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Great Spirit, as you empower the flowers to the brightness of spring color, I honor my long winter of introspection and bring forth my new beginnings. Mother Earth, I plant my love, my seeds, from the sacred gourd of plenty into your gracious land. I listen for the language of the drums, the symbols of the sacred shields, to enlighten me. I pull back the bow of my being in expectations of new acts of power. I set the arrow of my intent, as my spirit begins to grow. Thank you for honoring my sacred garden and the seeds that I have imparted to you with my trust and innocence. May I hear the winds of communication from you, Great Spirit, as I walk this great Mother Earth as she awakens in beauty. HO!

Spring is akin to the beginning cycle of life. Spring is when the seeds are planted. During wintertime, you hibernate and hold close to you all that you have accomplished during the year, and you discard what no longer serves you so that in the spring, in the first planting of the year, you have a sense of what it is that you need to accomplish in the months ahead. As a warrior of spirit, you need to choose your target. You need to define that target and understand what is needed to take you toward your goals.

Planting seeds requires great care. You must first till the soil and choose the fertilizer carefully. Symbolically, this includes the education of your body so that you are ready for what is next, so that you are physically capable of carrying out what is needed for the planting. Then you gather your seeds, or bring forth the seeds you have saved throughout the past years, and you choose the seeds that are important. In a sense, this is like an archer making sure that the bow is well aimed. You are gathering energy. When you plant a seed, you are planting and cultivating energy so that life force will find its way toward the light and blossom and become a manifested reality. A plant will then grow into full bloom as the seasons turn. You are gathering your forces so that when the planting happens in the springtime, life will surely follow.

Many of my teachers in the Sisterhood of the Shields have shown me how important it is for us to honor the land, the plants and all things that grow. Early in my training, Agnes and Ruby introduced me to working with gourds. Gourds are one of the oldest known domesticated plants in the world. They were used as musical instruments and as vessels for food and drink even before pottery was invented.

When gourd seeds are planted in the spring, they need warmth throughout their growing season before they are harvested in the fall. Gourds also require cross pollination. Some varieties take pollination during the day, but ornamental gourds, which can be used to make rattles and other instruments, are pollinated at night by various moths, depending upon the climate and area in which they are grown.

In *Shakkai, Woman of the Sacred Garden*, I wrote about being introduced to gourds in a new and very special way. In many shamanic teachings, gourds are used to hold one's 'hu,' our life force or spirit. Symbolically, the gourd seeds represent the seeds of all of the potential that every one of us has within ourselves. These are the seeds of our deepest selves, the universe of life and our inner essence that animate our being.

Close your eyes, if you will, please, and focus on this image, and see a bamboo plant before you...

You open your eyes and notice you are in a forest of gently waving foliage. You hear the whisper of the wind all around you, almost like the ocean's waves breaking onto shore. You see a young woman running past you. She is young, with thick dark hair flying behind her. She stops, nearly out of breath, and motions for you to follow. You notice that she is holding a large, beautiful gourd in front of her.

You jog behind her for a bit, and then you both slow down as you approach a clearing in the bamboo forest. There is an elderly Japanese woman sitting there, dressed in a simple silver gray kimono, her white hair held in a top-knot with a pink and green silk ribbon.

The young woman gives this beautiful elderly woman the gourd that she has been carrying, bows and then sits to the left of the older woman.

"Come, sit here," the woman says to you. Her name is Shakkai, and she motions to a tatami mat set into the indentation of a large brown stone across from her. As you sit, she pours tea from an old, ornate silver tea service that looks European.

You take the tea, and although you don't want to appear rude, you have a question about the gourd, which is sitting on beautiful red silk pillow embroidered with yellow and orange dragons. As if she can read your mind, Shakkai laughs and picks up the gourd.

"Tell me, what is the similarity between you, this gourd, and the stone you are sitting on?" she asks.

You think of several things, but before you can answer, you hear a giggle from above you.

Looking up, you see an elder woman entwined around a branch. It is the being known as Old Holy Crooked One. She nods to Shakkai and the young woman, and they bow to her as they leave.

"This is what you all have in common," The Old Holy Crooked One says to you. "You, this stone and this special gourd were all seeded here from the stars. Come with me, and I'll show you the inside of the gourd."

You barely have time to put down your tea cup before you feel a tugging sensation in your mid-section, around your navel. You feel as if you are being turned inside-out. The air turns pale blue, then lavender, as you travel through a tunnel and find yourself in a large, bright womblike cave. You look around you, and realize that you and Old Holy Crooked One are sitting inside the gourd.

"What are we doing in Shakkai's gourd?" you ask.

"This is not Shakkai's gourd," she replies. "It would not be appropriate for you. You are inside of YOUR gourd, your own place of potential."

Curious, you look around, noticing all of the seeds nearby. You begin to pick them up, as they sit germinating within the gourd. You hold one, and feel a familiar ache, a dream you wish to realize, a goal you've had, perhaps for a long time, but did not feel ready to pursue.

"Pick up the seeds that call to you, so that you may plant them and tend them and help them to grow," the elder woman says as you begin to pick and choose shiny, luminescent seeds.

Some of the seeds fit into your pockets, others are the size of your palm. Old Holy Crooked One gives you a pouch to contain all of your seeds. You tie the pouch to your waist with a thin sash which the ancient woman gives you. Then, she roots around in the wall of the gourd.

"Here," she says, "take this one and keep it in your place of power." She indicates your navel area.

You look at this large seed, which is opaque and vibrates with life. As you look at this marvelous and magical seed, you can see various planets, stars, and galaxies swirling within it. You place the seed with both of your hands onto your shaman center. Feeling the warmth, you look down, and the seed has disappeared, but you know that it is within your own sacred center.

You can hear the wind picking up outside the gourd walls, and the swish and sway of the bamboo leaves. Old Holy Crooked One places one gnarled arm around your shoulder, and you feel the turned-inside out sensation again.

Opening your eyes, you see yourself sitting on the tatami mat on the stone. The young woman and Shakkai are collecting the tea set. You stand and bow

to them, and the three of you move in opposite directions. The Old Holy One is nowhere to be seen, but you can hear her laughter floating on the breeze. As you walk onto a new trail filled with fragrant flowers and new blooms, you touch the pouch with your fingertips, and you know that it safely holds all of your seeds waiting to be planted.

We are all pilgrims on the path to the unknown. We sit in awe and wonder at the architecture of power. Ripen the receptive void within you, like a womb accepting a seed. Open yourself to the unknowable, to that which is unfamiliar to you, so that the energy of what you need in order to be whole can flow into you. When you think of yourself as an entity separate from power, you will obstruct the current, and power will defeat you. Identify the form of power you want - what you want to accomplish, build, create, or be - and become that, so that there is no separating you.

"Unknown" card, *THE POWER DECK*.

In love and spirit,
Lynn Andrews

Registration for the 17th session of my four-year "Mystery School," The Lynn Andrews Center for Sacred Arts and Training, will remain open through March 15. www.lynnandrews.com/mys-school.htm. *This is a time of great planetary change. Many of the great calendars are ending now because we are entering a new age of wisdom. We have the possibility of creating a new world of heightened understanding. We live in a time of great vision. The great libraries of knowledge will be opened to many from different paths and religions. There is much for you to learn, but truth is never reached without struggle on the human path.*

Make your plans now to join me along with a community of women and men from all over the world for four days of magic, mystery, sacred ceremony, dreaming, drumming and the creation of sacred art at my **22nd Annual Joshua Tree Gathering on the Mesa: Bright Cloud Woman and the Live Arrow, May 27 - May 30, 2010, at the beautiful Ghost Ranch in Abiquiu, New Mexico. www.lynnandrews.com/jt.htm.** *Stories are never written about people who try to live safely. At Joshua Tree, we push the envelope of all that we can be; we challenge ourselves every day to become more, to shine the light within each of us a little more brilliantly in everything that we touch.*

Saturday, April 17th, 12pm - 1:30pm VIP Luncheon with Lynn Andrews, The Body Soul & Spirit Expo in Calgary, Canada, at Maverick Special Events Dinning Room located upstairs from the Body Soul & Spirit Expo. Special discount is available for [LACSAT Students](#) otherwise you can get more info on being a [Special Guest](#). Menu info is available on my [website calendar](#) for April.

Saturday, April 17, 3pm Lynn will be delivering the Keynote Speech, The Body Soul & Spirit Expo in Calgary, Canada, Those of you who purchased Luncheon tickets will get special seating for this event.

Sunday, April 18th, 4:00 p.m. - The Body Soul & Spirit Expo in Calgary, Canada, is proud to feature a special workshop by *New York Times* and internationally best-selling author and shaman healer Lynn Andrews, "*2012: The Crossing Times*." There are still a limited number of seats available for this one-of-a-kind offering. Register and reserve your seat for the workshop. [Visit the website.](#)

April 2010 - Jan 2011 Writing Spirit, The School with Lynn Andrews! *Join me in an exciting writing adventure of inspiration and creativity. You will certainly feel shifted after this course, as I have great plans for anyone stepping into this arena of intent. Experience the mystery of shamanism as you travel out of old shadows into your special light of your writing spirit.* This 10 month course begins April 2010 and goes through January 2011. **Registration is currently open!** Download the information packet to learn more and to register. Visit my [Writing Spirit School page](#) for more info.

The 2010 enrollment drive for my International Councils of the Whistling Elk is now under way. Please come to www.lynnandrews.com/councils.htm to locate a Council near you or to receive information on starting a Council in your area. *Councils meet every month in cities, towns and villages worldwide, as well as in cyberspace, to share in the sacred tasks and teachings of the Sisterhood of the Shields, providing you with the sacred space and opportunity to explore your Shaman self in deep and often profound ways.* You are all invited the annual meeting of my **Joshua Tree Council of the Whistling Elk** at this year's **Joshua Tree on the Mesa Gathering, May 27-30, 2010.** I will see you there!

Out and About with Lynn Andrews:

Tuesday, March 23, 9-10 a.m. Pacific Daylight time (“Los Angeles”), Kindred Spirit Radio Show with host Lynn Andrews. Listen at www.HealthyLife.net. Lynn's guest will be Neale Donald Walsch, celebrated author of the *Conversations with God* series of books.

www.nealedonaldwalsch.com

Schedule a private phone session with Lynn.

<http://www.lynnandrews.com/phonecall.htm>.

Enjoy previous issues of my InSpirit Newsletter at

<http://www.lynnandrews.com/newsletter.htm#Previous>

Discover my Daily Inspirational Teachings at

<http://lynnandrews.com/dailywisdom.php> .

Enjoy my regular monthly column in *Kinetics Magazine*, published by Dannion and Kathryn Brinkley. www.kineticsmag.com .



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