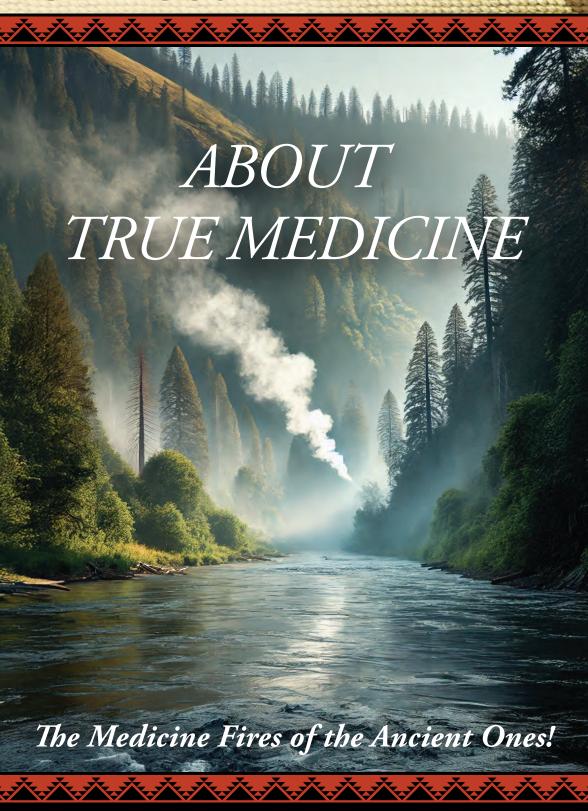
# **CHITCUS**



Throughout Indian Country, Veterans face unique issues. Here too, on the Salmon and Klamath Rivers along Northern California's Lost Coast, Veteran' questions arise. I was asked what is the meaning behind "TRUE MEDICINE" the American Indian Preservation Fund poster?

 ${
m W}$ hy did I create a Veterans poster titled "True Medicine"?



"To the North American Indian, "medicine" meant more than a substance to restore health and vitality to a sick or maladjusted body. "Medicine" was one's energy – a vital power or force that was inherent in Nature itself.

A person's "medicine" was their power – the expression of their own life-energy system." [A means to be!]

Kenneth Meadows from his book– Earth Medicine: Revealing Hidden Teachings of the Native American Medicine Wheel

### To Be A Scout

"True Medicine" as spoken before the ancient fires of Karuk tribal medicine men, represents the culmination of knowledge from the Karuk Tribe's ancient ones. This time-tested wisdom, passed down through oral history by the tribe's elders, directs the people's actions within Mother Nature's order, establishing them as the true stewards of natural resources. They maintained balance between all creatures—winged, shelled, two-legged, and four-legged ones.

This traditional knowledge, the basis of tribal law, was handed down through generations, fostering prosperity, resolving disputes, and confronting life's challenges with vigor. It was revered knowledge deeply rooted in the ancient stories, wisdom, and practices of the tribe. Tribal villages all along the North Coast and conforming to the high inland mountains of the Pacific Northwest followed these teachings.

This base of knowledge shaped what transforms into each young person's 'Medicine'—their own natural energy and source of individual power. The Creator's teachings opened a pathway to the individual's heart. Thus, empowering one's spirit which energized one's soul. Here with life's teachings, you were inspired with the means to express and navigate one's individual pathway into the Spirit World. Through the Creator, each earned their "True Medicine," the means of individual empowerment!

Chitcus, Karuk Tribal Medicine Man

## From Scout To Brave

Upon completing your manhood trials, you join the elders at the great medicine fire! You realize a powerful tool has been instilled—your spirit along with your physical being. After your fast, sweat, and quest, you are ready to become young tribal scout. "True Medicine" has been tested and guides your every step towards manhood, empowering you to master the creator's teachings. Through trails and teachings, you acquire your "Medicine," enabling you to transition through your lessons learned to becoming a young scout. Your paths, your trails, your power become the journey. They will carry your power and spirit into the medicine world. Your next fast begins the transformation into a young brave. This empowerment forms the foundation of all your skills, knowledge, and leadership abilities, even of your visits with the blessed one, one who teaches you about "True Medicine."

As a young brave, you move beyond your mentor's teachings! The traditional fast, sacred Indian sweat, and personal quest lead you to self-counsel. You see the importance of brotherhood, family, and protecting the nation. You are now a brave.

Ahead is becoming a warrior. On the field of battle, your spirit of unity, or esprit de corps elevates you. The ultimate warrior feat—counting coup during battle or engaging the enemy in the field of battle—says to the foe, you have now been touched! Warriorhood is a position of prestige, and hard-earned respect within the tribe. Those who count coup become the defenders of the family, the community, and the nation.

Chitcus, US Marine Vietnam Veteran, 65/68

### Now A Warrior

Our brave with "True Medicine" has now become a whole being, a pure warrior at heart and soul! One who, in times of danger, will protect and guard and, if necessary, give up their life to assure the safety of the tribe, the elders, children, and the families.

Here one's spirit and blessed soul transitions in and out of the Spirit World. When one fasts, simultaneously making one's "Medicine" and enters the sweat house, they travel into the Spirit world. There, honor, respect, and bravery become the threshold of manhood for all: the young boys, scouts, braves, warriors, and become the guardians of "True Medicine."

Hear me people! I am prepared to die with honor this day in battle! I will protect our elders my children and my family, along with our homes, ceremonial and burial grounds, within our villages!

Chitcus, US Marine Vietnam Veteran



# I Have Made My Medicine

Chitcus, Karuk Tribal Medicine Man

I have fasted for seven days. I have prayed before Creator for our people in the great Indian sweat house of the ancient ones. I have sat by the sacred fireplaces of the Karuk medicine men of the past. Blessings abound! "True Medicine" is before me. I now know my power!

The "Guardians of The Medicine" are the warriors who will lay down their lives for the people, their families, elders, women and children during battles or other times of danger. The warrior will defend and die to protect the tribe's ceremonial and burial grounds. It is one's inherent right to perpetuate, to protect, to preserve our teaching of the old way of life. Know your "Medicine." Know where your center of the world is—Kottomein!

 $M_{
m y}$  "True Medicine" test came through my Uncle Shan Davis just before our Karuk "World Renewal Ceremonies." These ceremonies of the Karuk Tribe, Pi'cky Y'a Ish, commenced in September of 1969. It was a Thursday, six days into my Tribal Fast. The weather was hot and clear outside. Not a cloud in sight! A typical day in Somes Bar, California. It was sunny. About 80° just before high noon. The temperature was going to climb to over 100° that day where our ol' Indian sweat house was located. Uncle and I sat at our sacred medicine fireplace. There, Uncle told me that if I had power, I could replicate the sacred fires of the past. In mind and spirit I was to engage the Pacific Northwest fog near Orick, California and move the fog bank inland to Kottomein. I was to make it rain lightly over the low-hanging trees where the peppernut bushes touched Mother Earth. I was to make it rain by the sacred medicine fireplace of the Karuk Au'da.

I cannot repeat what I said to my Uncle. But Uncle just looked at me and said, "Get with it son!" Uncle taught me to make Medicine for the Karuk Au'da. (The People.)

Then it rained slightly in Somes Bar, California that warm sultry day in September of 1969, and I became a traditional Medicine Man of the *Karuk Au'da* at Kottomein! the "Center of The World."

As the soft rain touched the low hanging pepperwoods, they glistened and shined! Our *Pi'cky Y'a Ish* was able to commence. It was our Karuk world renewal ceremonies. I made MEDICINE as the Karuk Tribe's *Karuk Au'da Fu'a T'a Vai'ne'm*. (The People's Medicine Man.)

Dark of the Moon - September, 1969



Chitcus, Karuk Tribal Medicine Man



White Deerskin Dance, Kottomein, 1972



Chitcus at Stand Up Night at Pícký Yáu ísh, Somes Bar, 1969

Follow the smoke of the sacred fires of the medicine man!