



“Hehàka Sapa Wohdaka,” A Letter by Black Elk in Iapi Oaye

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Black Elk speaks.

From Red Cloud, my relatives those Lakota who are able to read Lakota, I write this for you. My relatives, I am Lakota. Last year 1885, I was in New York. I remembered God all the time. I went overseas to a place they call England. I stayed there one year. I then went across the ocean for four days, to a place they call Germans. I stayed there one year. I then crossed a sea that took 60 days and I stayed there for one year. The thing that White people are most concerned about and that they have many events about is God and God’s will. I was trying to figure out the White man’s attitude about God’s will and what he did about it. I went from town to town. I found out that there was a lot of attention paid to and lot of activity around the will of God. I learned that I should have been loving like the angels of heaven instead I am like pennies jingling or an empty gong. And this is what I think. I cannot hide anything and with the faith that I have I should be able to move mountains, but without faith I am nothing. And everything that I own, I feed others so I am left with nothing and I give my life to be burned, I have not love I have nothing more to give.

Therefore, Lakota people keep God in your lives. I keep Him in my life. The things that I do are good, and I hope that you people do the same.

My relatives, next I will talk about some of the celebrations I have been in. I have a friend named Mexican Joe, and he participated in our show. His name was High Bear and the other’s name was Two Elk. They were in Manchester, England. I saw them and they came to the tent of the show camp where I also came. Just then a fire started and some horses died a lot of things burned.

I wanted to see where Jesus was killed. It would take four days boat ride, but there is also no train there. They would ride horses but they would die of thirst. They have some animals with long necks that can take you there. It also cost too much to go there. This is all I will say.

Black Elk. Manchester, England.

Translated by Deacon Ben Black Bear, Jr., St. Francis, Rosebud Indian Reservation, South Dakota, June 2017; requested by the Marquette University Archives.

I A P I O A Y E .

RANTEE AGENCY, NEBRASKA.

TAKU WAŠTE OKIYA, TAKU ŠICA KIPAJIN.

A. L. RIGGS, PUBLISHER.

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WOKAJUJU KAŠPAPI ŠAKPE.

HEŃAKA SAPA WOHDAKA.

MaŃpiyaluta etan mitakuye Dakota oyate tokel ieska wowapi onspepi kin he le wowapi kin cieŃgapi lo. Mitakuye malakota. Hekta omaka 1885, henakeca qonhan New York el waun, Wakantanka ohinniyan weksuye. Miniwanca opta England eciyapi ekta wai. Omaka wanji waun, hehan ake miniwanca wan anpetu topa oiynuwege ca ekta wai, Iašica ewicakiyapi. Omaka wanji hel waun, hehan ake miniwanca anpetu wikcemna šakpe oiynuwege ca ekta wai, qa omaka wanji waun. Ho, hecel, wašicun kin ohinniyan awaciupi kin hecela wicohan ota kinhan, Wakantanka hena tawacin wašicun kin tokeške awacin kin, na toked škanpi kin slolwayin kte lin. Otonwe iyaza omawani, yunkan Wakantanka tawacin okšin wicohan ota. Yunkan wicaša akantu maŃpiya okni-
gle cejipi kin on isanpa eša wacanwakiye šni ehantanhan mazaša snasna qa taku ituya sna kin he iyemaceca. Na

wowiyukean mluha ęa, taku anakih-beya kin owasin wookalinige ko slolwayeęa wowacinye oyasin mluha on he kin yutokan iyewaye kta owakihieša, wacanwakiye šni ehantanhan mataku šni. Na taku mitawa kin oyasin wonwicayapi kin el waklusote ęa mitancan kin hee hulinagin kta e waqu eša, wacanwakiye šni ehantanhan takula iciyopteya waun šni.

Hecen Dakota oyate, Wakantanka ohinniyan awacin po. Hehanl miye ohinniyan Wakantanka awacanmi. Okšan wicohan ecanon awicakehan lila wašte he ivecen oyate kin hecan-nipi ni ecanmi ye lo. Mitakuye hehanl ito taku wanjigii womagaga owaglake kte lo. Kola, Mexican Joe eciyapi, oškate yukan Dakota opa el, Matowankantuya eciyapi, na unma Hehakanonpa eciyapi. England, Manchester eciyapi wan el unpi. Wanwicablake hici han tipi oškate kin ben hipi kin ehau el wai hici, ehau tipi kin ide na šunkawakan šakpe tapi na taku ota ide wanblake.

Miniwanca tanka kowakatanhan heciya Jesus ktepiake wanblakin kta wacin tka anpetu topa miniwanca, nakan mazacanku wanice. Šunkawakan awicayapi qešin ipuza tapi. Taku tahu hanskapi qa hena ece e lo ekta ipi okihipi. Lila mazaska ota ca ekta mni kta owakihie hece kta owaklakin kte lo.

BLACK ELK.

Manchester, England.