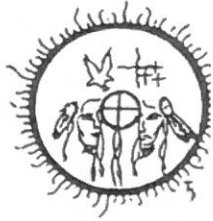




1. Hastiin Klah ca 1925



2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations



2. Kuilix 1846



3. Osh Tisch 1928

We Are Part of a Tradition

In many of our cultures before the arrival of Europeans to North America, "Two-Spirited" referred to an ancient teaching. Our Elders tell us of people who were gifted among all beings because they carried two spirits: that of male and female. It is told that women engaged in tribal warfare and married other women as there were men who married other men. These individuals were looked upon as a third gender in many cases and in almost all cultures they were honoured and revered. Two-Spirited people were often the visionaries, the healers and the medicine people. They were respected as fundamental components of our ancient culture and societies. This is our guiding force as well as our source of strength. This is the ancient heart of Two-Spirited People.

Today, Two-Spirited People are Native people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, other gendered, third/fourth gendered individuals that walk carefully between the worlds and between the genders. Unfortunately, due to many of the colonizing forces and experiences that Native People have gone through, the roles of Two-Spirit people have been lost in our consciousness and many Native People have adopted the homophobic attitudes that are present in today's society. With the coming of the Seventh Generation Two-Spirits are slowly relearning their traditional roles in Native Communities.



5. Charlie the Weaver 1895

Ongoing education for all the Native communities, along with the Two-Spirit youth, is very important to our future. We believe that only when Two-Spirit People are brought back to their respected places as teachers, artists and healers will all Native People of Turtle Island, and by extension, the world, begin massive healing of spirit. We begin by greeting one another.

~Doe

Hastiin Klah ca 1925 - famous Navajo *nadleehi* who created a new genre: weaving the sandpaintings into large tapestries. Source: *Changing Ones Third and Fourth Genders in Native North America*. Will Roscoe. p 61

Pend d'Oreille woman warrior Kuilix in battle against the Crows. Source: *Changing Ones*. p 78

Famous Crow Osh Tisch lived entire life as a *bote* in women's dress. Source: *The Spirit and the Flesh Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture*. Walter L. Williams. Plate 13.

We-wha, renowned Zuni *lhamana* who had a major role in all of the community's political and spiritual activities. Source: *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Plate 9.

Navajo, Charlie the Weaver dressed both distinct from men and women. Source: *Changing Ones*. p 42.



4. We-wha 1885

history

In our culture, before the Europeans came to North America, "2-Spirit" referred to an ancient teaching. Our Elders tell us of people who were gifted among all beings because they carried two spirits: that of male and female. It is told that women engaged in tribal warfare and married other women as there were men who married other men. These individuals were looked upon as a third gender in many cases and in almost all cultures they were honoured and revered.

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"Our Elders tell us of people who were gifted among all beings because they carried two spirits: that of male and female."

At our 1992 Annual General Meeting, we adopted the name 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations to honour our ancestral past and reclaim our Aboriginal identity. As our 2-Spirited community is unique, so are our issues and our organization. We are members of a group of people whose way of life has been drastically altered by historical circumstance.

Since European colonization, the existence of the Two Spirit community has been systematically denied and culturally alienated from the Aboriginal identity. 2 Spirit members bear witness to this activity in the form of racism, sexism and homophobia in the courts, the streets, the education system, the media and in other lesbian and gay organizations within the dominant Canadian society.

