

Gae Ho Hwako (Norma Jacobs) and the Circles of Q da gaho d̥:s, *Q da gaho d̥:s: Reflecting on Our Journeys*. edited by Timothy B. Leduc. Kingston & Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022. 318 Pages. ISBN 978-0-2280-1197-2. \$37.95 Hardcover.

This anthology was developed through three in-person sharing circles, each of which informs one section of the book, and a corresponding website. The circles flowed from Elder Gae Ho Hwako's (Norma Jacobs) teachings on the spirit of the Ohén:ton karihwatéhkwen (the Hodinohso:ni Thanksgiving address) and the teachings of the Tekeni Teyoha:te (Two-Row Wampum). Gae Ho Hwako is of the Wolf Clan in the Cayuga Nation. She is a Longhouse Faith keeper who has taught and worked as an Elder in Residence. Contributors include Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars, authors, and community activists with connections to Wilfrid Laurier University and/or Six Nations of the Grand River. Each reflection is grounded in Onkwehónwe (Original/Indigenous People) ways of knowing, understanding, and being. The authors prioritize relationality by holding space for the reader and welcoming them into Q da gaho d̥:s. They encourage dialogic reflection while creating space for poetry and prayer, respectfully merging Indigenous and Western epistemologies in the spirits of the Tekeni Teyoha:te and the Ohén:ton karihwatéhkwen. Gae Ho Hwako urges us to return to Q da gaho d̥:s, the sacred meeting space between the two purple rows of the Tekeni Teyoha:te, which represent the canoe and the ship, where the Tekeni Teyoha:te was originally solidified between Indigenous and settler Nations. She asks us to recall our original promises to remain culturally distinct while maintaining peaceful, respectful, friendships between the canoe and the ship.

Gae Ho Hwako opens the circles with the Ohén:ton karihwatéhkwen. Kawennakon (Bonnie Whitlow) builds upon Gae Ho Hwako's words by inviting readers to direct their thoughts to giving thanks as we move through each circle following the progression of the Ohén:ton karihwatéhkwen. In the first circle, we are asked to reflect on Onkwe'shón:'a (the People), the second, Yethinihsténha tsi yohwentsyá:te (Mother Earth), and the third, Shonkwaya'tishon (The Creator) and other spiritual helpers. Timothy B. Leduc invites readers to enter Q da gaho d̥:s, to Esehsgwaowhaneh (expand the teachings) of each circle by reflecting on their experiences, stories, knowledges, gifts, and responsibilities. Blank pages hold this space for readers in each circle. Elder Awnjibenayseekwe (Banakonda Kennedy-Kish Bell) leads us toward the first circle by reminding us that gratitude is essential for harmony, balance, and good relations, and is a necessity of Mino-Bimaadiziwin (the good life).

Gae Ho Hwako opens the first circle, Onkwe'shón:'a, by reminding us that the teachings of the Tekeni Teyoha:te contain a bundle of instructions that can help us navigate negative behaviours in relationships. She speaks of the importance of clear communication to the restoration of balance and reminds us of our interconnectedness with all that is of Yethinihsténha tsi yohwentsyá:te. She urges us to return to Q da gaho d̥:s to unweave the impacts of colonization on our ceremonies so that we can support one another in peace, friendship, and respect. Kawennakon adds to Gae Ho Hwako's words by asking us to bring our attention to the importance of orators and storytelling in Hodinohso:ni teachings. She asks us to reflect on how the academy has violated the Tekeni Teyoha:te through extractive practices that contradict Onkwehónwe protocols for authenticating knowledge keepers and identifying experts, and contributed to the erasure of Onkwehónwe systems of knowledge and stylistic conventions, in favour of the ship's mechanisms for assigning authority. She advocates for the creation of legitimate and original Hodinohso:ni knowledge, grounded in Hodinohso:ni teachings and ways of knowing. Shelly Hachey facilitates healing by reflecting on the difficulties of existing in both the canoe and the ship through Q da gaho d̥:s and

stresses the importance of maintaining healthy boundaries between them. She also reminds us of our relations with all living beings, and the necessity to include them in the work of reconciliation. Timothy B. Leduc expands the teachings by reflecting on his responsibilities to Q da gaho d̥:s from the perspective of the ship. Elder Awnjibenayseekwe gently guides us out of the first circle through poetry and prayer. In this circle, we are asked to reflect on relationships between the people of the canoe and the people of the ship. We are asked to return to Q da gaho d̥:s to clarify and renew our obligations to one another in peace, friendship, and respect.

Gae Ho Hwako leads us into the second circle urging us to search within our cultural teachings when trying to understand who we are, as people experiencing constant change. Our ceremonies strengthen our relationship with Yethinihsténha tsi yohwentsyá:te. They provide us with a bundle of instructions to give thanks for the gifts Mother Earth provides that nurture our bodies. Yethinihsténha tsi yohwentsyá:te, like all mothers, is responsible for giving life. Each year, she begins the cycle of bringing new life into the world. The ship's waves have caused great destruction to these cycles and brought about detrimental cultural and environmental change because many have forgotten Yethinihsténha tsi yohwentsyá:te's role as life giver, nurturer, and sustainer. Lianne C. Leddy reflects on Gae Ho Hwako's teachings about the sacredness of giving life, our connections to land and water, and our responsibilities to future generations. She reminds us that there are many ways to be life sustainers and nurturers. Kitty Lynn Lickers situates Indigenous women in late adulthood life stages within Q da gaho d̥:s. She notes that Indigenous women in this space have been branded as either matriarchs or broken women, always constrained within the violent historical and ongoing impacts of colonization. She brings our attention to their struggle to embrace their roles as bringers of sustenance to their communities and asks us to consider storytelling as ceremony, to strengthen connections with Yethinihsténha tsi yohwentsyá:te and past and future generations. Elder Awnjibenayseekwe guides us out of the second circle by reminding us that Yethinihsténha tsi yohwentsyá:te does not belong to the ship or the canoe, rather, she is the first mother to both. In this circle, we are asked to reflect on our relationship with Yethinihsténha tsi yohwentsyá:te and the importance of acknowledging her through ceremony and action, and we are reminded of her connections to women as givers, nurturers, and sustainers of life.

Gae Ho Hwako welcomes us into the third circle by asking us to give thanks for Shonkwaya'tishon and other spiritual helpers. She asks us to bring our attention to the spiritual beings that guide and support us in our journeys. She directs us to our dreams, stories, and experiences, as important spaces for learning and growth. Barbara-Helen Hill adds to Gae Ho Hwako's words by asking us to reflect on our friendships with nature. She reminds us of the friendships between plants, animals, humans, and spirits that are unseen, as well as the connections that were in place long before the ship arrived. She urges us to think about truth and reconciliation as something not only between Indigenous Peoples and the Canadian Government, but within ourselves. Giselle Dias speaks about their relationship with a spruce tree, and how this relationship helped them understand how colonial prisons actively separate people from the healing potential of friendships with other beings. Dias reminds us that the energy of friendship comes with the responsibility of being in a reciprocal relationship. Timothy B. Leduc reminds us that we are in daily relationships with all beings that we offer thanks to in the Ohén:ton karihwatéhkwén and these beings are always sharing with us in the spirit of friendship. Elder Awnjibenayseekwe leads us out of the third circle by reminding us of the coming generations and our obligations to become good ancestors. In this circle we are asked to reflect on our relationships with Shonkwaya'tishon

and other spiritual helpers/friends. We are asked to consider how we give thanks for, and nurture, our relationships with all beings.

Gae Ho Hwako closes the circles by reminding us to reflect on our purpose. She urges us to return to our ancestral teachings through the ceremony of Ohén:ton karihwatéhkwén and the teachings of the Tekeni Teyoha:te to renew our relationships with Onkwe'shón:'a, Yethinihsténha tsi yohwentsyá:te, and Shonkwaya'tíshon and other spiritual helpers. She encourages readers to expand the teaching beyond what can be seen and heard, to ask questions, seek answers and find clarity. She reminds us that the healing of being in ceremony can start with the simple acts of giving thanks daily and creating space to nurture our relationships with all our relations in peace, friendship, and respect.

Esehsgwaowhaneh. In acceptance of the offer to step into the circle and expand the teachings, I offer my reflection on the circles, the ceremony of Ohén:ton karihwatéhkwén, and the teachings of the Tekeni Teyoha:te. I am an Indigenous woman. I don't belong to a clan, but my father is Mohawk from Six Nations. I have lived most of my life with one foot in the ship and one foot in the canoe, and Shelly Hachey's reflection about the ship welcoming her with open arms so long as she assimilated, and the canoe often seeming inaccessible, resonated. For most of my life, I have existed in Q da gaho dę:s, trying to figure out how to honour my roots in the canoe as well as my roots in the ship. I have come to understand when people advise against this way of living, warning that rough waters will force you to choose a side, they are being truthful, not exclusionary. I am now in a place where I can dedicate time and energy to travelling that well-worn pathway along its roots to the sheltering branches of the Great Tree of Peace that Kawennakon mentions in her reflection, *Awehaode Communication: Journeying with Norma*. By returning to community, participating in ceremony, and focusing on my relationships with, and obligations to, Onkwe'shón:'a, Yethinihsténha tsi yohwentsyá:te, and Shonkwaya'tíshon and other spiritual helpers. I have had to make choices to leave certain relationships and situations behind. I found myself turning to this book for the reflections shared on friendship, Gae Ho Hwako's teachings about okyadaot (friendship as a supportive medicine) helped me to better understand my experience.

Kawennakon aptly quotes John Mohawk in her reflection, *Awehaode Communication: Journeying with Norma*, "It would be an [Iroquois] way of doing things to tell a story and to refuse to tell the listener what he/she should have learned from the story. The [Iroquois] pattern would be to tell a story and to ask the listener to use his/her own mind to see what they think the story means... different people at different stages of life are able to grasp and learn from different elements of a story at different moments." The authors of this anthology are not telling readers what or how to think. They are sharing their stories and asking readers to reflect on their own related knowledge and experience in Q da gaho dę:s. If the reader is willing to sit with the teachings in gratitude and reflect on their experiences in Q da gaho dę:s, they will come away with insight relevant to where they are in their journey, whether they are of the canoe, or the ship.

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