

Eagles in Potawatomi

During ceremonies in which eagle feathers are used, the eagle feathers become animate. When the eagle feather is not being used the Potawatomi word used is

KNOMIGWEN

When the eagle feather is being used in a ceremony the word used is

KNO MIGWENEK

Works Cited

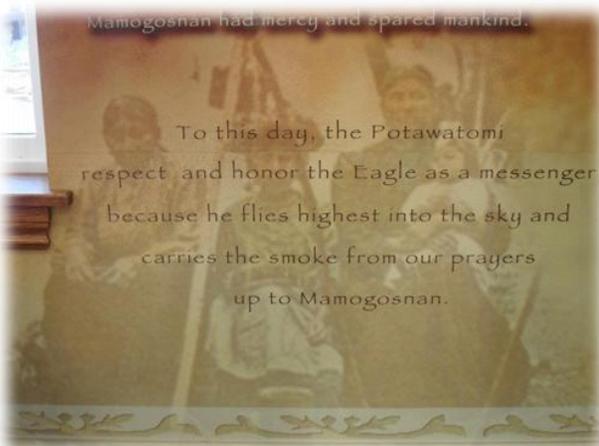
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Bodewadmi Kno

Potawatomi Eagle



The Eagle Story

The Potawatomi legend of the eagle begins with the creator, Mamogosan becoming angry with humans because they were not living properly. The women did not dress appropriately, they fought, and they did not use tobacco in their ceremonies. Mamogosan decided to destroy humanity because of this, but Eagle asked if he could spare the humans. The creator said that if Eagle could find people living properly then he would spare humanity. So, Eagle flew for three days looking for these people. He flew east, west, and south but did not find any such people. The creator gave him one more opportunity to save search, so Eagle flew North, the direction of the Potawatomi villages. Eagle found that these people used tobacco in their ceremonies, the women dressed correctly, and they were peaceful. Eagle returned to the creator and told him not to destroy humanity because of these people. The creator spared humanity and even today the Potawatomi revere eagles because they fly and carry prayers to Mamagosnan.



Receiving an eagle feather

An eagle feather is gifted from one person to another. In addition to receiving an eagle feather when one is named, a person can be given an eagle feather for several occasions such as graduating high school or having a child. The ceremony when the feather is given changes with each person gifting the eagle feather, but it is usually smudged before being given.

Eagle Feather etiquette

After an eagle feather has been gifted, the person who received it can do what they see fit with it as long as the feather is respected properly. Some are used in ceremonies like in talking circles or when praying. During talking circles the person holding the eagle feather is the speaker. During prayers the feather sends the prayers to the Creator making them feel closer to Him. Others chose to keep it in a cedar box to protect it and many times the feather will be wrapped in red fabric because red is a significant color for Potawatomi people.

Significance of having an eagle aviary

"The aviary is much more than a source of feathers for us, it is one of the many ways we are trying to live in the right way and do what we can to honor our brother the eagle and all of creation."

-Kelli Mosteller