

SOME ANCIENT AND SOME
LESSER KNOWN SACRED PLACES

The Americas

BOLIVIA.

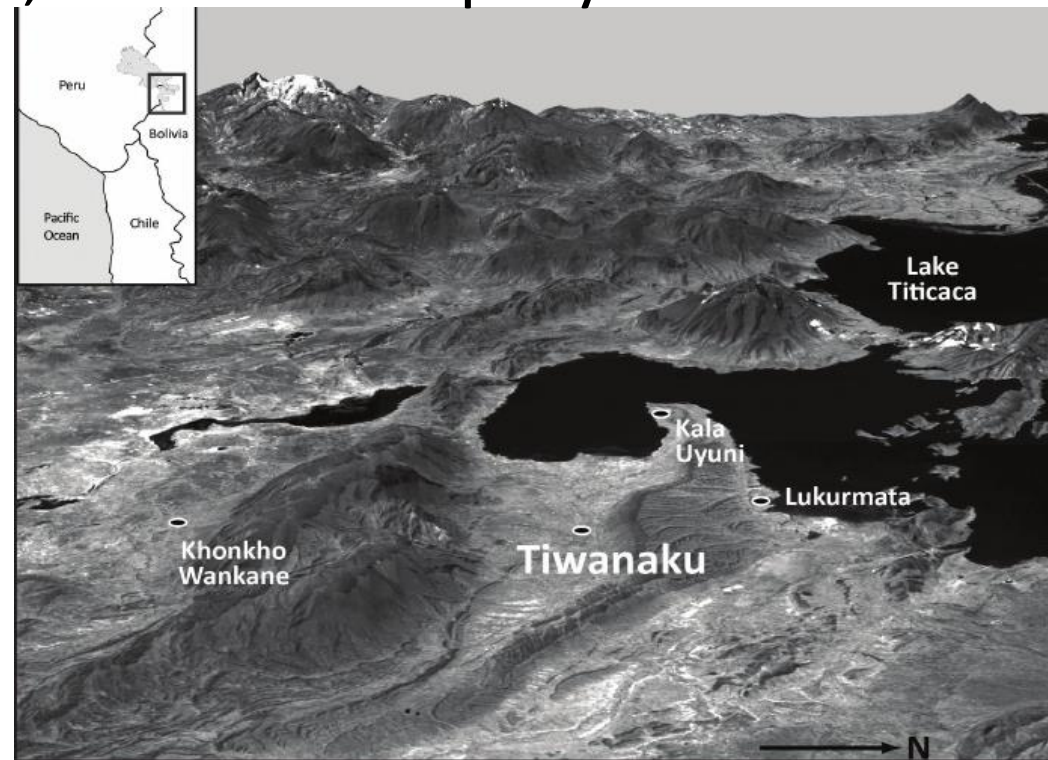
- Tiwanaku archaeological site includes a temple complex, of which Puma Punku is part.
- (also: Pumapunku).



Modern Tiwanaku.
ancient settlement.

Lukurmata was a secondary site near Lake Titicaca in Bolivia.

- It was a major ceremonial centre in the Tiwanaku state, a polity that dominated the south-central Andes from 400 – 1200CE.
- After the Tiwanaku state collapsed, Lukurmata rapidly declined.



The restored Gateway of the Sun from the Tiwanaku civilization in Bolivia.

- Tiwanaku is significant in Inca traditions because it is believed to be the site where the world was created.



Front and rear view 1903.

- Puma Punku = Door of the Puma.
- The (estimated) 10 tonne Gateway of the Sun is carved from a single block of Andesite granite.



Pumapunku.

- The largest of the stone blocks is 7.81m long, 5.17m wide, averages 1.07m thick, and is estimated to weigh about 131tonne.
- They are so precisely cut and smooth that they appeared to have been machined.



How did they produce such fine work and move such heavy rocks up to 15 km?

- The holes are so smooth that they also appear to have been drilled by machines.
- Enthusiasts that believe in ancient alien visitation love these sites.



Divider slide.

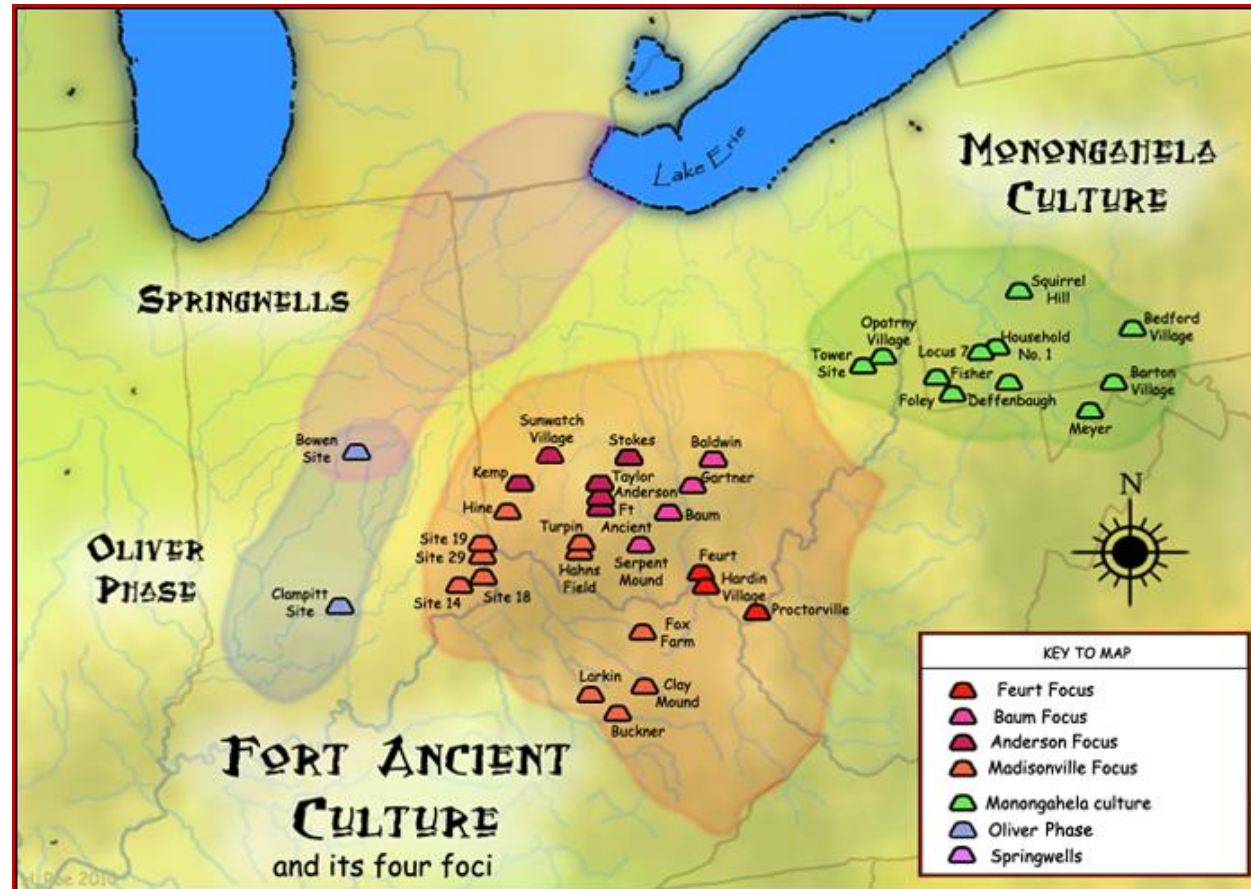


North America.



Fort Ancient people of southern Ohio(1000 – 1750CE)

- Red Indian?



Re-construction of SunWatch Indian village.

- Starting in about 1000 CE, groups in the Middle Ohio Valley adopted maize agriculture.
- They began settling in small, year-round nuclear family households and settlements of no more than 40 to 50 individuals.



Semi-nomadic culture.

- These small scattered settlements, located along terraces that overlooked rivers and sometimes on flood plains, would be occupied for short periods before the groups moved on to new locations.
- Assorted stone, bone and ceramic tools, including stone discoidals for chunky(a game, which involved hurling spears or sticks at a rolling disk called a chunky stone).



Unearth in Oklahoma in 1900.

- Chunky man about to hurl the discoidal.



Evolution to larger groups.

- By 1200CE the small villages began to coalesce into larger settlements of up to 300 people.
- They were occupied for longer periods, possibly up to 25 years. During the Early and Middle Fort Ancient period, the houses were designed as single-family dwellings.
- Later Fort Ancient buildings are larger multi-family dwellings.
- Settlements were rarely permanent, as the people commonly moved to a new location after one or two generations, when the natural resources surrounding the old village were exhausted.

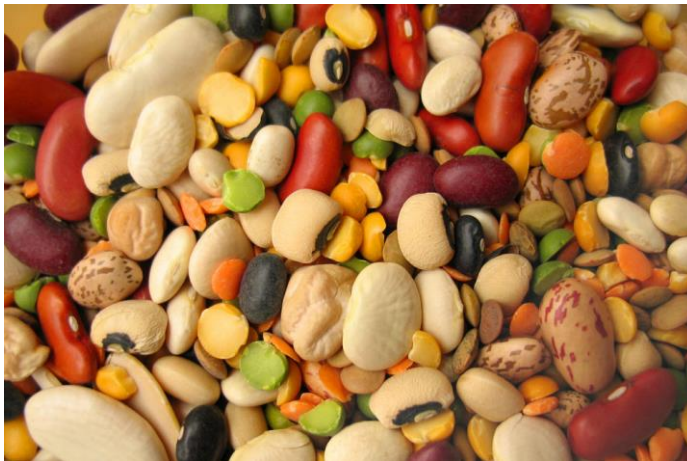
Restricted diet.

- The Fort Ancient are notable for their intensive reliance on corn agriculture.



Additions to their diet.

- As the population continued to grow, corn was supplemented with beans and squash.
- These three plants were grown together and were referred to by historic Native Americans as the “three sisters.”



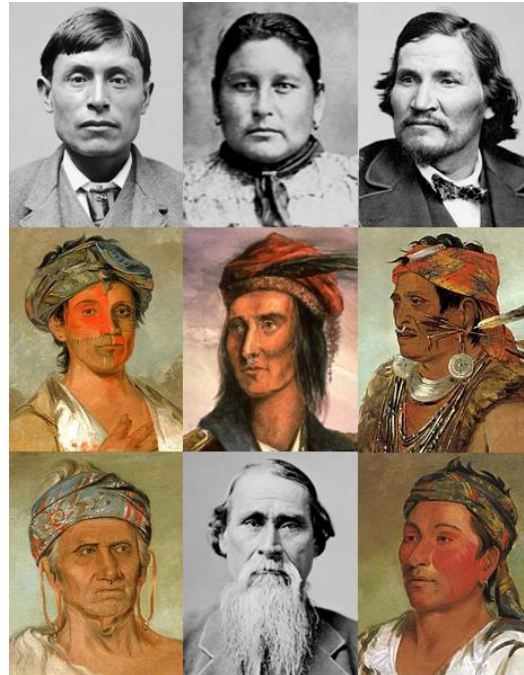
Serpent Mound, Ohio Brush Creek.

- It is suggested that this mound was formed by the Fort Ancient people to honour Halley's Comet(1066) or a supernova that shone during day and night, for two weeks, in 1070.



Where did they go?

- The Shawnee tribe is often described as the most likely historic descendants, though it is difficult for historians and archaeologists to find any definitive links.

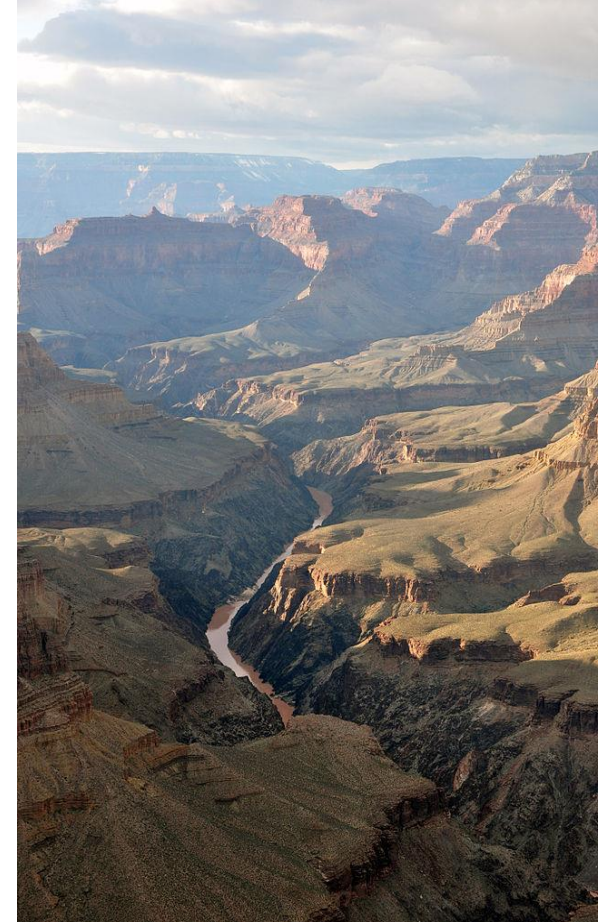


Another site.



Grand Canyon.

- According to the Hopi Indians their ancestors the Hisatsinom emerged into the canyon through an underground cave and dwell there still.
- Machu, guardian of the world form an agreement with the Hopi that, if they took the cloak of guardianship then they might stay.
- Various other tribes play a protective role too.

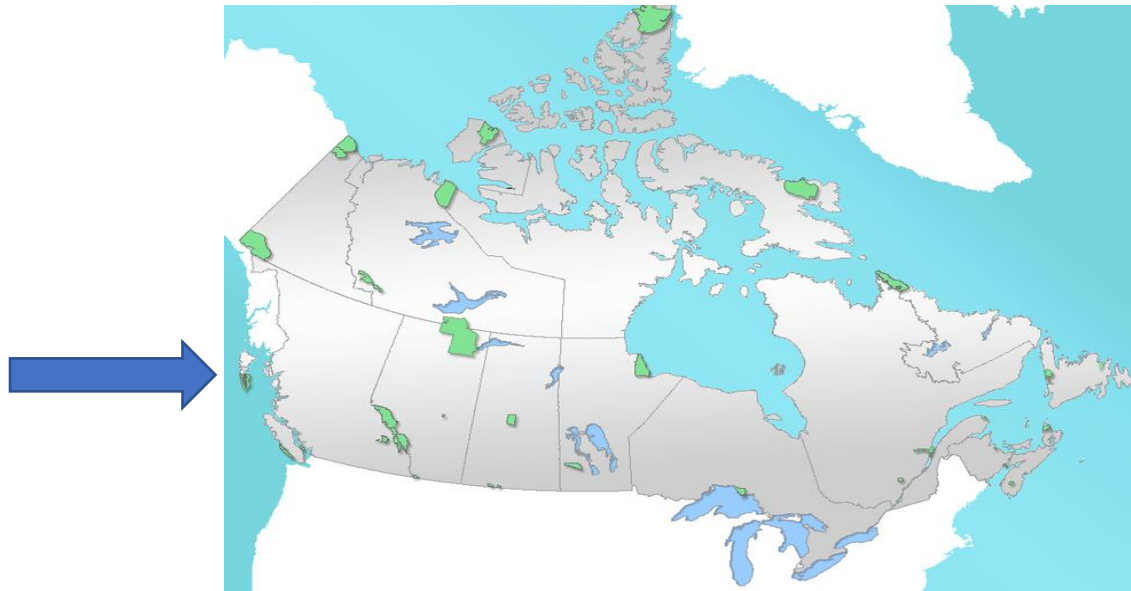


Another site.



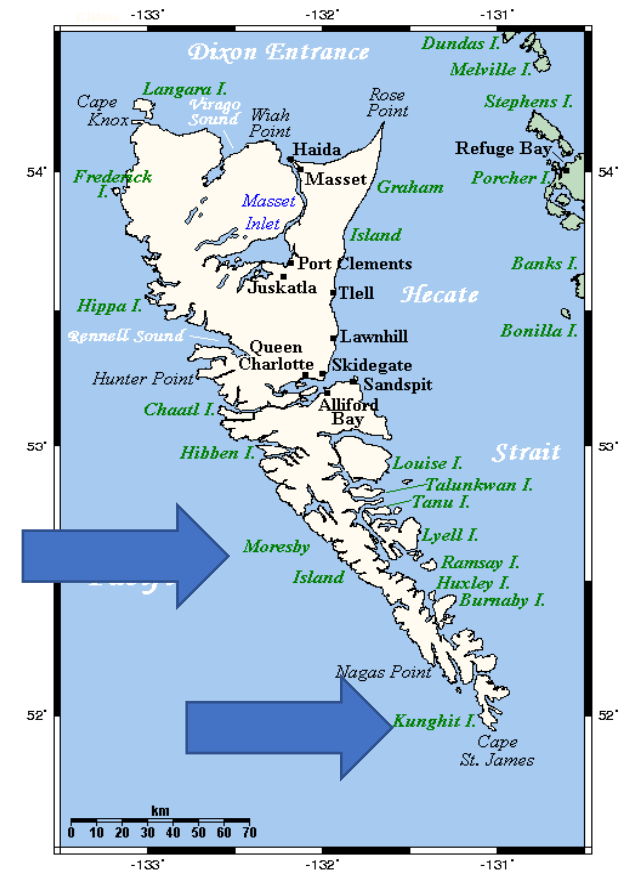
Totem poles on Ninstints.

- Ninstints is the usual name in English for S'Gang Gwaay Llanagaay ("Red Cod Island"), a village site of the Haida people and part of the Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site in Haida Gwaii on the North Coast of British Columbia, Canada.



Haida Gwaii = Haida Islands.

- Formerly Queen Charlotte Island.
- Gwaii Haanas National Park protects an archipelago of 138 islands, the largest being Moresby Island and the southernmost being Kunghit Island.
- **SGang Gwaay** (Anthony Island) is located to the west of Kunghit Island.
- SGang Gwaay, refers to the wailing sound made when winds push through a hole in the rocks at a certain tide level.



Religious Beliefs.

- Animals were classified as special types of people, more intelligent than humans and with the ability to transform themselves into human form.
- Animals were thought to live on land, in the sea, and in the sky in a social order that mirrored that of the Haida.
- Traditional beliefs have been largely displaced by Christianity, although many Haida still believe in reincarnation.

Haida Raven Dancer.



Oral traditions.

- In Northwest Coast culture, their customs, beliefs, and history were passed down orally through stories, songs, and dances.
- They had stories about why certain things occurred, for example, the changes in season.
- There were also stories about each group and how they first appeared in this world.
- All of these stories were passed down to subsequent generations.

Kwakwaka'wakw wolf dancer.



Spiritual beliefs.

- The people of the Northwest believed that they were surrounded, at all times, by supernatural beings interfering with the natural world.
- In their culture, spirits were connected to all living things.
- The only links between the spirit world and the natural world were the Shamans.

Traditional shaman.



Influencing the supernatural.

- It was a Shaman's job to cure the sick, to ensure that there was adequate food, and to influence the weather.
- The belief was that they had the power to do all those things through an ability to communicate with the spirit world.
- There were men and women Shamans, but usually they were men.

Tsimshian Shaman curing a boy.



A spiritual dimension to illness.

- When someone took ill, it was believed to be an intervention by the spirit world, or a loss of the person's soul.
- Shamans were the only people who communicated directly with the spirits, so they were the only ones who could cure the sick.
- Shaman's dance wand.



A woman shaman and a rattle.

- Shamans wore:
 - Bearskin robes
 - Aprons
 - Rattles
 - Skin drums
 - Charms
 - Necklaces
 - Masks (on some occasions)
- The Shamans used their rattles to summon up powers from the spirit world.
- Then they went into a trance, communicating directly with the spirits, asking them to cure the ill person.



The island is now part of a National Heritage park and thus uninhabited.

- Haida people have a continuing presence at S'Gang Gwaay and four other village sites between May to September as part of the Haida Gwaii Watchmen Program.
- Between two and four Watchmen live at each site serving as guardians to protect the natural and cultural heritage of these sites.
- Former Haida village: S'Gang Gwaay Llanagaay (Red Cod Island).



Family emblems.

Totem poles were large carved poles used to display the clan crest and social status of a family.

The poles were carved directly out of cedar trees, so some were up to 15 metres tall.

Most totem poles had both animal and human forms carved into them, usually representing the family crest.

Totem poles were usually painted black, red, blue, and sometimes white and yellow.

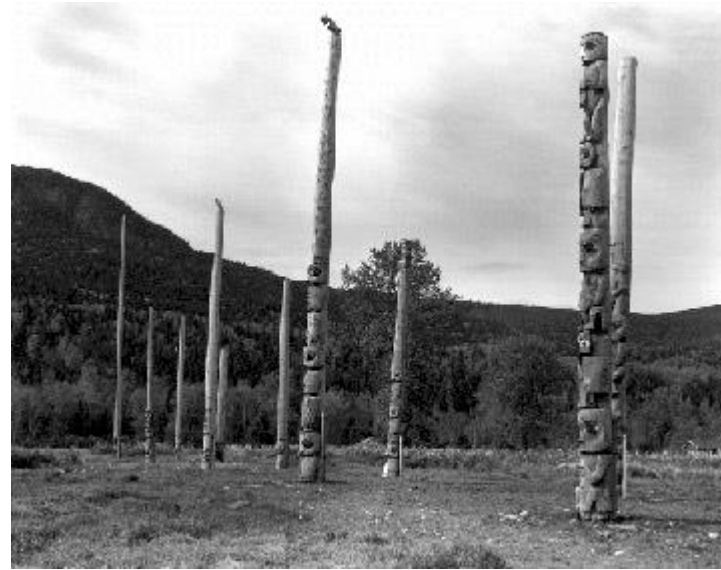
In Nuu-chah-nulth and Kwakwaka'wakw culture, a pole with a bird on top showed the house of the Chief.

It usually took help from most of the village to raise the totem pole.



Examples of totem poles.

- Nuu-chah-nulth Chief's house totem (left).



Another site.



Niagara Falls.

- According to Christopher Engels: 1000 Sacred Places: ‘The Iroquois tribe consider this place (*Niagara Falls*) to be a sacred place as it is the home of the creator divinity and god of life Manitou”.
- A view of the American, Bridal Veil and Horseshoe Falls from the Presidential Suite of the Sheraton Fallsview Hotel, Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada.



Iroquois confederacy.

I have some doubts about the information because there was never an Iroquois “tribe”; that was the name of a confederacy of 5, then 6 Indian Nations: Mohawk, Onondaga, Oneida, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora peoples.

Engels also states that the Indians believed that good spirits rose to the happy hunting grounds from the falls and the souls of the evil were abandoned to the turbulence of the waterfall, forever.

Bridal Veil Falls.



Another site.



Medicine Wheels.

- There are no written records of the purposes of these stone circles.
- The Medicine Wheel National Historic Landmark lies on top of the Bighorn Range in Wyoming, a desolate 2,940m high and only reachable during the warm summer months.



Some kind of ceremonial use.

- Sources vary as to its diameter: 24-30m.
- At the centre of the circle is a doughnut-shaped pile of stones, a cairn, connected to the rim by 28 spoke-like lines of stones.
- Six more stone cairns are arranged around the circle, most large enough to hold a sitting human.



Prayer offerings in the central cairn.

- The central cairn is about 3.6m in diameter and 60cm high.



They remain centres for spiritual interactions.

- Modern day prayer offering on the protective fence.



Summer solstice.

- Astrological alignment?



Previously called the Bighorn Medicine Wheel.

- The Medicine Wheel National Historic Landmark has similarities with Sundance sites of the plains Indians i.e. indigenous American culture.
- Sundance sites were huts with a central post and 28 radiating roof joists.



Plains Indian Sundance.

An important ceremony to the Native American people, the Sun Dance can be interpreted as meaning "Gaze at the Sun".

Some sources indicate that youths danced until they became entranced, wherein their totems were revealed to them.



From Encyclopaedia Of The Great Plains.1

The ceremony is highly variable because its performance is intimately connected to the authoritative guidance of visions or dreams that establish an individual relationship between one or more of the central participants and one or more spirit persons. In all cases, however, the primary meaning is understood to be the performance of acts of sacrifice in ritual reciprocity with spiritual powers so that the welfare of friends, family, and the whole people is enhanced.

Sundance Tree.



From Encyclopaedia Of The Great Plains.2

- The Arapaho, Cheyenne, Blackfoot, and Sioux nations all practice sacrificial acts of piercing the flesh, often described pejoratively as "torture" by outsiders.
- Others, such as the Ute, Shoshone, and Crow nations, perform sacrificial acts of embodying their spiritual intentions through fasting and intense dancing, but not through piercing.



Another site.



Buffalo Heart Mountain, near Cody, Wyoming.

- Named by the Crow Nation, it is believed to radiate supernatural power that cause endow senior members of the tribe to have visions.



Ritual.

- Members of the tribe would climb the mountain after having fasted, without water, for several days.
- Those who reached the summit would be granted visions.
- These visions were believed to endow the tribe with metaphysical strength in times of trouble.
- Crow Indians, c. 1878–1883.

