their fire down near Bryson City which they called Kitoowhagi. The bunch they had left at Asheville kept on going south and dropped over the Blue Ridge Mountains into the edge of South Carolina. They were a big bunch so they broke into three fires. They put one fire at a place called Joostinal, one fire at a place called Koowahiyi, and one fire at a place called Sunigu. If you go to South Carolina now there is a white town called Seneca at that site of old Sunigu, but that old Sunigu of the Cherokees has no relation to the Senecas in New York. South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia come together in that area. The Cherokees put these three fires over in the foot hills of the Blue Ridge Mountains on the South Carolina side.
The last people left in Cypress Tree Standing finally moved out and put their fire down at a place called Echota, which was just north of Tellico Plains on the Tellico River (that's where the Tellico Dam basin is that has been so controversial; it looked like they were going to flood all that country when they built the dam but it doesn't look like it is going to go through now.) This last bunch out were people who had formed the rear guard of the Cherokees, holding back those northern tribes. So even though those people on Tellico Plains were the first into the region and were called the third resting place of the Cherokees, the Echota people became the head fire of all the Cherokees because they were the ones who had suffered in fighting the rear guard action.

There were thus seven mother towns among the Cherokees. Those mother towns were like the head town in a region, people spread out from the mother town and formed smaller settlements in the area. Then, everybody in the region would come into the mother town for the big religious gatherings. Two mother towns were in what is now the state of Tennessee, two in what is now North Carolina, and three in what is now South Carolina. But Echota, in Tennessee, was the capital.

Now when the Cherokees migrated into Tennessee, the Creeks were already in that country. There are a lot of Creek place names in that section yet. Watauga Old Fields is a Creek word. There are a lot of Creek place names in both Tennessee and North Carolina. There was a town called Tuskegee, where Sequoyah was born, right close to Echota. It was a mixed town of the original Tuskegee Indians and Cherokees. Finally, most of those Tuskegees moved south and became part of the Creek Confederacy. I believe that even in the 1700's, though, there were Tuskegees living in that town.
The Cherokees were pushing the Creeks in front of them as they migrated. Naturally this didn't make for good feelings, so the Creeks got into a war with the Cherokees. There are many mounds in this part of the country but if you ask the old people if the Cherokees built those mounds, they will say no. Those mounds were built by the Creeks and the Cherokees just used them. When the Cherokees who were moving in there wanted to put up a temple they would put it on a mound already built by the Creeks. Now, the Cherokees were fighting the northern tribes on one hand and the Creeks on the other.

When the Cherokees moved into North Carolina they were not too far away from the Catawbas in central North Carolina and, of course, they got into a fuss with them over hunting territory. It got so bad that the two tribes had to make an agreement that the Cherokees would stay west of the French Broad River and the Catawbas would stay east of the Catawba River. The land in between the rivers was neutral ground. If you go visit the Catawbas today they will remind you of that agreement. They will joke and ask you what you are doing east of the Catawba River.

The Cherokees in South Carolina were right north of a people called the Ani Wahala in Cherokee. I think it is Guale in English. They were a peaceful people and knowledgeable in religion and medicine. But we weren't so lucky with the Creeks and the northern tribes. They were wild to get the Cherokee hair.

The migration of the Cherokees south started about 500 or 700 A.D. and went on for several hundred years so it was probably about 1,000 A.D. when the Cherokees finally got settled in what we call the old country. But the war kept going on during this time and afterwards also. This war between the northern tribes and the Cherokees kept right on but it became worse as the Creeks got involved.
One time there was a medicine man who lived in the town of Kitoowhagi, one of the seven mother towns on what is now the Tuckasegee River close to present day Bryson City, North Carolina. He saw something in the fire. He headed out of that settlement up into the Big Smoky Mountains. He went up on top of Clingman's Dome, which the Cherokees call Koowanuyi (the biggest peak in the Smoky's) to fast in order to see if he could receive some kind of knowledge of what he had seen in the fire. He laid down a holy fire on that mountain peak. He took some of the fire and walked a big circle around the top of the mountain. The ground was made clean and pure in this manner. On the second night he was there, a doctor from another one of the seven mother towns came up there. It continued like that until on the seventh night there were seven doctors, each from a different mother town and also from a different clan. This meant that each of the seven clans of the Cherokee were represented by the doctors on that mountain.

On the seventh night they received what they had been looking for, a message. God told them that He had given them the Four Mothers Law with the pipe and tobacco to help them but they had been breaking that law for many hundreds of years. They had followed a path that would lead them to destruction if they kept on. Then God said that He was going to give them a second chance and give them a second and stronger law of peace which He called the Seven Clan Law. It is a long complicated set of moral notions about preserving harmony among the people and with other tribes and with the natural world.

With this law He was going to give them some things to help them. He was going to give them seven ceremonies. One would be a ceremony in March before the people planted. Then there would be a ceremony in June or July when the corn was ready to eat. Then there would be a
ceremony in August or September when the corn became hard which would be the main ceremony and last four days. This would be a ceremony in which all sins would be forgiven and wiped away for that year and harmony made among the people. It is called Anigohuski in Cherokee. I guess that it was probably something like a Thanksgiving in late August or early September. The fourth ceremony would be at the first new moon in October. The people would celebrate the new year and take medicine for the coming year. Ten days after that ceremony, there would be a fifth ceremony in which the people would get ready for the coming winter. They would bring the surplus harvest to the fire to give it to the poor or maybe to a chief who didn't have time to support himself because he was working for the people. The name of this fifth ceremony is Agohuda in Cherokee, which means women gathering wood. The sixth ceremony was held in the early part of December. The Cherokees called it the Pigeon Dance. In this ceremony pine needles and tobacco are sacrificed to the fire and the people dance different animal dances to make the hunting good over the winter. It was also to give thanks for the hunting, because the Cherokees used to do most of their hunting in October and November. These were the six ceremonies over the year.

The seventh ceremony was called the Eagle Dance or Feather Dance. It was supposed to be used to make peace among the Indians. It was to be used whenever you smoked the pipe or to welcome visitors or to celebrate a victory or after an eagle was killed or to purify returning warriors or to help the poor. Most of those eagle dances could be performed any time during the year.

God gave the Cherokee doctors the Seven Clan Law of peace and He gave them all the ceremonies with the songs and rituals to go with them. Then He told them that later they would see a great medicine man, not
a Cherokee, but almost like some kind of spirit. This being would give them the medicine songs for hunting animals and prayers to say to cure different sicknesses. The last thing God said to the doctors was that "we now on the Cherokee would be known to Him and among themselves as AniKiloowhagi, keloowa People. That became our true name, our religious name, our name from God.

That vision must have taken place about 1200 or 1400 A.D. because the Cherokees started out from the north about 500 A.D. and it took them several hundred years to come south. They were warring for several hundred years after that. Therefore, it must have been about 1200 or 1400 A.D. when they got the second chance, the second law called the Seven Clan Law.

Now, what God had said about the great being came to pass. There was something like a spirit, a kind of being, who lived on top of a mountain called Whiteside Mountain in English now. It is close to the North Carolina - South Carolina border. Now this being lived close to the top of that mountain in a big cave. He used to bring harm to the Cherokees. But they couldn't kill him. The Cherokees finally decided that they were going to get rid of him because he was killing the people and using his medicine to hurt them. One time they set out watchers and they saw him come off the mountain and go down where the Cherokees lived. They doubled around to back of him and put seven women who were having their monthly sickness along the trail back to his house. When he came back and saw the first young woman he said, "Sister, you are sick." He said the same thing to the next woman. To the third and fourth woman he he said, "Sister, you are bad sick." When he got to the fifth one he said, "Sister, you have a sickness that's hard on me." To the sixth one he said, "Sister, your sickness will kill me." When he got to the
seventh one he said, "Sister, you have killed me." And he fell over. The Cherokees ran up and drove a sourwood (that is a kind of wood that Cherokees used to make pipe stems) stake into his heart. They called this being Stonecoat because he wore a coat made of overlapping scales of stone. That's what made him so hard to kill. The Cherokees would shoot arrows at him and they would bounce off him like off of chain mail. Then the Cherokees piled wood around him and burned him. While he was burning, his spirit ascended into heaven. As his spirit went up, it sang all the songs to help in the hunting and recited all the prayers for all the different diseases. Before that the Cherokees just had whatever songs or prayers they would dream of, plus the herbs. From that time on, they not only had those seven group ceremonies that God gave them, but they had prayers for each sickness plus the songs to help hunt the animals. For example, they say deer will give you rheumatism if you don't sing certain songs. God, through Stonecoat, gave those songs to the Cherokees so they wouldn't get the rheumatism. It happened just as God had said it would.

Now the Cherokees were back on the white path again and they lived in peace and prosperity for several hundred years. They had no warfare except maybe some defensive warfare, because all that war that was taking place with the northern tribes and the Creeks slacked off. This was about 1400 or a little earlier.

There was a couple of things that happened not long after that. One was that the Cherokee doctors became corrupt. There was all the new medicine and all these new ceremonies that the chiefs and doctors had control of, so some of these doctors began to get big-headed and fiesty. They tried to set themselves up like gods to rule the people
and to pass their position along to their nephews and to put a set of
permanent rulers over the people. The Cherokees didn't like it but they
were afraid of them. There was one doctor who decided that he wanted a
married woman. While her husband was off somewhere hunting, he made
medicine and drew that woman to him. I'm not sure on this, he may have
just went and got her because everyone was scared of him. When the husband
came back, he got so mad he took his ax and killed that doctor. Then all
the other people rose up and killed all those corrupt doctors and their
families. They say the name of this family of doctors was Ani Kutani,
but I think it was really the name of the whole caste of doctors. Any-
way the people got rid of those corrupt doctors but they didn't lose any
of the medicine.

The other thing that happened after that vision in the Smoky Mountains
was that a lot of the Indian tribes started stirring around and migrating.
The Cherokees stayed where they were in the mountains and pretty soon
they saw Mexicans coming through the country. The old Cherokees used
to say that the old time Mexicans had the fire just like the Cherokees
and that they set a big store by the Thunder. If you look at their flag
or their money you will see the Thunder's messenger and his bracelet,
the eagle and the rattlesnake, pictured on them. The Mexicans were
traveling in family groups, maybe a man and his wife and children and
several others. Now the Mexicans had been coming into the south for
years to trade, but the Cherokees said that now they were just like bees
going hither and yon.

Not long after that the Cherokees saw something come out of the
south. It was a funny looking animal. It had four legs and two heads
(at least that's what they thought). One of its heads was dressed in
something like the Stonecoat had worn. The coat was made of overlapping
flat "rocks" except the rocks shown when the sun hit them. They watched
that animal for a long time. There were also some bearded men walking
along who had the same kind of coats on. What the Cherokees had been
seeing, of course, was a horse and rider. They had never seen a horse
and rider before. They thought it was all one animal with four legs
and two necks. They saw that it was something like a man when one head
got off the animal, but they didn't know if the being was human or not.
The Cherokees got into a fight with them. The strange beings were
powerful in fighting because their horses would run and scare the
Indians. The Indians sent some young ladies down to their camps to
find out if they were humans. The ladies came back the next day and
said that they were men sure enough. Still the chiefs weren't satisfied.
They thought that maybe the strangers were men with some kind of spiritual
power because the chiefs had never seen those big animals like giant dogs
before. They had never seen the glistening rocks that the beings wore
over their bodies for armour, nor the crossbows and swords they carried.
The Cherokees figured that they must have some kind of spiritual power.
The Cherokees captured several of them. They threw a couple of the
beings over a big cliff. They hit the ground and died. The Indians
threw a couple of others into a big pool in the river and they drowned.
Now the Cherokees thought that if they had some spiritual power they
would be able to fly and to breath underwater. They couldn't, so the
chiefs figured they were just regular men who were great fighters, but
not spirits. The chiefs let them go on through the Cherokee country.
They went off to the west and the Cherokees never saw them again for
many years. That was the Spaniards.

The Cherokees didn't hold to the Seven Clan Law like they were
supposed to. The Four Mothers Law had lasted 1,000 years. The Cherokees
started breaking the Seven Clan Law after a few hundred years. The way they started breaking it was that they misused the hunting medicine that the Stonecoat had given them to help them hunt the animals. One man started using it on other people. He was jealous hearted. They say that it was used this way by this man for several years. People didn't understand what was killing everybody. Finally, one man was out hunting and he came down sick. He saw this man coming at him through the woods. He knew then that this must be the one who was making him sick by medicine. He was just strong enough to draw his bow and kill the evil one. So, the sick man saved himself but that was just the start of it. Pretty soon that kind of conjuring and using medicine the wrong way spread through the whole Cherokee tribe. Soon the Cherokees started using it on other tribes too, as war medicine. They took that hunting medicine and perverted it to conjuring one another and as war medicine against other tribes. Now, that war started up again worse than before.

The Cherokees used to go everywhere to make war. They used to go clear to New York to fight the Senecas. They used to run up this way clear to Manitou Island to fight the Ottawas. They would go to eastern North Carolina to fight the Tuscaroras and the Ani Soowali, the Lumbees. Of course, the Five Nations went everywhere - Georgia, Minnesota, Missouri, and all over. All the Indians were the same way. The Creeks ran from Alabama to New York and the Mohawks ran from New York to South Carolina to fight the Catawbas. The Indians usually went to war after they got their crops laid by and after they were through hunting, probably in November. Sometimes in the late spring after they got their crops planted they would go off to fight. It was bad. Lots of people were killed.

During that time the Cherokees lost some of their medicine. They say it was kept in a red trunk. I don't mean medicine songs or prayers,
but medicine objects with power. They had the red trunk in the big temple at Echota right by the Holy Fire. They had one man there appointed to guard it at all times.

One of the northern tribes, I believe it was the Delawares, came into the Cherokee country in the fall when most of the Cherokees were out in their hunting camps. You know, Cherokees used to live in villages in warm weather but as soon as the crops were in people would scatter to their hunting camps. They might go clear to Kentucky. Kentucky was a favorite hunting ground for people; also in the Nashville basin, southwest Virginia and over east of the Blue Ridge Mountains in central North Carolina. Anyhow, this northern tribe came into Echota when most of the people were away and they burned the temple and took that red trunk. Some people say the Cherokees made wampum belts after that vision in the Smoky Mountains in order to write down a record of the Seven Clan Law. Well if they did, I think they lost those wampum belts, I think they may have been in that red trunk. I don't know for sure but I do know the wampum belts that we have now don't come from that early time, they come from later. If the Cherokees made wampum belts right after that vision, I would guess that they probably lost them when those northern tribes hit them.

The next thing the Cherokees noticed was that the war got a lot worse. The Five Nations were especially bad. There was a little tribe called the Coushattas, Koosati in Cherokee, that lived west of modern Chattanooga, just about where the Tennessee River crosses into Alabama. There is an island there called Long Island and that is where the Coushattas lived. There couldn't have been over two or three thousand of them. They didn't all live on that island but that was their head town and the rest
lived around there close. Well, the Five Nations jumped on them and drove them out of there. The Coushattas went south and joined the Creeks for a long time and later moved over to southern Louisiana.

The war picked up and a lot of tribes were stirring around. The Cherokees thought that stirring around was because the warfare was picking up. That was true but there was another reason that will become clear. The world was about to turn over.

The Black Mountains near Ashville, North Carolina where the Hunter kept the game
The Great Serpent Mound (above)
The Head Fire on the Upper Ohio River (below)
Modern Cahokia (above)
Clingmans Dome the sacred mountain (below)