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Perform Agnihotra • Heal The Atmosphere

**Agnihotra at Medicine Wheel Gathering
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What is Medicine Wheel
From Vasant's Correspondence
Therapy Hut
In Satsang Mail**

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Cover

This was the opening ceremony where certain symbolic objects were placed within the Medicine Wheel, i.e., buffalo head. (Photograph courtesy of Phillip Liebman)

Agnihotra at Medicine Wheel Gathering East Coast U.S.A.

Sun Bear or Gheezis Mokwa is a Chipewewa-Metis medicine man. In the native American tradition a medicine person is one who is a healer and sacred teacher. Sun Bear was born on the White Earth Reservation in Minnesota and received his early training from his uncles who were medicine men. Sun Bear says, "To become a medicine man you need to study with a practicing medicine man and believe in what he does until you learn to walk upon the fire. The medicine I have comes from a long period of time spent working with other medicine people and from the visions I have had." Sun Bear began the Bear Tribe in 1970 and his visions and dreams have guided the tribe through its evolution to become a teaching and healing center.

The Bear Tribe Medicine Society is a nonprofit teaching and communications organization which runs a self-sufficient community on a farm near Spokane in Washington State. Sun Bear and his helpers Wabun and Shawnodese travel lecturing on the topics of self-reliance, earth awareness and traditional Native American philosophy.

The Bear Tribe organizes Medicine Wheel Gatherings throughout U.S.A. to fulfil Sun Bear's vision of the return of these ancient focuses of knowledge and learning.

In Sun Bear's words, "Our purpose is to share our knowledge. We believe that knowledge is healing and we feel that if we can help another person achieve a better balance within himself then that is healing."

A modern day *Medicine Wheel Gathering*, born in the vision dream of Sun Bear, came to New York State on the East Coast on Friday evening, Saturday, and Sunday, Sept. 17, 18

and 19, 1982 at a campground near Hopewell Junction, sixty miles North of New York City. The Gathering brought together ten Native American Medicine Persons, plus Native American Dancers, Drummers, and special guests.

Native American prophecies from many tribes foretell a time of changes and of re-ordering on the Earth. The prophecies also foretell that after a period in which the Red Man would live as though he were "dust on the Earth," a new time would come when the religion and the knowledge of the "good Red Road" would be accepted again by the inhabitants of the American continent. Sun Bear's vision and his belief in the prophecies have instructed him that now is the time for the return of the Medicine Wheels to North America.

A Medicine Wheel is a large circle built with stones. It is symbolic of the universe. It is also a teaching tool, history, a mandala, an altar, a place where Medicine people share their teachings, a central gathering place and a place where ceremonies are conducted. It is a place for dancing and singing. A Medicine Wheel is an explanation of the cosmology of the religion of the American Indian. It is a common symbol to all the tribes.

If there is drama and ritual in the ceremonies, songs and dances around the Medicine Wheel, there is also drama in the story of the organization of the modern day Medicine Wheels. Sun Bear and the Medicine Society he founded organized the first Gathering in a National Park campground at the base of Mount Ranier in Washington in 1980. Six hundred lived in tents and celebrated in the rain at that Gathering. Since then there

have been three Gatherings in California, one in Texas, and one more in Washington. They have grown in population and have learned from their organizational mistakes. More importantly, they have overcome criticism of both Native Americans and non-natives and now many people join in the celebrations and ceremonies. Sun Bear is following his vision. As a Native American and a Medicine Man he has no other choice. Now is the time to teach people the knowledge and the ceremonies of the Medicine Wheels. Now is the time to teach people the ways of Healing and Loving the living Earth Mother.

Sun Bear had invited Vasant to the Gathering to demonstrate *Agnihotra*, the healing fire from Vedas, and to give a talk on the healing potentials of Homa Therapy.

Excerpts from Vasant's talks at the Gathering:

"In all ancient civilizations fire is holy as it heals. In fact the only form of worship that was common to mankind all over the planet was related to rituals around fire. It is high time that the scientists of the West delve deep into the science of healing fire as given through Vedas, the ancientmost treasure house of knowledge known to man. This is the science of *Yajnya*, the science of Homa Therapy.

"Agnihotra is the basic healing fire tuned to the biorhythm of sunrise/sunset. Agnihotra sets right the harmony cycle of the planet. It benefits plant life. It removes all tension from the mind and makes mind full of love.

"Man's body is a very special instrument in creation. Man acts like a biological transducer when he performs Agnihotra. He helps to bring about the transformation and mani-

festation of subtle energies into activating and activated states and they become beneficial to all creation.

"Agnihotra atmosphere and Agnihotra ash will save the world. People will soon find out that Agnihotra is the Savior. Agnihotra atmosphere helps to cleanse the water resources of the planet. Agnihotra makes the air medicinal and thus the whole community benefits by the practice of Agnihotra.

"In Mississippi I met some black farmers who said that their ancestors used to burn dried cowdung on the field at sunset. When questioned why this was done the reply was 'This practice keeps the devils away.' If microbiologists make experiments with Agnihotra effect on aerial microflora they would realize the deeper meaning behind this statement. In the process of Agnihotra dried cowdung is burnt in a copper pyramid exactly at sunrise and sunset. You heal the atmosphere by the process of Agnihotra Homa fire and the atmosphere heals you."



Photograph courtesy of Phillip Liebman

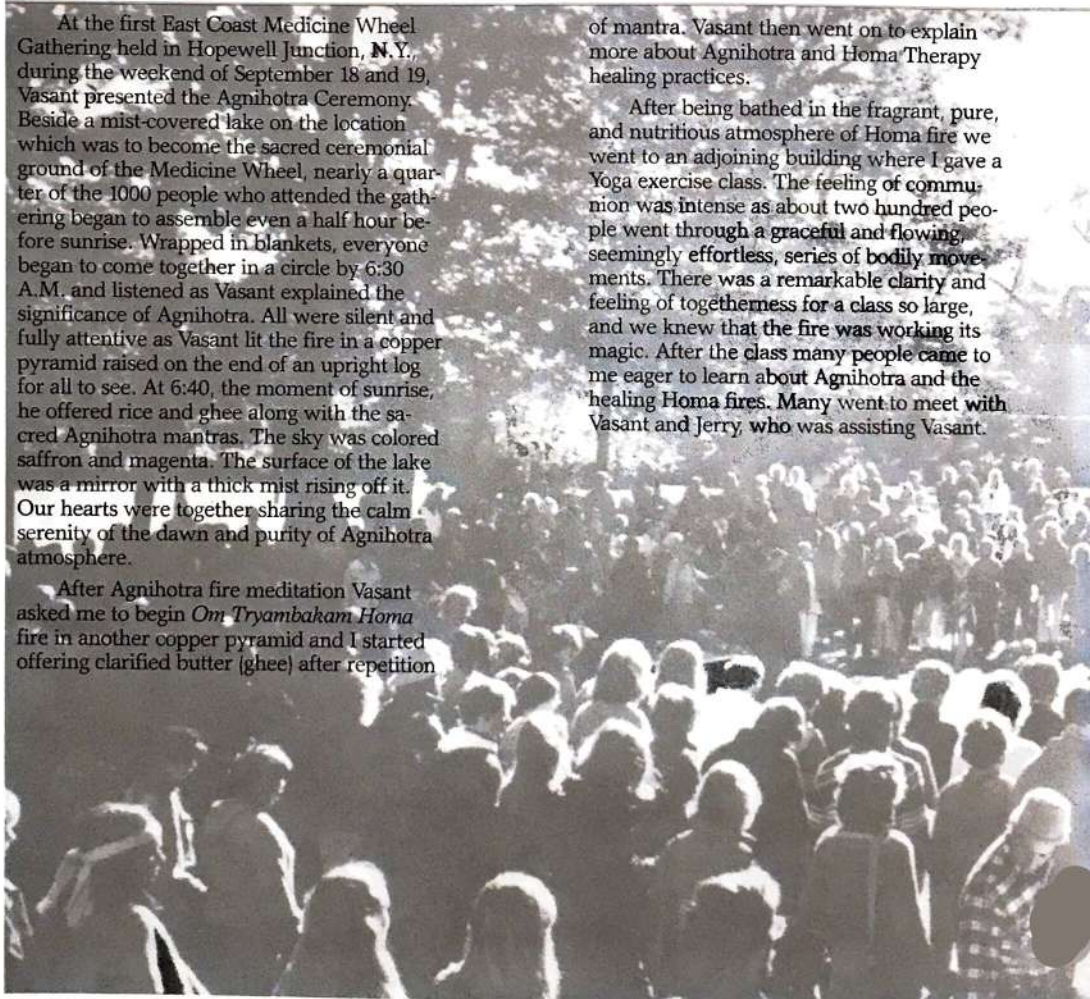
Agnihotra Unites East and West

At the first East Coast Medicine Wheel Gathering held in Hopewell Junction, N.Y., during the weekend of September 18 and 19, Vasant presented the Agnihotra Ceremony. Beside a mist-covered lake on the location which was to become the sacred ceremonial ground of the Medicine Wheel, nearly a quarter of the 1000 people who attended the gathering began to assemble even a half hour before sunrise. Wrapped in blankets, everyone began to come together in a circle by 6:30 A.M. and listened as Vasant explained the significance of Agnihotra. All were silent and fully attentive as Vasant lit the fire in a copper pyramid raised on the end of an upright log for all to see. At 6:40, the moment of sunrise, he offered rice and ghee along with the sacred Agnihotra mantras. The sky was colored saffron and magenta. The surface of the lake was a mirror with a thick mist rising off it. Our hearts were together sharing the calm serenity of the dawn and purity of Agnihotra atmosphere.

After Agnihotra fire meditation Vasant asked me to begin *Om Tryambakam Homa* fire in another copper pyramid and I started offering clarified butter (ghee) after repetition

of mantra. Vasant then went on to explain more about Agnihotra and Homa Therapy healing practices.

After being bathed in the fragrant, pure, and nutritious atmosphere of Homa fire we went to an adjoining building where I gave a Yoga exercise class. The feeling of communion was intense as about two hundred people went through a graceful and flowing, seemingly effortless, series of bodily movements. There was a remarkable clarity and feeling of togetherness for a class so large, and we knew that the fire was working its magic. After the class many people came to me eager to learn about Agnihotra and the healing Homa fires. Many went to meet with Vasant and Jerry, who was assisting Vasant.



Vyas Houston

The Medicine Wheel Gatherings are events held throughout the country several times a year. They evolved out of the vision of a native American Medicine man named Sun Bear, leader of the Bear Tribe, a fully self-sufficient community near Spokane, Washington. Sun Bear is the author of several books and publisher of a monthly magazine "Many Smokes." He has been appearing more and more frequently on radio and television programs throughout the country and as a keynote speaker at many New Age gatherings and conventions. His primary goal is to teach people how to "walk in balance on the Mother Earth." Sun Bear, along with a handful of other Native American leaders featured at the Gathering, is now making his ancient spiritual teachings available to non-natives.

Although there were no other eastern teachers present, it seemed appropriate that Vasant should be there, since it is through his dedicated work that the ancient Agnihotra fire ritual has become available to people all over the world. Indeed, it has been indicated in the prophecies of both traditions that here would be a meeting of the two at the time of the Earth's greatest need.

Later in the afternoon a large group of people was visibly moved by the poetic words of an extraordinary young spiritual teacher of the Native American tradition, Dhyani Whahoo. During her talk she made reference to the beauty and power of Vasant's morning Agnihotra ceremony. She recalled her childhood when her people gathered at dawn, made a fire and offered prayers. She told how it made you feel at one with the cycles of nature.

The following morning as Jerry and I reached the lake for morning Agnihotra, we saw six figures, all native American Indians, forming a circle in the center of the Medicine Wheel looming over a small fire, performing their traditional ritual. The sky was pale saffron and violet. There was a thick mist on the lake. The predawn light presented the figures in a soft, hazy light, leaving their features undefined.

*dawn of day, dawn of creation
timeless, eternal fire
reveals its beauty*

Photograph courtesy of Phillip Liebman

What is the Medicine Wheel?

Bear Tribe Medicine Society

Medicine wheels made of stone once spread all across this land, constructed by the original Native inhabitants. These wheels were the ceremonial centers for the Native people and a way for them to gain knowledge. They were high energy areas where people could experience the power of the earth and the universe.

During this Gathering we construct a medicine wheel consisting of a center power object, which represents the Creator, the center of the universe surrounded by seven stones representing the earth mother, father sun, grandmother moon, the turtle (earth) clan, the frog (water) clan, the butterfly (air) clan, and the thunderbird (fire) clan. Radiating out from the center we place four rocks for the spirit keepers of the north (Waboose), of the east (Wabun), of the south (Shawno-dese), of the west (Mudjekeewis). Between

the northern and eastern stones we place three others to represent the Snow Goose, Otter and Cougar people; between the east and the south there will be stones for the Red Hawk, Beaver and Deer people; between the south and west, for the Flicker, Sturgeon and Brown Bear people; between west and north, for the Raven, Snake and Elk people. We will also place three stones between each of the directions and the center circle. These represent some of the paths that people can take as they travel around the medicine wheel.

People are also invited to come to the wheel individually with respect and to pray and meditate upon the power that each stone represents or to give thanks to these powers for the blessings they have given you and all of your relations upon our common earth mother.



From Vasant's Correspondence

Health can improve with one hour *Homa* daily.

We are fortunate today to have such a method of healing. Of course if you continue to abuse your body with bad foods or cigarettes, alcohol, drugs, etc., you will find contradictions in your lifestyle. You'll have to choose one way or the other. At that point Agnihotra will aid in making a right decision. Life's problems catch up to you quicker, the faster you live your life.

If you go into the right habits it becomes so simple. There should be a yearning in your heart for this. It is such a simple thing. Do not discard it. It is easy to fall back, to miss a meditation time, to neglect to take shower before Agnihotra. If it comes like this you call someone who is regularly doing all the disciplines. See if you can spend a day with them. This is helpful for you in your case. Reach out for help from others doing the disciplines if you begin to fall down.

You must be a support for others now. First support each other. Regular Satsangs even if there are two people will help you. Then contact new people who have shown interest in what you are doing. Have them over for Agnihotra. Call and arrange a time for them. If it is separate or in a group let them come.

There is much trouble in the world. There will be less trouble for you if everyday you meditate carefully at the timings given.

Now and then you may have to miss for some reason but make the effort to do all you are able to.

Do not worry about having faith. You just do the meditation timings and two hours . . . work. Then the rest unfolds from within.

So many people suffer now in the world. Everyone has his own karma. You may look at someone and think, "How ideal their life is." Then you do not know what troubles they already have, what is to come to them. So never look at the next person and think like that. Envy does no person good.

Through grace everything will be made smooth for you. You have difficult time but that time is coming to an end and if you do the disciplines things will improve greatly.

Be grateful for every way in which someone helps you. Do not expect others to help you. But always be grateful when they do. Similarly when you need help do not hesitate to ask for it but do not demand it. Be humble in your approach toward soliciting help from other people. Always be grateful. Remember that.

Practice humility. By practice I mean quietly you do things for others and just don't mention small things that disturb you.

Therapy Hut

(From Vasant's talks in Europe)

Therapy hut is the room where besides sunrise/sunset copper pyramid Agnihotra Homa fire we do four hours of *Om Tryambakam Homa* daily and twenty-four hours *Homa* on full moon and new moon days.

There is something like sweat therapy given in *Ayurveda*, the ancient science of medicine.

Agnihotra, itself, is a very, very special *Homa*. It is a peculiar *Yajnya (Homa)*, truly



peculiar. And the other one, where you put some medicinal herbs into fire, of course, that is another aspect. But Agnihotra is the basic one. However, we have to take scientists to a place now where they can see logically and understand easily that by putting something like medicinal herbs into *Yajnya (Homa)* fire, observing certain disciplines accompanied by mantras, a certain change takes place in the universal Prana thereby creating a healing effect on the mind. When, for example, you have a place like Agnihotra Press and certain disciplines are maintained, the atmosphere becomes pure and fresh. The sun's rays are refracted to the layer of atmosphere in such a way that it becomes healing. Also sounds, especially when done in a disciplined way like the mantras, are reflected in such tones that they travel great distances even to other solar systems and also those sounds, themselves, begin healing and soothing. So it is a combination of discipline, mantra and *Yajnya* fire, acting and reacting, that is the catalyst for the healing phenomena. This is *Homa* Therapy.

Within these therapy huts, one could actually treat many different types of diseases, many types of ailments. Also they could be utilized for preventive medical purposes. And I would imagine this would be its greatest usefulness in the area of preventive medicine. And this is breaking within the medical field itself. I should think that even now there is enough so-called scientific evidence on the books to show the medicinal aspect of an environment such as this. One could actually state its medicinal properties.

The sweat lodges of the American Indians are based on principles of Sweat Therapy.

In Satsang Mail



Agnihotra in Catskill Mountain Area

Recently I had the opportunity to travel with Vasant into the Catskill Mountain area of New York to share the message of love through Agnihotra fire. We visited Ananda Ashram where since last year the whole community has taken to Agnihotra fire. It was so uplifting to see the entire community practicing Agnihotra fire.

Operating under the name of The Yoga Society of New York, many programs for human development such as Hatha Yoga, Yoga Philosophy and Psychology, Anatomy and Physiology, Integral Counseling, Acupuncture, Teaching and Communications Skills, Sanskrit, and others are offered in the atmosphere of Homa Therapy under the guidance of Dr. Mishra who has practiced neurosurgery, endocrinology, ophthalmology, and psychiatry in some of the leading hospitals.

A special highlight of the trip was an invitation for Vasant to speak and demonstrate by the Bear Tribe Medicine Society. Although scheduling placed the Homa activities at 6:30 A.M., at sunrise a large number of persons came for the event. Nearly all stayed past the scheduled ending time to ask questions.

It was particularly interesting to see native American Indians reviving their old culture which includes a lot of fire, smoke, sweat baths, chanting and other ceremonies originating from ancient times when Yajnya was a widespread practice on the planet.

At the Wheel Gathering we also met Medicine Story, a native American Indian leader whose farm in Massachusetts called "Another One" Vasant had visited just a few days back. His wife Ermmie took a copper pyramid and an Agnihotra mantra cassette to teach Agnihotra to the group. Medicine Story invited Vasant to visit his farm again.

Present at the Medicine Wheel Gathering was a psychiatrist from the New York area who was quite interested in the practice of Homa Therapy. We discussed the possibilities of helping to establish a holistic healing center in which biofeedback equipment could be used to study the effects of Homa Therapy.

Such a blessing it has been to see so many souls being introduced to such a beautiful practice as Homa to bring peace, happiness, and *Love* to the planet.

All Love;

Jerry Hodges