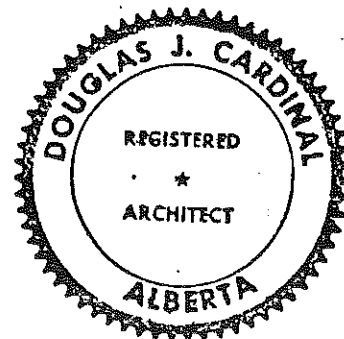


indian education
in aberta
working philosophy

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INDIAN EDUCATION IN ALBERTA

A WORKING PHILOSOPHY



JUNE 25, 1974

DOUGLAS J. CARDINAL
ARCHITECT

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FOREWORD

Why a new educational system for the Indians of Alberta? To understand the need for one, you must give a little thought to the state of the Indian people today. To the casual observer they do not seem to be able to, or often, even willing to, benefit from the sophisticated educational - and abundant career - opportunities offered by the "technological culture" of Canada today. They would seem, to judge superficially from their performance in Canadian society, to be destined for a life of educational, economic and social stagnation quite apart from the trend of mainstream society. And to the casual observer most of them are the way they are simply because they are incapable of being and unwilling to be, anything else, an "inferior race of people."

Very few judgements could miss the point of it more. The Indian adult was not always at the bottom of the social ladder, the Indian child is intellectually of no lesser capacity than his white counterpart, Indian communities were not always stagnant pools in the rich Canadian landscape. The truth is that the Indian people are experiencing a turmoil that few other Canadians will ever have to know, let alone grapple with. They are caught in the whirlpool of a deep conflict, a conflict of radically different cultures. On the one hand, they are the products of a rich and ancient culture which has demonstrated, by the persistent recovery of the Indian people through repeated waves of natural and cultural shock, that it cherished certain attitudes that enabled the Indians to flourish longer than any other known "natural people". On the other hand, they find the patterns of their lives today determined largely and forcibly by members of a modern society that is committed largely to a way of life which, even to its own realization, is now engendering serious threats to the survival of that society.

Faced with the obvious necessity to live in harmony with the majority culture around him, and in many cases reluctant to abandon values that have been an integral part of the lives of his people, each Indian seeks through his own route some "balance" of life-style that must grow from a blending of these

two cultures. Some, unable or unwilling to abandon ingrained values or grapple with the conflict, withdraw to the setting that bears least evidence of the presence of the "alien" culture - the reserves, which more often than not, fail to offer him the things and ways of life that he needs for leading a meaningful life. Others forsake their own traditional ways for a place of apparent, but dubious, dignity in a Western society that has not yet fully learned to accept the Indian on any but its own terms. Yet others, finding neither spiritual nor material satisfaction in either way of life, and in the absence of those social attitudes that make possible a culturally balanced way of life, wander this way and that in the heart of the turmoil, always confused by the seeming hopelessness of the struggle of life, and thrashing out at every main festation of this conflict.

The Indians have realized that a direction, a meaning, cannot be restored to their lives through a unilateral "submission" to another culture; that any way of life for the Indian must necessarily be founded on the dignity of his race and a pride in his heritage; that harmonious life in Canadian society or a reserve against the backdrop of the majority-culture setting - can only be achieved through a blending of selected good aspects of both cultures. And since the preparation of a person for life in the society in which he lives forms the basic and broad purpose of education, hope for Indians can be seen to be largely in the development of an educational process that will, through its nature and its example, prepare each Indian for a full life encompassing the positive elements of both cultures.

An earlier report relating to the Alberta Indian Education Centre developed a basic philosophy for the Centre from these principles. In "Indian Education in Alberta - A Working Philosophy", that basic philosophy is refined and adapted to satisfy the more comprehensive educational needs of all Indians in the Province, to serve as the foundation upon which all facilities, including the Alberta Indian Education Centre, may be developed. The first parts of this document are devoted to making possible an understanding of the state of the Indians today, while the latter sections discuss the nature of a new educational system that must answer the needs of the Indian people of Alberta.



PART 1 - PRELUDE

The Indian Concept of Knowledge

We the Indians of Alberta, have always been hunters and warriors. We lived our lives very close to the powerful forces of nature and our survival, which was always a hard battle, depended on our knowledge of these forces and our acting in response to these forces. We learned early that our lives would be affected, sooner or later, and for our good or to our harm, by our every action towards our environment and nature. We also perceived that the animals around us, the trees, and all other living things, affected each other, and us, by the way they lived; and we realized that in order to survive in nature we had to understand all of these things - we had to have a full understanding of the natural environment around us, and a full understanding of ourselves, who were a part of that environment, and of our fellow man.

The Indians observed that all forms of life contribute to life itself; that every living thing has its place within life's framework and so is important. They thus viewed their fellow man, and their community as being as important and as worthy as themselves. This attitude formed the basis of their non-hierarchical system of society with its emphasis on decisions BY CONSENSUS AND THE FREEDOM OF THE INDIVIDUAL. Indeed, a man's esteem was not measured by his material possessions- which would be an indication that he took more from nature than he gave - but on his wisdom and his prowess as a hunter and a warrior; qualities which would contribute to the long-term good of the community.

The path of a hunter demanded that he know the animals that he hunted, their life cycles, their peculiar behaviors, their dependency on their environment, also the hunter's own potential as he stalked his prey, and his own limitations as a human being. He must see the relationships of the infinite variety of the natural environment around him, and he must know the parts and have an understanding of the whole, and how each part fitted within the whole. To be a

natural hunter he must be at one with himself, at one with his prey, and at one with the whole environment. He understood that the lives of the hunter and the hunted are entwined, that one depends upon the other. This insight that he gleaned from being a hunter prepared him for the path of a warrior.

As a hunter the Indian realized that his prey was predictable and that his success as a hunter depended on how he could predict the behavior of his prey; he knew the ways and habits of the animals and thus was able to predict their behavior. A warrior on the other hand learned to be unpredictable, so that he did not fall into a trap when he was stalked by his fellow man. To be a warrior he must understand himself, his environment, his fellow man. If he were threatened by another tribe, he might be forced to come in physical combat with his fellow man. If his own environment in one area had been depleted by him or by an act of nature, it might be necessary for him to move, for the sake of his own survival. In thus moving for food, he and his tribe sometimes encroached upon another tribe's hunting grounds and, for their own survival, came in combat with them - so there were times when, for their survival, they were confronted with the choice of dying or coming in combat with their fellow man.

From the example of the life around him, the Indian learned not to kill but for the sake of his own survival. One species did not unnecessarily shed the blood of another; one did not kill except when absolutely necessary. Even in battle, certain tribes in Alberta demonstrated their reluctance to shed blood through the use of the "coup stick". Putting his own survival at stake, a warrior of spirit from such a tribe, would ride into battle with a coup stick and he would touch an armed enemy at a vulnerable spot, and with this gesture would say "I am of superior strength and I have shown that you are vulnerable, and you know I could kill you on that spot. But I will spare you. I will show my strength and the strength of my tribe but I will spare you because you have a family. I need to defend my boundaries for the survival of my tribe, and so we will sit down in peace and smoke the pipe and discuss where our boundaries shall be".

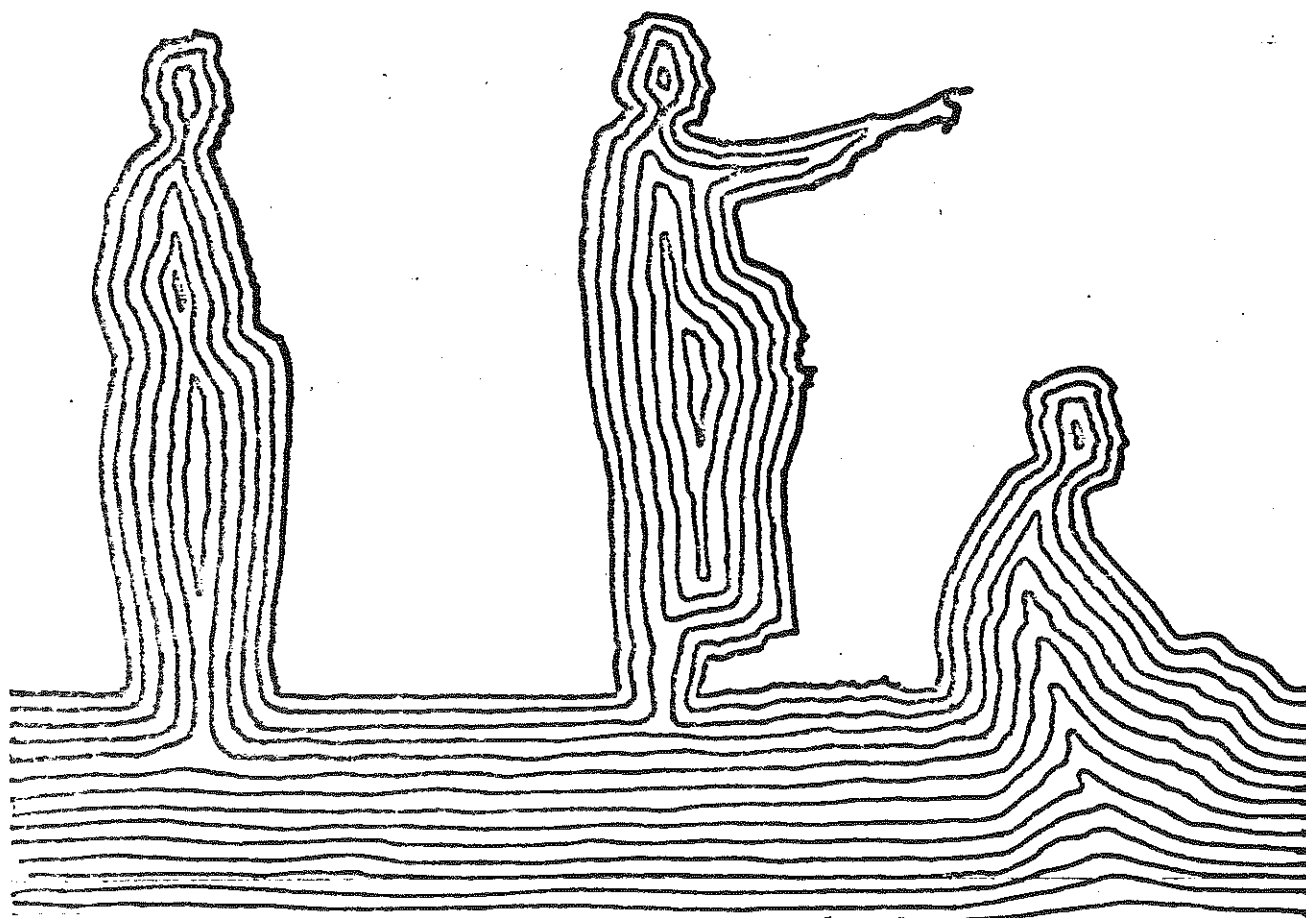
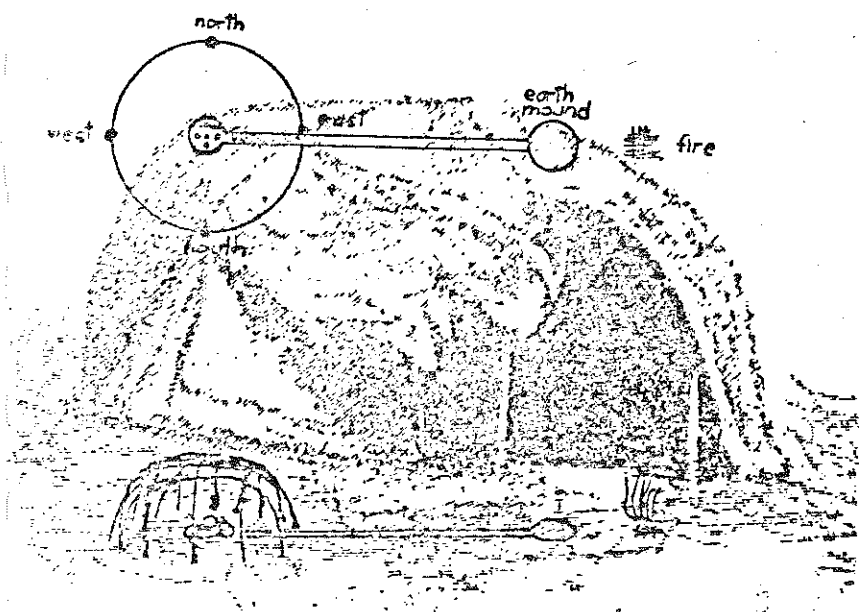
The hunter and the warrior also had to learn to be selfless and egoless so that he could be at par with his fellow man, at par with the animals, at par with the trees, and the plants, and the winds, and the rivers; because if he were not free of his ego and set himself above the environment around him, he would be

insensitive to his surroundings and thus be vulnerable to the animal he was hunting or the warrior who was hunting him. Thus for his own survival as a hunter, and particularly as a warrior, he had to be fully at one with himself - selfless, egoless and at par with every living being.

The Sweat Bath, a ritual observed for hundreds of years by certain tribes of this region, and carrying a special significance to each tribe, was one of the several ways in which an Indian would seek a cleansing of his spirit.

Any sense of over-importance of ourselves lessens our sense of relatedness to our fellow creatures, and thus lessens our chances of survival. Any growing feelings of self-importance and alienation must therefore be purged. The PURIFICATION CEREMONY in our Sweat Lodge cleans our body and mind of all our ego and other ills, and today, when we are forced by the society around us to wander from our path of knowledge, the Sweat Lodge reminds us to be at one with ourselves and with nature. Here we must find ourselves and here our own weaknesses will come out, and we will have to contend with ourselves. When we have gathered in the Lodge and the door of the Lodge is closed, there is nothing but total blackness and we can see only the glow of the red hot rocks in the centre. As the water is poured and the steam rises, we can feel the weaknesses within our own body and hear the sounds of the people beside us. As we sit on the earth and breathe the moist air and see the red fire in the rocks, we are reminded of the elements of the universe - earth, air, fire and water - and we realize that we are in a tiny universe in this darkness. In the pitch blackness we almost feel our own birth and the birth of which we are part. The heat brings out the weaknesses and excesses of the body and the mind, and the diseases that come with civilization heart trouble, ulcers, kidney trouble, the weakness of stress created by being in conflict with the environment and in conflict with ourselves - they are all brought to the surface. When we hear the old chants, the old prayers that are sung in the Lodge, we realize how far we have wandered from ourselves as human beings, and how far we are from our natural environment; how much in conflict we are with our fellow man. No one has to preach to us, no one tells us of our faults, we feel them through our own experience in the Sweat Lodge.

We find that in order to remove the weaknesses in our body, we have to first deal



with the conflicts that are in our mind. We have to confront ourselves and our conflicts with our fellow man and with the environment. As the steam permeates every pore of our body we turn to the Spirit for help, and we see a miracle - the Spirit does help us. Our own inner voice, our own soul also answers us, and with the help of the Holy Man and our fellows in the Lodge we are encouraged to confront our conflicts, and with their help we become victorious over our own internal battle. And having thus cleared the way, we are open to ourselves and to our fellow man and our environment. We have ridden ourselves of our own conflicts and we each realize that all of us in that Lodge had our own individual battles to fight. We realize that in that Lodge we were all one. And we had to become one in order to overcome the conflict within ourselves, within this small environment we find ourselves in - the small universe of earth, air, fire and water.

And so the purification ceremony teaches us that to be at one with our environment we must first clean our body and minds of our ego, our feeling of self-importance.

Just as the purification ceremony makes us one, makes us whole and compatible with our whole environment, it also cleanses our body from sicknesses aided by various herbs and medicines which nature has given to us. For the Sweat Bath is not only mentally and spiritually healing, it is physically healing as well. We believe that most illnesses are psychosomatic, that our whole body is a balanced universe. Our whole body has all the tools to deal with diseases, infections or inflictions. We believe that if we have an illness, it is because we are in conflict with ourselves, or in conflict with the outside environment. Conflicts produce imbalance with the various germs, and bacteria, which are a part of our own universe. They are beings that coexist in our universe so that we may exist as a total entity. It is an imbalance that causes sickness; physical weaknesses of the body are magnified and we perceive - not psychologically, but consciously - this imbalance within our whole being. We are forced through the Sweat Lodge Ceremony to become at one with ourselves and the universe within the lodge, and thus our whole being goes to battle against the forces that have unbalanced us. When we are sick and out of tune with ourselves, the Medicine Man constructs a situation in which we must face our own conflicts, our own imbalances, and we must use all of our energy, our remaining strength, to fight the battle within ourselves until we have won. Thus until we are in a state of balance the disease or infliction will not be beaten.

This native vision, this gift of seeing truly, with wonder and delight, into the natural world, is informed by a certain attitude of reverence and self-respect. It is a matter of extrasensory as well as sensory perception. In addition to the eye, it involves the intelligence, the instinct, and the imagination. It is the perception not only of objects and forms but also of essences and ideals.

-N. Scott Momaday (D)

The Indian not only learned to understand all the elements of nature, he learned also to perceive the FORCES behind all these elements, and the INTERRELATEDNESS of all these forces. The key to his survival was to understand the forces around him and within him rather than merely the physical or materialistic entities. A man not learned in the ways of a warrior might look at an adversary and see just the man, but a warrior saw more than that, he saw a friend or a foe, he saw the man's life force, his aura. Could he trust that man with his life? Would he go to battle with or against the man? A warrior was totally aware of the forces within that man, the effects of these forces around that man and how they affected him and the environment around him. If he did not have this ability to perceive, he was not a warrior. Not only did the warrior develop the knowledge of understanding the forces within himself, emitted from him, which were entwined with every living being around him, not only was he aware of the forces of all other living beings around him that were entwined with his, he could also SEE and FEEL these forces. He perceived even those forces in nature that were not embodied in a materialistic form such as an animal, a plant, or another human being, and he communicated with those forces. By the knowledge imparted to him by all these forces of nature he had the clarity to construct his own universe, ever expanding, always awesome, unfathomable, and he was totally aware of his own relationship with his universe. Thus the world was expanded for a warrior. When he became a warrior he learned to rely upon the forces around him rather than merely the visible objects. He realized that while his eyes could be deceived the other senses which he developed were usually right, and for his survival he developed those senses beyond the material limits, until they were the controlling factors in his life.

Thus the Indian entered into a world of forces, or spirits, a spirit world that was meaningful to him because it offered him another dimension for survival. Life for him became what might be called a total spiritual commitment - a philosophy that humbled him to the forces of nature, to the spirits of nature and to the Great Spirit, the Creator, whose handiwork was all the universe around him. The many rituals that formed an important part of his life often served to bring him closer to these spirits, and the fast in nature meant for some Indians a way of achieving a revealing closeness with the forces of nature. One Indian might describe the fast thus :

Even as the singer sees into the immediate landscape, he perceives a now and future dimension that is altogether remote, yet nonetheless real and inherent within it, a quality of evanescence and evolution, a state at once of being and of becoming. He beholds what is there; nothing of the scene is lost upon him. In the integrity of his vision he is wholly in possession of himself and of the world around him; he is quintessentially alive.

Most Indian people are able to see in these terms. Their view of the world is peculiarly native and distinct, and it determines who and what they are to a great extent. It is indeed the basis upon which they identify themselves as individuals and as a race. There is something of genetic significance in such a thing, perhaps, an element of being which resides in the blood and which is, after all, the very nucleus of the self.

- N. Scott Momaday (D)

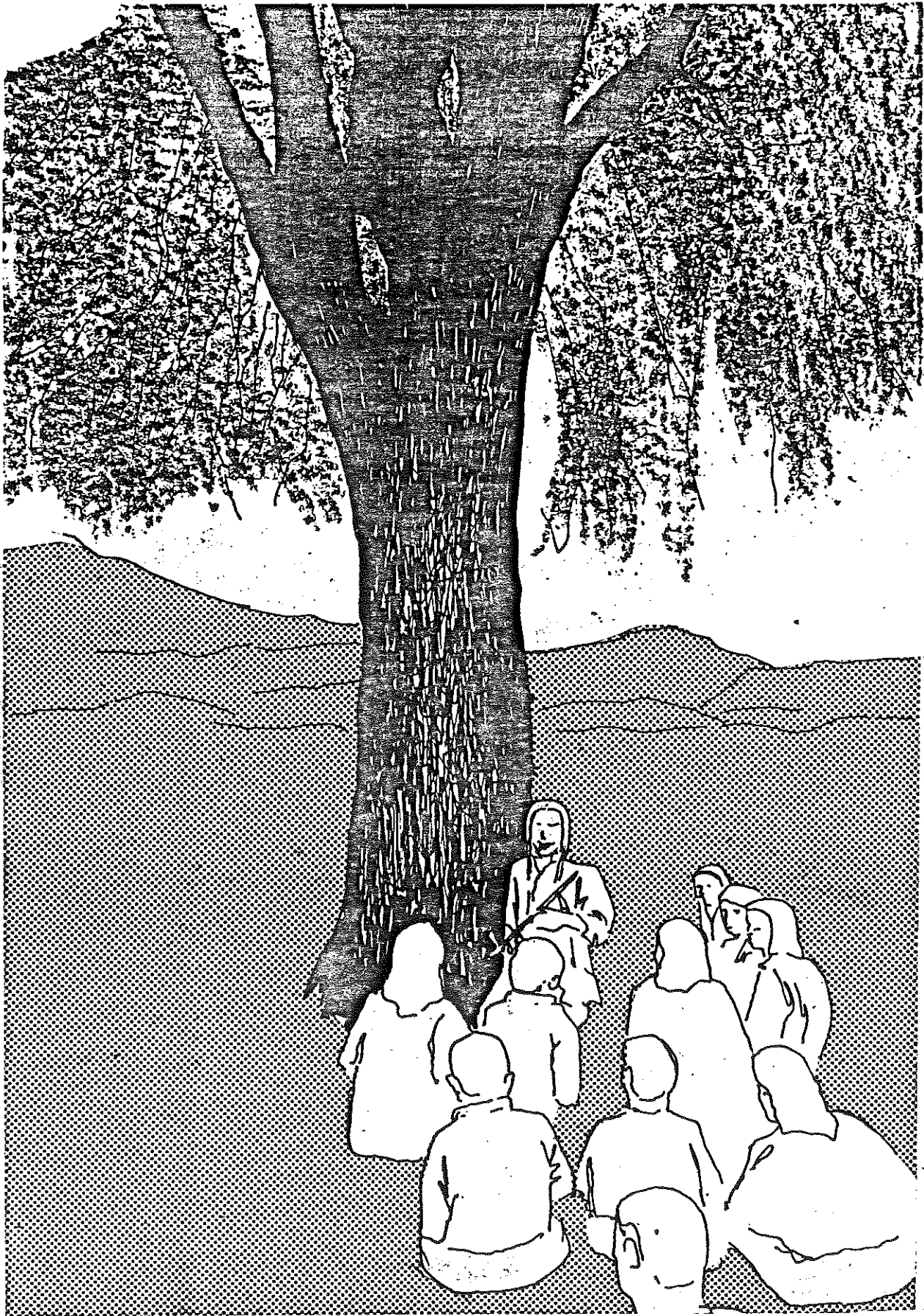
We constantly seek to be one with the environment, the universe, the Creator, and we go back to the Sweat Lodge, again and again, seeking to learn. When we have thus purified our minds of our ego and conflicts with nature, we may wish to go further in our quest for knowledge of the forces of nature. We may, depending upon our own personal goals, ask our teachers to help us go on a fast in nature. With their advice we will construct for ourselves a lodge in which we can barely sit down. Each tree we cut down to make the lodge demands respect, for the tree gave up its life so we might find knowledge, and we make an offering to the Creator before each tree is cut. After we have constructed our lodge in the ancient ways, we have a feast with all the people who have come to help us out through their support and their prayers. We then enter into the purification rite, where we are thoroughly cleansed. Our body, our mind, our soul, our whole being is opened to learning and understanding. Without speaking to anyone we then go to our place on virgin land for the fast, in a quest for a vision. During the day we are outside our shelters, and at night we are tied into our shelters by our Holy Men. Here we have made a commitment to go without food or water for two, three, four, or as many days as one felt necessary so that we may learn the lesson that the Creator will teach us.

At first our pangs of hunger and thirst, our body discomforts, take up much of our thought, and the plants, animals, and insects seem to invade us and cause us much misery. We are conscious of our personal suffering and we strike out and kill the insects around us, we fight against ourselves and the environment, as we sit there and suffer, aloof from the teeming life around us. The more we lash out against the environment around us the more uncomfortable we become.

Finally we give up the struggle. Finally we get tired of our own misery, and start observing the life around us. We realize that if we keep our own place and respect all the beings around us, they will let us be. The more we reduce our self-importance the more we find that we can work with nature, and the more we feel at par with nature; all the animals seem to come to our path. We learn that we can co-exist with our natural environment if we reduce our self-importance, and that if we reduce ourselves to the level of a squirrel, an ant, a shrub, they do not bother us any more because we start understanding their place. They have a right to be, just as we have a right to be. We may spend

To be something, to be himself, and always
at one with himself, a man must act as he
speaks, must know what course he ought to
take, and must follow that course with vigor
and persistence.

- Jean-Jacques Rousseau (C)



hours watching them and observing the forces that control their life, their destiny. In becoming at par with the living things around us and experiencing their lives we find that we can communicate with all the living beings around us, and we realize that we are not separate entities, apart from all nature.

After a few days without food or water, our senses of a hunter are keen. Our eyes and ears become sharper and another world unfolds to us; a world of forces; a world which reveals to us the interrelationship of the forces of nature and thus the forces of the Creator; a spiritual world beyond one's intellectual comprehension; and here the struggle beings, for we find that not only is our body alien to the natural environment, it has also been cut off from the life forces of nature, a child crying out to his Creator for help and understanding, for the forces within us are not strong enough to help us. We cry out in prayer, and we then feel the strength coming to us, we can hear the drums and the songs far off from the people who have gathered to ask the Creator to help us through these lessons, and that too gives us strength.

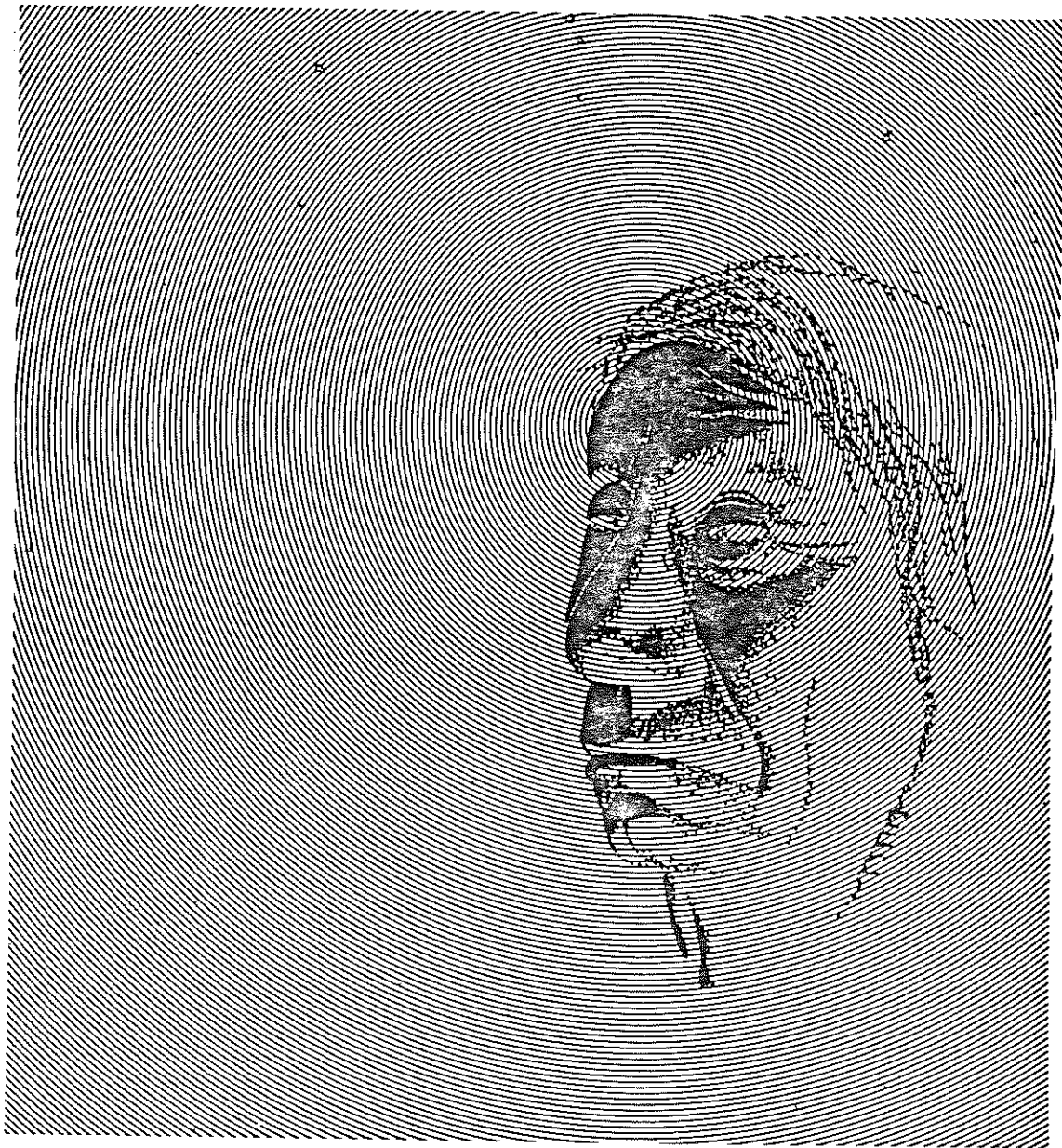
These are the experiences of the night. In the morning we look out into nature, and see the life forces around us. We ask each one of them for help and we receive it. We walk softly in our moccasins in the grass that we may not destroy much life. We lean against a tree and find the strength and force of the tree entering our body. The cool wind seems to revive us and the dew drops glistening on the leaves of the trees quench the thirst in our soul. The nature around us invigorates and feeds our soul.

And when it is all over, and the Holy Man opens the door, and we see the sun rising, we feel that it is the first day of our life, the first day in a new life of living in tune with the spirit, and the days we have spent in this shelter seem like years. When we go back from this experience to the purification rite, before we return ourselves to the world of men, we see the life forces of the people in the lodge, and even though it is black it is not dark for us because we see the spirits of the people around us.

Once we have the clarity and understanding that comes from being at one with ourselves and at one with the Creator, we realize that there is no other path to follow if we want to be in complete harmony. We call this the path of the heart and it is the only way for a human being to live and the only way to die.

With respect to such things as a sense of heritage, of a vital continuity in terms of origin and of destiny, a profound investment of the mind and spirit in the oral traditions of literature, philosophy, and religion--those things, in short, which constitute his vision of the world--the Indian is perhaps the most culturally secure of all Americans.

- N. Scott Momaday (D)



He is truly a warrior of Spirit whose soul is entwined with that of his Creator. When we follow this path we learn a great deal about ourselves and we can understand our whole universe, which is in our own body, our mind and our soul. We see ourselves as a unique creation, the products of millions of years of evolution, and we have a greater understanding of our own personal and unique destiny. We can hear the voices of our ancestors guiding us, for their knowledge is within us, the knowledge of thousands of years. It is far greater than the mere intellectual knowledge that we may have amassed in our own short lifetime: we find that our intellect from our own experience does not have the knowledge that we find from being in tune with ourselves, our forefathers; the wisdom and direction which we receive when we are in communion with them always leads us in the right direction.

It was through such an awareness that the Indians survived for thousands of years through the highly sensitive development of all their senses. Being hunters and warriors brought them totally to a oneness with their land - the earth, the plants, the animals, the air, the water, their fellow man. Had they not understood the need to be sensitive to the complex interrelationships between all aspects of nature, the Indians would have succumbed to the forces of nature and would not have survived to this day.

Our philosophy, our spirituality, the communication between the forces around us, and within us, our environment, our fellow man, our language - all have evolved from thousands of years from living on this land. This philosophy taught its lessons of living to our ancestors before us, and we believe that every child inherits this philosophy at his birth. Our classroom is the natural environment; our books of knowledge are our own people; our teachers are our Holy Men, the medicine men, and our whole environment; and our way to knowledge is the path of the heart, which makes of us whole beings fully in harmony with the rest of the universe.

B. A View of the Western Life Style

When we look at the world around us today, we see many conflicts. We see a society that has done great things for the comfort of its people and little for the good of nature. We see a people who have studied every little part of the world and understood little of the relationships between these parts. We see a race that teaches its young to compete with the environment and continue on

Do you think any man can find true happiness elsewhere than in his natural state; and when you try to spare him all suffering, are you not taking him out of his natural state?

- Jean-Jacques Rousseau (C)

Every feeling of hardship is inseparable from the desire to escape from it; every idea of pleasure from the desire to enjoy it. All desire implies a want, and all wants are painful; hence our wretchedness consists in the disproportion between our desires and our powers.

But the object which seemed within our grasp flies quicker than we can follow... Thus we exhaust our strength, yet never reach our goal, and the nearer we are to pleasure, the further we are from happiness. On the other hand, the more nearly a man's condition approximates to this state of nature the less difference is there between his desires and his powers, and happiness is therefore less remote. Lacking everything he is never less miserable; for misery consists, not in the lack of things, but in the needs which they inspire.

By striving to increase our happiness we change it into wretchedness. If a man were content to live, he would live happy; and he would therefore be good, for what would he have to gain by vice?

- Jean-Jacques Rousseau (C)

the path of their elders. We see the doings of the path with the head, a path which our ancestors knew leads to destruction.

A look at the history of the development of the Western civilization will show that the reaction of Anglo man to the hardships of nature was characteristically different from the response of the Indians of the past. To increase the material comforts of life, Anglo man treated nature as an adversary to be overcome, rather than an ally to be worked with. He saw himself as having dominion over his environment; not dependent upon nature for his happiness but dependent upon THINGS. By divorcing himself from the framework of other living things he also deprived himself of the peace and harmony that comes to a natural man working with his environment. When he came to a relationship with nature in which he found that he had a certain measure of control over its influences, life became easier to live, but it also pointed to a future in which the natural environment would always remain in subservience to man's needs. It cannot be surprising that from this background arose an attitude, in society, of trying to increase one's comfort and happiness at whatever cost - and the disproportionate development of man's ego had begun. And just as the Indian came to his way of knowledge through the philosophy of living of his ancestors, so did Anglo man, understandably, settle into a life-style that perpetuated his ancestor's disregard for the needs of nature; living became a continuous pattern of taking from nature and not giving back, a continuous pattern of EXPLOITATION.

When seen in the light of their own background, the dominant Western attitude today appears a logical and inevitable result of the Anglo man's responses to nature and the attitude and social priorities evident in white society today would seem to be quite pertinent to the white man's set of values. Consequently, the dominant society's educational systems and all its other physical manifestations are a natural result of a particular life philosophy.

The Indian, however, with his philosophy of harmony with nature, senses the danger. He sees a culture that has not only strayed far from the path of the heart, but is also handing down this legacy to each successive generation through its educational processes. The educational systems of such a society, as indeed members of that society are so aware, inevitably limit the full potential for learning that each child is born with, stunt its growth and introduce the child to the "social

Our wisdom is slavish prejudice, our customs
consist of control, restraint, compulsion.
Civilized man is born and dies a slave.

The infant is bound up in swaddling clothes, the
corpse is nailed down in his coffin. All his
life long man is imprisoned by our institutions.

- Jean-Jacques Rousseau (C)

There are two classes of men engaged in bodily activity, peasants and savages, and certainly neither of these pays the least attention to the cultivation of the mind. Peasants are rough, coarse and clumsy; savages are noted, not only for their keen senses, but for great subtlety of mind. Speaking generally, there is nothing duller than a peasant or sharper than a savage. What is the cause of this difference? The peasant has always done as he was told, what his father did before him, what he himself has always done; he is the creature of habit, he spends his life almost like an automaton on the same tasks; habit and obedience have taken the place of reason.

The case of the savage is very different; he is tied to no one place, he has no prescribed task, no superior to obey, he knows no law but his own will; he is therefore forced to reason at every step he takes. He can neither move nor walk without considering the consequences. Thus the more his body is exercised, the more alert is his mind; his strength and his reason increase together and each helps to develop the other.

Oh, learned tutor, let us see which of our two scholars is most like the savage and which is most like the peasant. Your scholar is subject to a power which is continually giving him instruction; he acts only on the word of command; he dare not eat when he is hungry, nor laugh when he is merry, nor weep when he is sad, nor offer one hand rather than the other, nor stir a foot unless he is told to do it; before long he will not venture to breathe without orders.

He rests securely on your foresight, why should he think for himself?

- Jean-Jacques Rousseau(C)

code" developed by such a society. In order to be useful to that society the child is forced adhere to a strict rigid discipline of man made rules and regulations that are often incompatible with the full development of a person. He is forced into an artificial and much dreaded environment called the "classroom" - usually drab and forbidding - where he must sit in straight rows and keep his body and his soul dormant while a teacher pours bagfuls of information into his ears. Knowledge, as the white man's methods of education reveal it, often merely as an entity to be containerized into courses and sessions and poured into the ear of a passive and submissive pupil, to be regurgitated upon command. Punitive efforts are made by the teachers when their pupils do not accept "knowledge" in this form, even though the child's whole being may instinctively reject a process of learning that is contrary to the natural learning ability with which the child was born.

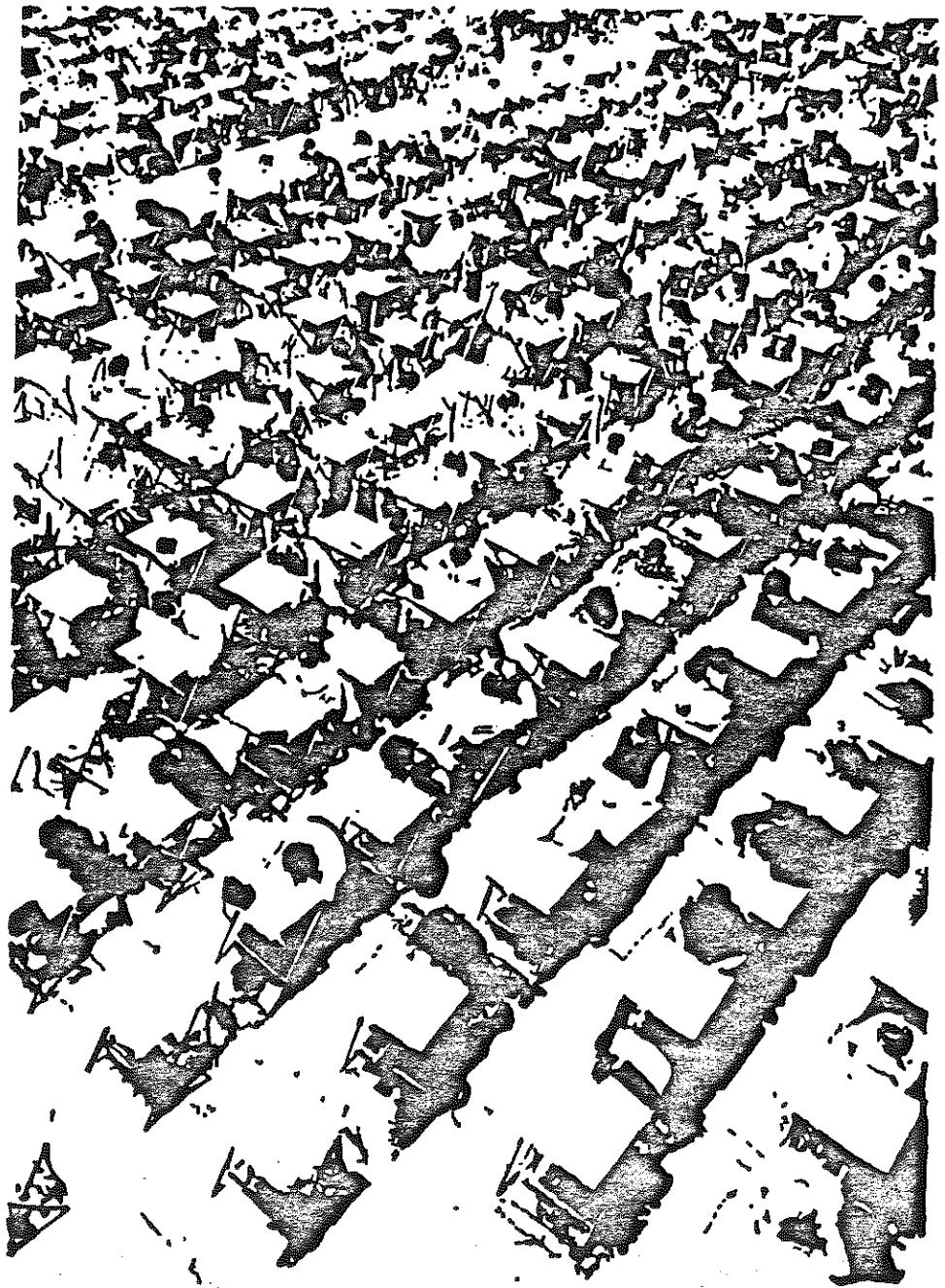
The Indians can see that this educational process, while it fully trains a man to function according to the tenets of his own culture's philosophy, also produces a man who follows the dictates of his intellect alone, and sees only with his eyes; a man who even as a child, learned to develop his ego and his desire for supremacy over his fellow student and his surroundings, through the spirit of competition created by his teachers in the classroom. The Indians see this as a strengthening of the intellect but a slow death of the individual; the child is destroyed because he is denied his own perception, his natural desire for learning from nature, his soul. He is taught to segment, not unite; to study minutely each leaf of the tree, not to perceive the beauty of the whole tree. And he is encouraged, in his later learning, to segment further, to study even more minutely each leaf of the tree. Children who have graduated through this process can "specialize" but what does this do for them? After their years in school and in university, the rest of their life is like concentrating entirely on one leaf of the tree reaching a phenomenally high level of understanding of the properties of that leaf - its colour, its texture, its pattern, its veins, but not even seeing the tree on which it grew, or the forest of which it is a part, or the rivers which flow through the forest, nor hearing the wind, nor seeing the sky, nor being aware of the animals, but particularly not even being aware of how he relates to the whole natural environment and to himself. There is nothing less than the slow and sure death of the "nature man" in him, to be replaced by a civilized man trained to live within the rigid framework of a society committed to a betterment of life through a reliance on technology. The result is a society that enjoys vastly improved standards

The Indian usually took only what was necessary for survival. Preserving the forests, animals, streams, and meadows was vital to the Indian, because his existence depended on maintaining natural things or, better yet, leaving them alone.

When we contrast the practices of the American Indian with those of Western man, interesting results are apparent. Western man, with the support of his religious beliefs, considers land, animals, minerals, forests, and even native peoples to be his private possessions. The world is his domain, created especially for him by the Almighty for his use and well-being.

The consequences of this Manifest Destiny attitude are clear. Indian tribes have been systematically subjugated and ruthlessly driven from territories they inhabited for countless years. The land is abused by careless farming practices and the use of pesticides. Rivers and lakes are so polluted by indiscriminate dumping that nothing can live in or near them. The air is befouled with particles and noxious gases to such an extent that people die and smog filters out the very sunlight. The once-numerous animals of the forest and plains are now either gone or endangered--slaughtered by the millions for "sport" or because they interfered with Western man's grand design. The unchecked human population swells alarmingly, putting further strain on frail ecosystems. Urban crowding causes the insidious disease of city strangulation; its symptoms are drug addiction, crime, sickness, senseless violence, and loss of identity.

- Albert J. Snow (E)



of material life, that has in this process made several contributions to the welfare of man on this planet - but a society that nevertheless faces the danger of serious or complete destruction by the attitudes, the technology, the vehicles through which these achievements were made.

The Indian in the Middle

When we come in contact with the rest of American society today, we can sense the threat of destructiveness to our whole being, to our spirit. To be amidst these forces drains our strength, as it should the spirit of any man, and we feel a heavy sense of anguish or disorder. We think of the terrible gases these people have created, the terrible bombs that can wipe out all of the Creator's handiwork in seconds, and we feel a sense of sorrow that our fellow man has strayed thus far from the way he was meant to be.

To an Indian brought up by his parents in the Indian ways of life, even to an Indian accustomed to the nature of life on a reserve, the very different attitudes of an urban society are a source of bewilderment. His forefathers sought happiness in striving for fullness, he sees comfort found mostly in mere material possessions- he was taught to be wholistic, he sees knowledge sought after through fragmented thought and specialized study. He was taught to revere life, he sees the development of methods of mass destruction. He knew a simple life, he is now surrounded by machines and systems that often direct the lives of the people.

But of all the contradictions he faces, perhaps the most painful is the system of education that is thrust upon his children, for it is in the education of their young that the future hopes of Indians lie. It is improper education that can hurt them most for it is education, as the means to affect change, that serves as the backbone of their survival as a people.

As their children go through the western educational process year after year, the intellect, more than the rest of their being, designed for straight thinking, is exercised - there is a slow death of the natural child, without his even being aware of it. For during years of this process the child becomes less able to listen to himself, his own body, his own soul, and the other senses that his forefathers developed by being hunters and warriors of spirit. He is weakened as an individual because he is taught to deny his own perception, deny his own roots, deny his own

We may become powerful by knowledge, but we attain fulness by sympathy. The highest education is one which does not merely give us information but makes life in harmony with all existence. From our very childhood habits are formed and knowledge is imparted in such a manner that our life is weaned away from nature, and our mind and the world are set in opposition from the beginnings of our days. Thus the greatest of educations for which we came prepared is neglected, and we are made to lose our world to find a bagful of information instead.

- Jean-Jacques Rousseau (C)

eternal wisdom, deny his whole soul. Since the welfare of civilized society depends to a great extent on a commitment to the needs of technology, he is often taught to deny himself as an individual completely, deny his own instinctive knowledge of nature, and rely on the knowledge assembled, organized and imposed on him by other people. He becomes entirely dependent upon other human beings for this knowledge, for his identity, for his *RAISON D'ETRE*, for not only does such a system give him everything the dominant culture wants him to know, it even gives him his only sense of identity - he becomes "somebody" if he can conform to the norms of the society by exercising his intellect and his ego, qualities that have often led to success in society.

With the need to "specialize" in modern society, the path to knowledge has necessarily become a fragmented one; each fact is studied like a separate leaf on a tree, studied independently. Each twig, each branch, each part of the tree is viewed in isolation. This makes the Indian child not only dependent on these facts for successful competition within the system, but also dependent always on his teacher to explain the interrelationship of all of these facts. The more he wishes to learn, the more are the facts thrown at him. The more he wishes to succeed, the more dependent he becomes on outside authority and expertise to gather these facts. He is a recognized member of society only when he has totally given up himself and conforms to the ways of the society around him, and by this time his ego and his intellect have become a significant part of his life style.

In contrast with these attitudes, our teachers, our old people learned from their grandfathers that learning is irrelevant if it does not relate to the life experience of each individual, if it does not make a man compatible with his internal forces, with his fellow man, with his total environment.

When a child is born, the Indians perceive him as an individual to be respected, as he is the product of his ancestors. He is pure and he speaks the truth, he has not developed his ego and has no cause to be dishonest with himself and with the people around him. Little children are complete human beings, the handiwork of millions of years of evolution. Within them rests the potential of developing all the knowledge that a human being needs to survive. Just as a deer does deerlike things when he springs from the womb and a bird does

Teach him to live rather than to avoid death; life is not breath, but action, the use of our senses, our mind, our faculties, every part of ourselves which makes us conscious of our being. Life consists less in length of days than in the keen sense of living.

In a natural state man is only eager to preserve his life while he has the means for its preservation; when self-preservation is no longer possible, he resigns himself to his fate and dies without vain torments. Nature teaches us the first law of resignation.

- Jean-Jacques Rousseau (C)

Freedom, not iron discipline, is the open-sesame, for discipline imposed from above defeats itself through fear of punishment. To be educationally creative, it must be self-discipline, an inner condition and not an outer imposition.

- Sasadhar Sinha (B)

The regular type of school forcibly snatches away children from a world full of the mystery of God's own handiwork, full of the suggestions of personality. It is a mere method of discipline which refuses to take account of the individual. It is a manufactory specially designed for grinding out uniform results.

- Sasadhar Sinha (B)

birdlike things when he hatches from the egg, a human being has his own path, and if he listens to himself he will understand how he fits within the Creator's Grand Design. The Indian is taught as a child to listen to himself, not to accept knowledge from others as his own knowledge; when his own knowledge is proven to him, he can adopt it as being relevant to himself. He is taught that the experiences of others are totally related only to them, they give an insight into the way they are, but not into the way he is. Their knowledge cannot be meaningful to him unless he experiences the knowledge himself. The Indian is not by any means alone in this thought. Rabindranath Tagore, the noted poet and philosopher from India, said: "I have a deep rooted conviction, that only through freedom can man attain his fullness of growth the Power of thinking and imagination are undoubtedly the two most essential powers in life, which must not be ignored if one desires to grow up in a proper way". The Indians of the past knew that a child should be encouraged to be an individual, encouraged in his development by his teachers. His teachers constructed situations for him through which he may find himself, and he was taught to search for knowledge. His teachers gave him tests that forced him to use not only his intellect, the process of straight thinking, but his whole mind, his whole body, his whole soul - his whole being. He was placed in a position of self-testing and self-discipline, not in a system of competition. Unlike the child of the dominant culture who is taught to be dependent upon higher authorities and systems for every aspect of his learning, the Indian child was taught to be dependent upon himself.

In the man-made classrooms of the western culture, our children, like the other Canadian children, are brought up to be fearful of authority, and fear of punishment is used as a tool for teaching. We know that fear is an inhibiting force in the growth of a child. In the natural environment which was the classroom of our forefathers, our teachers taught us to overcome fear. A hunter and a warrior learns about death, and how plants and animals must die in order that he might live. In killing one's own food there is a great lesson about death. One learns that death is a part of the Grand Design of nature and living beings have to die so that others may live. A warrior of spirit must experience the death of others and learn to accept his own if he is to conquer fear; because if he conquers the fear of his death he is free of all fear - he is free of outside control, for it was through his own experiences

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and through his own teachers that he understood and overcame fear.

Thus the Indian child is torn between two cultures: at home he is brought up an Indian, at school he is taught values that are strange to him, and at home again he is bounced back to the Indian way of life. Too young to understand, and without much choice anyway, he is sucked into a conflict in teaching that leaves him with a lot to learn. He fumbles through his schooling, stumbles at the academic tests of his knowledge, and, without this very necessary certification from the educational system, is launched into the adult world ill-equipped to bring harmony to himself, leave alone live in harmony with others of his kind or an alien society. An Indian in the present educational system does not really have a fair chance to develop as a full human being.

D. The Cultural Balance

The Indian sees in the full realization of the values of his own culture much more than merely justice to a few people; he sees the growth of a universal understanding of a whole way of living. Ironically, his survival as a unique people of the world could, through such a universal understanding, deflect western man from his own present gradual degradation of life. But his survival as a culture is threatened by the present attitudes that society harbors towards him, and he realizes that his hope lies in being allowed to chart his own path, to seek and offer to society his own solutions to the existing stress on Indian life, both in the urban scene and in the reserve.

We must be allowed to help our children when they become confused, when they become exposed to the values of a society which shows little understanding of his circumstances. Our children must not be fed with systems that go against their

innate harmony with nature. Their inner voice is pure and strong when they are children and we cannot let them think that this inner voice is wrong. We cannot allow the systems to create a conflict, to force a child to believe what he is told to believe by his teachers rather than what he hears from within himself. His education must be in accord with his life. In his preparations for life in Canadian society the child needs support for his innate convictions as well. He needs them strengthened in his teaching, and he does not find this strength now. He must be allowed to be true to himself.

The Indian realizes that in his constant struggle with the alien values thrust upon him, he must not grow insensitive to the many aspects of western culture that he must acquire to function in western society. He must be given the opportunity to select those aspects of the dominant society that he needs for his full development in the world of today. While he must not be taught to placidly conform to the whole alien value system, he must be offered the knowledge he needs to examine the values of the white society and understand the interrelationship in all of its facets, and choose his own way. He realizes that the ideals of the dominant society are rapidly changing and that people are striving to come closer to themselves, to their fellow man and to the natural environment. Many people dedicated to this way of life, today have values similar to the Indian's and he is hopeful that a bond of communication could be formed with these and other members of the dominant society who are seeking to expand their knowledge beyond the limits of the materialistic environment they have created for themselves. The Indian feels it is imperative that he understand these people and is willing to share his knowledge with these people.

"The Indian", says Popovi Da, "does not impose his values on others. They are not missionaries, but they have faith in themselves. Among those Indians who believe and practise their own religion, there is a uniform belief that, during the centuries of living on this continent, they have made a unique adjustment and that their well-conceived percepts could supply important alternative behavior patterns to the anglo society. They believe they could mesh their contributions with those of the white society and, given time without harassment, they could produce a model for twenty-first century living.

But if they are plunged into a society with which they have little or no familiarity and less interest they will sink into the morass of the slums." *

Our biggest hope lies in ourselves, our own efforts. What good are the programs of the dominant society that try to help our people after they have been crippled and destroyed? They happen after the damage is done. The helper takes an ego-motivated position and his very help is destructive because he sets himself above us and gives - and the giver is the destroyer. Only we can help ourselves, and the only way we can help ourselves is to follow our own path of knowledge in understanding the new environment around us. The man who shares this land with us is a part of that environment. For our own survival we must understand his actions, just as we need the knowledge within us.

It is therefore important, if we are to survive, to gain as much knowledge about the peoples around us as we can, because not only do we want to survive but we also want to be free - free as we were before the coming of the immigrant culture. It is not inconsistent with our culture to understand our whole environment and our fellow man, not only to take defensive action in order that he does not destroy us, but also to take the positive action typical of a warrior and a hunter who lived in harmony with his total environment. We have to be at one with our fellow man, yet retain our own identity. We can still follow a path of our own choice, a way of life suited to our circumstance, which is spiritually entwined with nature and the Creator; but we must learn to treat our fellow man, as different as he is to our own beliefs, as indifferent as we believe he is to the life cycle, as a member of the human family. We have to understand the functioning of the various systems of society, including the educational system. We have to learn how to "think straight" and understand the rest of society, since we must compete with members of this society in order to perform in it.

*Mr. Popovi Da, son of the world-famed potter, Maria Martinex, himself shares her fame as an artist of great note. As former governor of the Pueblo of San Ildefonso, his observations are based on intimate knowledge and perception.

What does education mean? It means awakening one's life fully. Life means constant progress along the path of one's true interest.

Before his parents chose a calling for him, nature called him to be a man. Life is the trade I would teach him.

- Sasadhar Sinha (A)

I secure his present good by giving him his freedom, and his future good by arming him against the evils he will have to bear.

- Jean-Jacques Rousseau (C)

From the biological as well as from the psychological point of view, the educator must consider the child as a little human animal destined for the spiritual and moral life; and this animal develops according to certain laws whose natural progression must be respected above all.

- Jean-Jacques Rousseau (C)

PART II - EDUCATION

The Need for a New Educational System

Such are the basic Indian values, and also some of the dominant society values that are so different. In the light of these fundamentally different value systems it is not hard to understand that the educational system of the anglo society, in its present form, is not capable of serving the Indian people. It is therefore necessary to develop an educational system that would be most suited to the Indian values - both in their traditional forms and in their present-day adaptations - and to examine ways in which it may be implemented.

The broad purpose of education is to prepare a person for life and for his fullest development as a human being. An education system developed for Indians must, then, be compatible with the unique Indian circumstances of life, at the same time equipping him with the areas of knowledge that he requires in order to lead his own life, wherever he may wish to be. In its homes and its schools, the dominant society develops in its young appreciation for their own culture, and a knowledge of their own life-style, and thus is seen in their places of learning as well. This educational system is naturally therefore suited to the survival of that particular culture. The Indian has been on this continent thousands of years longer than the anglo man, and it is indeed hardly surprising that he should have developed an extremely rich culture and life-style during this time. It becomes imperative that, just as the anglo child must learn a respect for his tradition, the Indian child must be prepared for life in such a manner that he develops a growing sense of "belonging" to his own culture and to his own roots. And if the Indian is to learn in the proper unique context of his own tradition, then Indian methods must help shape the process of his teaching, and in fact the western knowledge that the Indians must acquire must also be transmitted in the same way.

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It is consistent with our traditional lives that we learn as much as is needed to enable us to survive. The white man's knowledge is not exclusively his, it is part of the knowledge of the community of man. Therefore we do not turn our backs to this knowledge, we wish to learn it for our benefit.

Since the Indian has always been so close to nature, the white man's ways of fragmenting knowledge are foreign to him, and he has always thought in terms of wholes. He therefore cannot conceive of learning as being a process in which his mind is saturated with segmented factual material. He would rather place the stress on understanding concepts and processes, and study the details only in their relation to the whole. An education system for him must therefore present all learning material only in terms of their relevance to his life-needs. The learning process must be consistent with the processes being learned.

B. Concept for Indian Education in Alberta

The greatest road-block the Indian meets on the way to a "CULTURAL BALANCE" is the present educational mill in which the bewildered Indian child finds himself. It is here that the child's native values are first questioned, even summarily rejected. It is here that he is taught he is an inferior being, through books and teachers displaying little knowledge of his culture. It is here, indeed, that the entire conflict between the cultures most vividly manifests itself, for it is in the teaching of its young that are reflected the attitudes that any society treasures most. It follows imperatively that, if the Indians as a people are to remain and grow as a unique culture, then the effort must begin with the early learning process of each individual Indian. The Indian must be given the educational opportunity to realize his potential. He must have the opportunity to acquire an education which will allow him, depending upon his interests and abilities to serve in any section of society that he chooses: to enter the professions; to train in vocational skills; to

Education should be a spontaneous process.
Children would imbibe education as they imbibe
food without suffering the consequences of
forcible feeding inherent in present-day
education.

- Sasadhar Sinha (B)

train in business skills; or, if he wishes, to use his education in serving his reserve community in one of the many areas where his service is needed. However, in order to develop him as a full human being, his education must also provide for his emotional and spiritual needs, which are unique.

We must change the present "cells and bells" system of education which develops weak people entirely dependent upon a questionable system; we must develop the kind of education which encourages individual strength, the kind of education where each child can quench his thirst for knowledge at his own pace rather than by competing with his fellow students. He must compete with himself. His own battle must be with himself first, for only by thoroughly understanding himself can he understand his fellow man.

The first encounter between a child and "school" should be a positive experience. He has, until now, spent his earlier years in the community in which he was born, with his parents and relatives, and among his friends. This is his world, the only one he knows and the only one, because of his experiences within it, that has any real meaning for him. It is his reference point by which he judges the lessons of each new experience. Within it, close to his parents and relatives, he feels secure. He may have picked up a smattering of English, but the language which he hears spoken, understands and speaks is the language of his people. At home, he may have been told stories of his forbears, of nature's creatures or of religious matters; Indian things spoken of in an Indian way, by Indians using his Indian language. At home, he has been taught by Indian methods, Indian standards of behavior and respect appropriate to his age. This learning experience began when he was born; he has since learned his language, some of the social and religious values and beliefs of his people, and, through experience, other matters regarding the natural environment surrounding the community. He identifies, in his child's way, with the culture of which he feels to be a part. His roots are at home and in his community and he feels secure; he is a young Indian.

At this point in his learning process, school should not be a disruptive force, an abrupt removal from his familiar surroundings to a strange place, to an alien building. In place of his family, a strange person who, even though not a part of his world, is somehow in a position of authority over him. Where dogmatic standards of behavior and respect are imposed; standards which are

The basic education of the mind and the release of the creative impulses in a person can normally be achieved only through the mother tongue.

No one can derive real benefit from the cultural resources of other countries without first acquiring a firm footing in his own cultural traditions and heritage.

One learns a foreign language in order to open up a new pathway for the mind in an unexplored treasure house of knowledge and thought. If the mind has not been initially trained to find its way in the world of ideas through an intelligent mastery of the processes of thought in one's own language, new languages may only create new confusion.

- Sasadhar Sinha (A)



If the infant sprang at one bound from its mother's breast to the age of reason, the present type of education would be quite suitable, but its natural growth calls for quite a different training. The mind should be left undisturbed till its faculties have developed; for while it is blind it cannot see the torch you offer it, nor can it follow through the vast expanse of ideas a path so faintly traced by reason that the best eyes can scarcely follow it.

Of all man's faculties, reason, which is, so to speak, compounded of all the rest, is the last and choicest growth, and it is this you would use for the child's early training. To make a man reasonable is the coping stone of a good education, and yet you profess to train a child through his reason! You begin at the wrong end, you make the end the means. If children understood reason they would not need education, but by talking to them from their earliest age in a language they do not understand you accustom them to be satisfied with words, to question all that is said to them, to think themselves as wise as their teachers; you train them to be argumentative and rebellious: and whatever you think you gain from motives of reason, you really gain from greediness, fear, or vanity with which you are obliged to reinforce your reasoning.

— Sasadhar Sinha (A)

quite different from those he has learned at home; where he is forced to sit in an imprisoning classroom, where matters irrelevant to his life are forced upon him in a manner and by methods incompatible with the benign, carefully contrived instructions of his parents. Where a language other than his own is the medium of conversation. Where things familiar to him, Indian matters, are ignored or repressed, including the values and beliefs which he learned from his parents and which are a part of his character -- to be replaced by alien values and beliefs held to be the proper ones. Where the language he understands is not the medium of communication. Where he is subjected to a process of melting down, as it were, to be gradually recast in a mold conforming to the values and beliefs of his new teacher and the school. Where, as this process is being brought about, his Indian roots are eroded. Where the school and his parents teach him incompatible value systems and he is thus in conflict within -- while being in conflict with his teachers on the one hand and his parents on the other. His natural learning process has been arrested and as time goes on, school becomes the generator of misery.

No, the Indian child should be treated as an Indian child. His first experience with "school" and his "schooling" should be as an easy merger with the learning process already in effect. The values and beliefs and cultural matters which have begun to form his character and are part of his make-up should be broadened, as befits his age and his ability to grasp them. His physical environment, with which he identifies, and which has been the reference point for many of his direct learning experiences up to now, should continue to have its place in his continuing learning process. All things which he has come to think in terms of, should continue to be the means of imparting new knowledge. His language - the language with which he thinks and understands - should continue to be the medium of communication in his continuing learning process, particularly in his early "schooling". Indian matters must continue to be taught. Local people - his parents and the wise men of the community, among others - should add their instruction and direct presence to the learning and the learning environment. Thus their importance - and the importance of what they taught - would be enhanced in the eyes of the Indian child. This importance should never be diminished, because the child's sense of security must never be threatened.

His school must therefore be located within his own community - close to home and family; and for the above reasons, the school should be governed by community representatives. Once the child has found the school an interesting place, having learned matters concerning his people, their traditions, some of their culture, and so on, other subject matter can be gradually introduced. Every effort must be made to present this material in a relevant manner, applicable to the child - that is to say, in the context of the natural environment, or in a way which uses some part of his culture as the learning example.

The child soon becomes bored with a torrent of words directed at him. During his early years, direct experiences contributed most to his learning, and in this transitional period at school, any changes must be gradual merges. Direct experiences should continue as one medium of learning, and audio visual presentations, perhaps the next most interesting medium, should be used as much as is possible and practicable. These could present both cultural and "subject" matters. They should be presentations which are tailored to his level of understanding and in sympathy with his particular tribe and language. These aids and the relevant books very probably do not yet exist, and they will therefore have to be specially produced. "Grades" or "Grade levels" - with their black-white pass-fail connotations could have no place in this school. While they may be an easy device of evaluation for the teacher in a conventional classroom, they do not serve the children in a school which views learning as a continuing process, since Indian children are not in this school to earn Success or Failure labels - they are here to learn. Therefore a truly ungraded curriculum must be followed, with interest and ability being the basis for the child's learning pace. Consistent with the Indian ways of teaching, the child should have freedom to learn; his teachers will provide him with guidance to channel curiosity.

Above all, his teacher - whoever he may be - must sympathize with the Indian people and be sensitive to their ways. He at the same time must have a clear grasp of the ways of the dominant society, so that the child may begin to expand his knowledge beyond the limits of his community, and so that the good qualities of the dominant society will not be understated. However, an Indian teacher upon whom has been impressed dominant society values and beliefs, and who possesses accreditation from that society, with little or only a

superficial adherence to his own peoples values and beliefs, is likely to be particularly unsuitable as a teacher in an Indian school. These sensitive teaching needs are best served by persons on the reserve, perhaps without a formal degree but with a deep-rooted knowledge of the dominant society, Indian people and subject matter; or perhaps even by a sensitive teacher from the dominant society who understands the language and the ways of the Indian people. At the present time and in the present institutions, teachers do not have their training directed to preparing them to properly perform their task among people of a different race within the context of unfamiliar customs and language. It will therefore be necessary to specially train the teaching personnel, and the training must be done only by those who have the proper background.

The culture, customs, language, attitudes and needs of the Indian people are unique. The type of school and school system which serves the dominant society will not, as is evident by their product, adequately serve the Indian people, and a new system must be developed which will realize these unique needs. It is particularly important that the teacher in such a system, the learning environment, and the community form a cohesive unit whose first motive is to educate their young within the context of their own culture and in a way relevant to them. The educational system and the educational process must not be a rigid unit of force and imposition - it must rather be compliant with the needs of the Indian child and obtain its results by the sensitive appeal to, and by taking advantage of, the Indian child's particular ingrained learning process of impression and recall.

Cultural matters are learned by instruction, observation and through continual use throughout one's life. There is no way that learning of things of a cultural nature can be compressed into a short time, then abandoned to learn other things. The culture must be lived to be alive; therefore involvement during the schooling process must be continuous - and at a pace elders judge is in keeping with the Indian child's age and understanding. In the meantime, and at the same time, learning of western matters should be accelerated but not presented in a manner which is incompatible with the child's native way of reasoning, or erosive to Indian values and beliefs.

It is not that the dominant society would lose by giving us the opportunity of collecting and dispersing our knowledge to ourselves and to the rest of society, they would gain since their own perspective would be broadened. In the past few years the ways of the dominant society have been held in question by their own children. Their own children see the flaws in their system. Their own children are crying for a sense of soul. Their own children abhor being caught in the systems that crush their souls and their humanness, and thus that society is changing. The concern of the majority of people caught within the systems is being heard all over this country, all over the world.

But we have the answers for our own total human existence and the dominant society is seeking them. While they are seeking the knowledge they have missed from centuries of being without soul and freedom, it is still a part of our knowledge and our way of life.

In every one of our classrooms in which any of our children are being taught, we must for the sake of our children, have a teacher who knows our own culture, our language, who is an Indian in spirit, and he must also be able to communicate effectively with the dominant culture. There are many people in the dominant society, who respect our values and our point of view and who would like to know more about us, and learn from our own teachers. With their attitudes they can help us and our children tremendously and in return we can teach them much. Hopefully these representatives, the best of the dominant society, can help us teach our children about the good forces in the dominant culture.

Our own Indian teachers must be learned in the Indian ways of teaching. Our traditional teachers knew various ways, various situations which they would construct for us in order that we may find the knowledge ourselves. Each person must find his own way. Each person has his own path but ultimately as we view our individual journeys we realize that the path is wide and that we are all on the same path. We realize that we are at different positions on the path and some of us have gone off the path, only to come back to follow it more stringently. Sometimes we can ask help from people who are further along the path and sometimes we can give help to others who have yet to learn the experiences relevant to this journey. But we can never advise people what to do. We all tackle our problems differently, all make our own separate mistakes and from these we learn.

But what we find amazing is that when we are on this journey - the answers are the same. The answers have come from within us and they are our own answers. And if they are the same as those of our fellow man, we realize how much alike we are. Our experiences reinforce our oneness, our wholeness, our sameness with our fellow man and with the total environment - and the knowledge came not from within a book, it came from within ourselves. The various tests which our teachers place before us - which evolved from thousands of years of ritual - force us to go deeply inward to ourselves to find the answer; so deep that we might even read our own genetic code; so deep that within us we find knowledge that is beyond ourselves, beyond our own intellect, a knowledge that is passed on through our ancestors. That knowledge dwells within each one of us and it is the knowledge of thousands of years, not the knowledge we have gleaned in our short existence. It is the knowledge a whole species has absorbed from its entire evolution. The experiences which we learn from the tests and from our teachers, make us thirst for knowledge. Life becomes a fantastic experience.

But we must temper this knowledge with the broader and deeper wisdom that comes from an awareness of the ways of the other peoples, the other ancient cultures of the world. This will give us the ability and preparedness to meet other peoples, to strengthen the dignity of our race by understanding those people who share our sensitivity for the universe.

In the process of Indian education, in a sense, learning and culture will proceed hand in hand. A foundation of Indian culture is being laid which is being continually added to during the school years, along with a gradually increasing infusion of western knowledge, language and customs. These two elements are presented in a coordinated manner and by the sensitive, integrated presentation of learning materials - that is, the presenting of western knowledge in an Indian context, in a manner relevant to the Indians' immediate life and individual learning pace.

Thus, in the Indian child's mind is born a knowledge of, an appreciation for, and a sense of identification with his people; the reinforcement of individual worth through involvement and achievement. And because the religious aspects, among others, of his culture have been nourished and followed, there is developed an individual who, when the time comes, will have the perspective to keep at

peace with himself in whatever society he may eventually be.

And so the "Cultural Shock" which has been particularly ruinous to the Indian, will be removed. Through gradual involvement in varied learning experiences throughout his school years, the Indian has gradually lived the changes; he has gradually adapted himself; and while his Indian values and beliefs have been honored and emphasized, he has learned western knowledge as well; the latter being an integral part of his total knowledge due to the manner in which it was taught and learned.

The Indian youth has at the same time received an education in all the academic areas within the normal syllabus of a western school, and at a final level corresponding to that of his dominant society counterparts. Thus, his cultural education has not detracted from, but has enhanced his progress and achievement in studies that, when he may wish to enter into a more specialized western educational system later in life, serve to bring him to a par with the academic training of students of the dominant society. Thus he has received the educational opportunity to realize his potential.

The Educational Network

While the education of young Indians will form the foundation to a strengthening of the place of the Indian Culture in modern society, it is obvious that attention must be directed to several other areas if Indians of all ages are to regain lost confidence in their abused identity, and a harmonious co-existence of both cultures is to be achieved. Young Indian adults might wish to be adequately equipped to function in today's technological society, or prepare for a higher study in a university of the dominant society. Both youths and older Indians might wish to receive training necessary for the development of small and medium-scale industry on the Reserves. Older Indians may wish to receive technical training, or prepare for administrative and organizational roles; Indian teachers must be trained for service in Indian centres of learning. Extensive training will be required in the areas of fine arts and other creative skills, especially the traditional Indian crafts. Several Indians may be expected to research, assemble, document and study Indian history and folklore, to

develop resource centres, archives of Indian knowledge. To realize so vast a range of goals, the Indians envisage, in its full development, a total educational system that will be designed to serve all aspects of Indian life and cater to every need and aspiration of the Indian people.

The educational, social, and economic needs of each individual Reserve will be met most satisfactorily by educational facilities located on the Reserve, and offering a wide range of opportunities in education, vocational training and life skills, to persons of all ages in that community.

The Alberta Indian Education Centre will supply the other places of learning with specially developed training facilities and resource materials, and also function as a place for higher learning and a springing point for major inter-cultural communication.

Other special facilities will be developed to serve other special needs, as those needs arise and are felt.

Thus the Indians of the entire province will be served by a network of educational facilities which, by virtue of their geographic locations and committed goals, will be equipped to respond to needs generated on every reserve - a network that will grow and adapt in step with the needs of the Indian people.

7. Education at the Community Level

The foundation of an Indian child's education, which relates him to the cultural tradition of his people and prepares him for a later life in western society, will be cast in COMMUNITY-BASED SCHOOLS located within each community and designed to provide the learning resources and facilities prescribed by the needs of that community. These schools will function as storehouses of resource material and personnel, whose prime function is to make available to the community all the necessary learning materials, teaching personnel and places for learning needed by persons seeking a basic level of education.

But where the school is not at one with our entire social life, where it is an imposition on our society, it is dry and lifeless. What we learn from it is learnt with difficulty; and when the time comes for its application we cannot use it adequately. We learn our lessons by rote; they have no relation to the people around us, no relevance to life. Our school-learning finds no echo at home or among friends; on the contrary, it is often looked upon with hostility. In such circumstances, the school is only a machine, a manufactory of matter without life.

- Sasadhar Sinha (A)

While their main responsibility lies in offering early learning opportunities to the young, they will always also be a valuable asset to all other persons who wish to take part in the learning process. Upgrading opportunities will be offered to adults in the community. Training in a wide range of vocational skills and trades will be offered, with equipment not only adequate for comprehensive training but also suitable to allow the school to offer actual technical services to the community. Courses in business education, administration and so on will equip persons to function in responsible roles in total community development work.

In the learning places of our young, the knowledge, the curriculum, the various programs, must all be designed for each child so that each will learn after his own heart, his own nature, his own separate being. The "peer group" of twenty-five or thirty children locked in a classroom, entirely separated from the rest of their community, entirely separated from their natural environment, must not be allowed to continue.

There are other methods of education that are accepted in the dominant culture which are in use among many people of the world, whose purpose is to develop the whole human being, to develop the whole person, to base the whole educational system on the individual needs of the students. There are no grades in such systems. Each individual student is allowed to learn as much as he can understand and cope with, without the other students being bored by held back from their own faster pace. Slower children are not humiliated because they cannot learn as quickly as others. Such are the methods we want. A child on his own; encouraged away from the classroom setting to seek knowledge; having all the necessary capsules of knowledge of the dominant culture available to him, be they books, notes, or tapes, having Indian teachers and western resource people to answer his questions; counselled and guided by his own people when he is confused, - this is the way of learning for our children.

The conventional classroom stifles the child's growth. It should be replaced by a resource centre and by resource people who will guide each child along his own path. He must be able to communicate directly with his teachers and his counsellors. He must have direct access to all resource material to help him on his way. Students should be encouraged to help each other and teach one another because through teaching, one learns a great deal. So they should be encouraged to assemble to discuss the knowledge they are gaining, to determine whether it is relevant to them. The teachers themselves must learn to be at par with everyone else, and with the students, as this is the only way there may be achieved a communication between them. Knowledge should

be taught to the children in large groups only when one-way communication is necessary, such as with the use of films and tapes, performances or lectures; but this one-way course of knowledge must not be imposed as eternal truths, it should rather be offered as information which will spark the children to asking questions and seeking their individual answers through discussion with their fellow students and their teachers, through research and at the resource centre.

Indeed this will be the nature of all our learning places, and the Alberta Indian Education Centre will serve us in this manner, too.

Naturally, the kind of environment that will offer these opportunities, and also serve the learning needs described earlier, providing each student with an opportunity for discovering his own vehicle and route for learning, cannot be found in the conventional classroom concept, with its rigid teaching format, its tendency to package all learning into convenient portions, its deification of the teacher, and its remoteness from nature and sometimes the whole purpose of learning. The Indian concept of education demands the use of the total environment as the learning setting, with the indoor classroom relegated to only selected uses.

The Indian children must be taken out of the mundane classrooms of today's schools and placed in the familiar setting of their own communities. They must not in their learning process, be segregated from the rest of their community, their own people, or separated from their elders who are the bearers of their knowledge. These children must develop their own perspective, and perceive their own world which is compatible with their own existence.

For the sake of his total development, the child - or, for that matter, any person - must have a wide variation in his physical learning environment. The resource centre, his advisors, his teachers, may be housed in one area but it must be recognized that the education of an individual cannot be confined to any one area. He must have the freedom to seek answers for himself outside this storehouse of information. He must have access to all the other sources of knowledge outside the limiting environment of the resource centre. There is a whole universe for the child to perceive, and limiting him to a man-made environment, segregating him from his fellow man, from children younger than himself, from children older than himself, from his own brothers and sisters, from his family, segregating him from his normal community life and isolating him with only a few members of his own age group in the limited environment of a

The human child abstracted from his natural surroundings can not grow into full manhood. The fragmentary nature of his development is, therefore, not only a derogation of his personality, but also a source of social disequilibrium.

- Sasadhar Sinha (A)

classroom, is surely forcing upon him a very narrow concept of education. His learning process must somehow be expanded into the whole span of his community life, so that it always retains its relevance to life in his society.

When the children must be forced into a classroom for the use of educational media facilities and so on, the experiences of the inside world must be a human environment, not that of a distribution centre for bagfuls of information. It must be an extension of the community environment around it, so that it does not alienate the students to the learning process.

We must have our classrooms, our schools, open into the natural environment. Our Indian teachers must often take us into nature's classroom and teach us how to become self-sufficient human beings in harmony with the Grand Design of nature. For some tribes among us the purification ceremony is one of traditional rites for making a man whole and knowledgeable about himself, his fellow man and his universe around him. It has been with us for thousands of years and was taken away from us by the immigrant culture when we needed it most for our strength. The people of those tribes realize that the ritual of the purification ceremony is fundamental to their culture for it allows each man to find his own path, his own destiny. It is a source of knowledge beyond the scope of the reality and the understanding of the dominant culture. It is an effective means of assisting us to survive today just as it was effective in helping us survive and nature experiences that on this land before the coming of civilization. A sweat lodge in a sense, like the many other rituals we have, is one of the Indian classrooms with all the elements of the universe in it.

When we come to search within ourselves in this primeval environment, the quest ends when the door is opened to the east and light streams into the Lodge. We realize then that when we are in tune with ourselves knowledge is like a light from the east, a birth of a new day, with all its beauty. The rest of this awesome, fantastic world is opened to us to perceive, and the joy of being alive and being a part of our natural environment takes on even greater meaning. The mundane problems which created our imbalance seem like the mere stamping of children's feet, and we laugh at ourselves and be humble, and we think how much they have lost who do not really see the world around them and let petty conflicts destroy their happiness.

Just as the traditional learning process is happening in all parts of normal Indian community life, with the active involvement of all people in the community, this new resource centre must also be an intrinsic part of the community it serves. The learning process must not be restricted only to children but to all persons on the reserve wishing to learn. Many Indian parents have thus far had little or no opportunity to pursue a path of learning in the existing educational pattern, and many of these people may wish to expand their knowledge in both the Indian and the western areas of learning. Parents, who in the past were always devoted to the total education of their children, will want now to be intimately involved with their development. Other adults will wish to acquire the many branches of knowledge needed for them to function usefully in the development of their communities. Such people must always have access to whatever learning opportunities are available in their own communities.

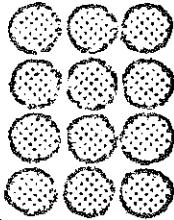
Since teaching will no longer be a one-way communication, with children helping children, and adults learning so that they may later teach and develop their communities, it can be said that everyone on the reserve could be a student and everyone could be a teacher. And since the process of human growth and development was never intended to be taken place only during what are today prescribed as "school hours", this resource centre will function at all times of the day. Thus this centre will break down the traditional concepts of a school, by offering learning opportunities to all people, all the time, in the entire community. Even such facilities as gymnasiums, playfields, auditoriums, eating places - normally provided separately for the "school" and for the "Community" - will now be shared by the whole tribe, and differences between "students" and the rest of the people are even further broken down.

This resources centre will contain information related to the western culture, to at least the same extent found in western schools, so that the Indian will not be denied any areas of knowledge normally available to the western children. Moreover, the information must be available in the most suitable formats that have been developed in step with the latest and most effective means of communication in educational systems today. The information should even extend beyond the confines of the people of Canada, to include other cultures from around the world.

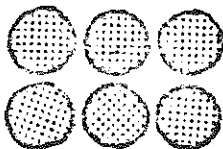
Secondary School Spaces

future

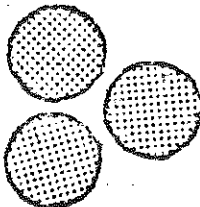
Current



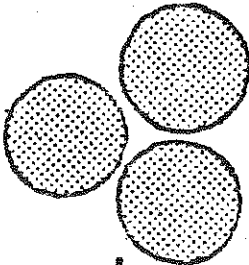
Regular classrooms for 30-35 students



Special educational spaces for 30-35 students



Vari-Purpose rooms for 75-150 students



Auditorium, gymnasium and cafeteria



Other necessary facilities and spaces



Outdoor spaces



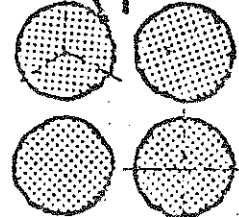
Individual study spaces for 1 or 2 students



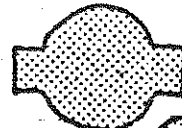
Seminar spaces for 12-15 students



Classrooms for 25-35 students



Large-group rooms for 75-150 students



Large multi-purpose areas for 150 or more students



Other necessary facilities



Outdoor spaces



Television studio facilities

Such a resources centre will naturally be of the size and scope needed for the community it serves, and can grow as that community grows. There are however several bands that are too small in number to need or be able to use the opportunities offered by a large resources centre. Such small bands of Indians, depending on the proximity of other bands, will be afforded full access to the larger resources centres of those nearby communities, so that their size will not deny them facilities available to other Indians.

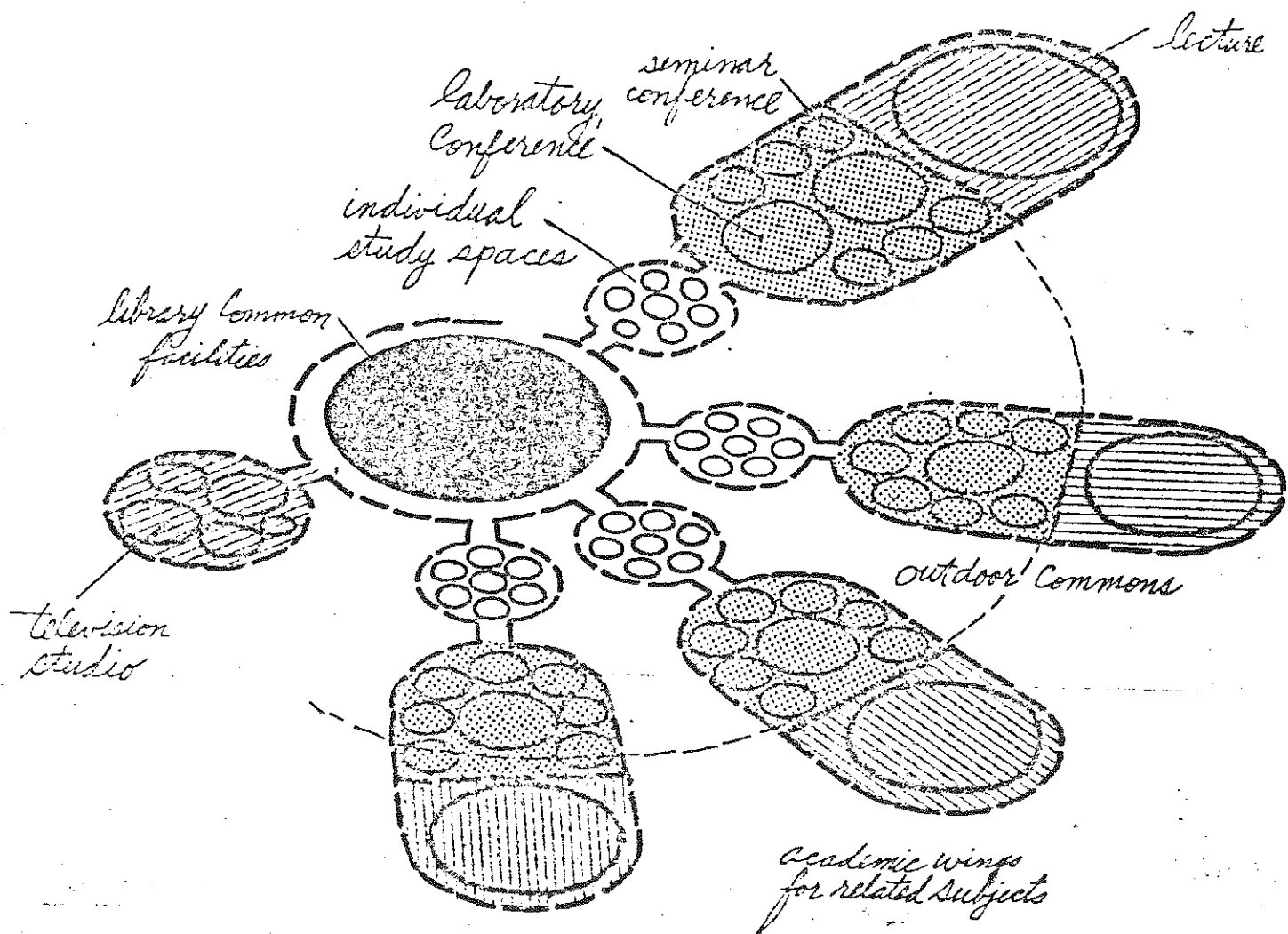
Thus the community-level resources centre will serve basically to lay the foundation in an Indian's educational process, so that, being equipped with a strong awareness of an appreciation for his own culture and having been introduced to some elementary western subject matter, he may proceed to the further levels of learning with the knowledge that his education will be of a definite value to him in his total development.

Obviously, if such a philosophy of education is to be implemented, the community must have total control over all decisions governing the nature and operation of its education. The existing system of dependence upon decisions made by authorities insensitive to the needs of Indians, must go, and Indians at the community level must get organized for what is virtually a "self-government of education".

Each community must reassert the right to masterplan the development on its own land, and acquire the freedom to expend funds in ways that best ensure implementation of those plans. Where resource personnel are required the leaders of the Indian community should be able to choose, hire and pay - and thus influence the effectiveness of - all staff, teachers, administrators, consultants, and so on. These personnel will function in roles that reflect the independence and self-sufficiency of the Band's planning team: community development planners, economic advisors, educational planners, program coordinators, curriculum planners, researchers, school teaching staff and principal and architectural Consultants. With an adequate machinery of this nature, a band could establish an educational committee and proceed systematically to develop its education framework.

The first step in this process has to be the development and definition of a basic philosophy of education in the community. This philosophy will reflect the aspirations of the Indian people, and will help determine the direction of all subsequent effort; it must therefore be developed with considerable attention to the attitudes and feelings among the people. Such a statement will also help point out the needs of a particular people, in educational, as well as social, cultural, recreational and economic areas. Surveys must be conducted on the reserve to determine the full range of needs felt and expressed among the people - and as a result of this effort there will emerge a picture

Diagram of Educational
Pattern Trends in
Secondary Schools



of the nature of the goals the educational system must strive to reach.

Having related the goals of education to the needs of the community, people of a reserve may draw up a comprehensive long-term plan for all subsequent development in education and related areas, a plan that can then be further elaborated to the level of a detailed masterplan for the school facility. Simultaneous effort in the preparation of education programs can lead to the formulation of curriculums tailored to the established educational needs.

Such an approach to the setting up of schools and related facilities will ensure that planning is indeed geared to the ultimate welfare of the Indian community and the full development of the Indian people.

The Nature of the Alberta Indian Education Centre

In order to implement the principles of education in Indian communities developed in this document, certain major types of resources must be available within the province; a sufficient supply of learning programs and their related resource material designed for their usefulness to Indians; and the specific resource people (from whatever culture and with whatever backgrounds of knowledge and experience the needs indicate), who will be working with the students and who also may be required to provide their counsel to the local decision-makers.

In large part these program resource materials, and resource people do not exist, and obviously, most Indian communities cannot develop them on their own. The development and supply of these resources are therefore one of the main areas of service to be performed by the Alberta Education Centre.

The Alberta Indian Education Centre will train personnel for the several areas of service on the reserves. These persons may be selected from both cultures, although preference would be given to Indians from reserves whenever possible. This training will enable these persons to serve the Indian communities and also assist in the development of programs and resource materials on the reserves.

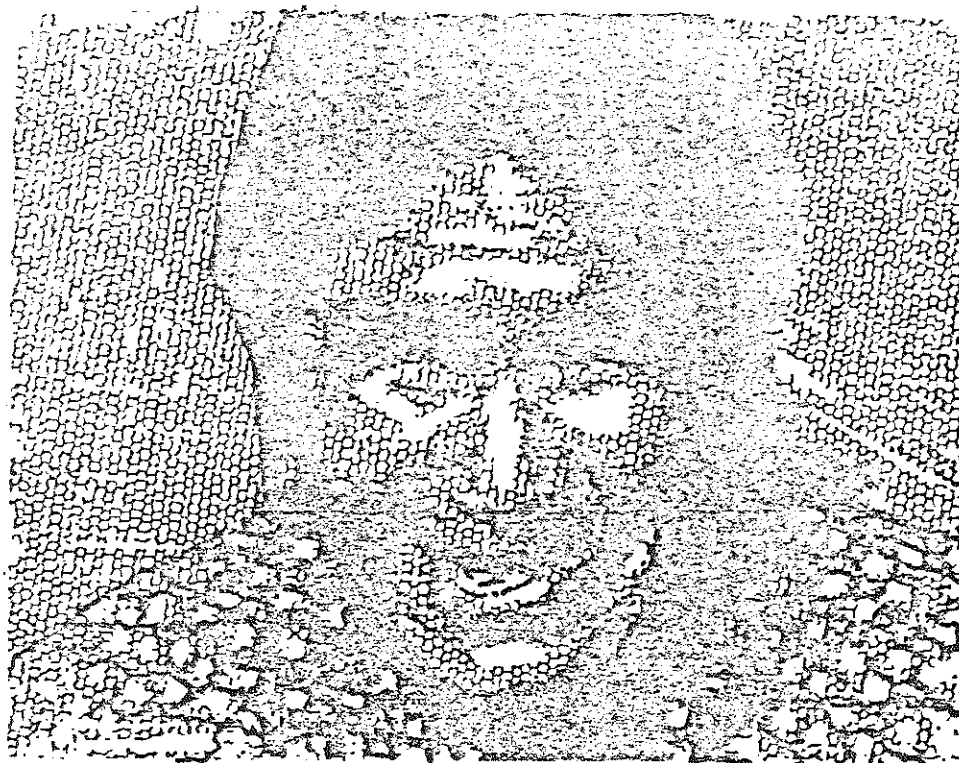
The Centre will develop among people from both cultures a knowledge and understanding of Indians and Indian thought generally, through any of several avenues such as formal and informal instruction, observation, association, field trips, and so on.

The fact that the teacher knows the mother tongue of the students, and may lapse into it depending upon the occasion, will exert a positive effect within the learning environment: a respect for the students is demonstrated by the teacher in that he has made the effort required to communicate with them in a sympathetic manner and in a sense, on the same level; also some fundamental ideas may be best expressed in the native language. These effects combine to increase the rapport between teacher and students and the positive, amiable atmosphere of the learning environment. This element of teacher training will be specially useful for trainees who have a good command of English but no knowledge of a native language. (Of course, since there are several different Indian tongues within the Province, these persons might select and learn the language spoken in the teaching area of their choice.)

A good working knowledge of the English language will also be developed among personnel at the Centre. This element of training may be primarily directed to persons who can speak an Indian language, but will likely be relying on some western resource materials in the local school; in order to properly interpret the western materials he must have a good command of English.

Training will be offered in the Indian teaching methods and techniques and the application of these in the teaching of western or other subject matter.

The Alberta Indian Education Centre could develop and supply educational program models to local and regional schools; models complementary to the learning patterns of Indian students, and developed through consultation with educators from both cultures. These models, when formulated, would guide the Centre in shaping resource materials. Resource materials such as books, films, tapes, displays, and so on, will be prepared for, or adapted to, the needs of Indian students.



tree
chipewyan
stonew
blackfoot
arcee
claver
beaver
saule

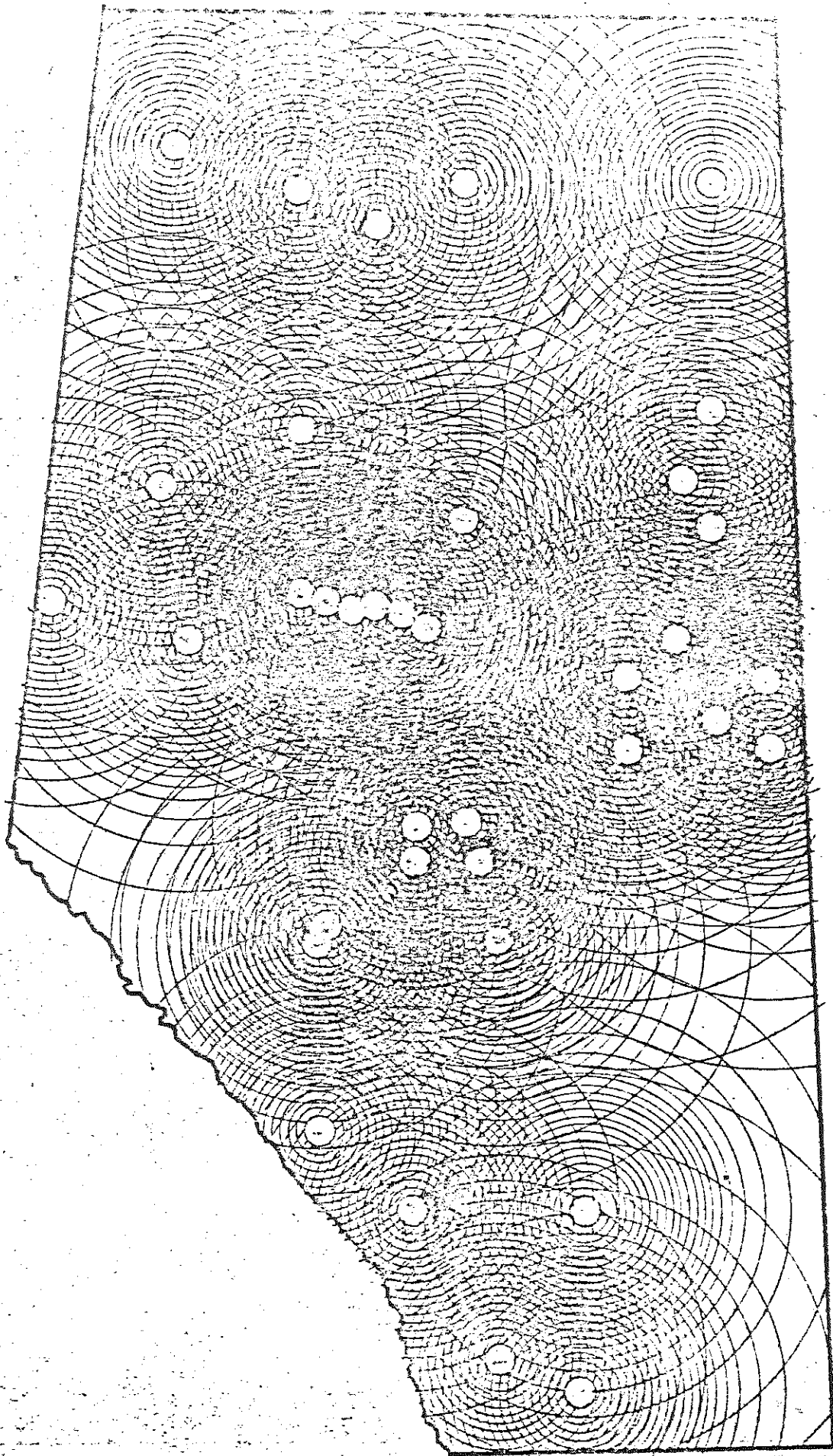
In a sense, the majority society is a society composed of strangers, due perhaps to the very size of its population. Technical school, college and university entrance personnel, as well as prospective employers, seldom have personal knowledge of the prior formal training of an individual. A standard method of documenting an individual's formally acquired knowledge - in the past usually by means of examinations - is therefore useful, and is a sort of passport for an individual seeking further education, or employment outside of his own community. It is at this point in his education that examinations become relevant to the Indian student. The Alberta Indian Education Centre must therefore prepare examination models consistent with the educational programs and resource materials, for suggested use in the community and regional schools.

Much of the work at the Centre will be in the area of research. This research and its results, while primarily directed towards community and regional school use, will also have secondary applications. The Centre's growing fund of knowledge relating to Indian people gathered from the North American continent, including Alberta, will be available to Indian people (and interested people from the dominant society) living elsewhere in the country. These people may come to the Centre to index their knowledge of the heritage of thought and knowledge of Indian people generally. As well, out-of-province, or out-of-country Indians, Indians whose provinces do not have a system of education sympathetic to Indian people, may observe a viable, dynamic system of Indian education, served by this Centre in action; they may thus return to their home and help initiate similar facilities and methods of Indian self-help.

We have much to learn about our own race, our own origin. We have much to learn from the other Indian people who inhabit this continent with us, and we need to turn our eyes outside from our own people and learn from Indian people on every other part of this continent. We can learn from them, we can understand them, because we are Indians too and thus through our understanding and recording of this knowledge, the immigrant people who co-exist with the aboriginal peoples of this continent can have a greater understanding of all of us. Our knowledge could be made available to any aboriginal group coming to the Centre from any land, to study our methods and learn how to survive in their own lands.

The Centre will evolve and grow and flourish out of the needs of the Indian communities and as it grows, as it develops and thrives, each community will have the resources and personnel needed, so that each community may grow and thrive. Each Indian person and each Indian community needs the Centre, for it provides them with the vehicle to develop in both cultures. But the Centre can exist and develop only out of the needs of the community, and therefore it must be inextricably tied to each community that it serves. Just as the community schools will be designed around a student-demand curriculum, the Centre will have to be designed around the community-demand need, with community-demand programs and community-demand personnel. Thus the Alberta Indian Education Centre, besides being a central repository of Indian knowledge and culture and dedicated to its preservation, will also be dedicated to an active role in bettering the lot of Indian people.

The whole attitude and working philosophy of the Alberta Indian Education Centre will be Indian in spirit. The ways of knowledge of the Indian people will be encouraged here, and we will bring back some of our communities that wandered off the path of Indian knowledge. We will bring back to some of our own communities the knowledge of our forefathers. The knowledge that we give our people from the facilities based in our communities, and the regional centres, and the Indian Education Centre, will be a way of knowledge in harmony with the Indian soul. It will be a way of knowledge that ensures that we will live in harmony with ourselves, with the environment, and with the people who share this land with us. Our path of knowledge, our system of education, our learning environment, will reflect the Indian soul and will help us develop into complete human beings, strengthened in our worth as a people and harmoniously blended into the colourful mosaic of Canadian society.



PART 111 - RECOMMENDATIONS

As the course of this Report will have demonstrated, any attempt to develop a working philosophy for Indian education in the province - and thence a system of educational facilities - must begin with a thorough understanding of the philosophy for living of the Indians themselves, and of the ways in which the principles underlying their life-style influence their educational needs of today. Thus the first parts of this Report dwell at length on their CULTURAL TRADITIONS, the CONFLICTS they have experienced in a confrontation with the dominant anglo society, and on their search for life in a "CULTURAL BALANCE" and a successful coexistence of both cultures. Accordingly, the recommendations presented in addition to dealing with the implementation of an educational network, must also include some areas of concern that are as important as those dealing directly with the educational facilities themselves; the recommendations are therefore listed under three headings: foundation; educational philosophy; and the educational network.

FOUNDATION

1. The following aspects of the Indian culture must be realized as being significant to a definition of their educational needs:

- a) The living conditions of the early Indians taught them to live in complete harmony with nature, and in a full realization of the interrelatedness of all aspects of nature;
- b) Traditionally the knowledge of the Indians was handed down from one generation to the next; learning was a total experience which involved all the human faculties and was an integral part of their daily living experience; it never lost its relevance to the purpose of life as the Indian saw it.

- c) The Indian philosophy for living bears significant similarity to those of the other ancient cultures of the world, and therefore cannot be discarded as being without considerable merit.
- d) The Indian people enjoy a unique place in the world's history, inasmuch as they are the only ancient people to have survived the innumerable waves of natural and cultural shock through the ages and remained reasonably unchanged. The merits of such a durable culture might be searched for a clue, even to the betterment of the worsening quality of life generally, on this continent.

2. In the development of an Indian educational philosophy it is necessary to recognize two main areas in which the impact of the dominant culture has affected the lives of Canadian Indians, and which may offer a clue to the basic goals of Indian educational reform:

- a) The cultural heritage of the Indian and the Indian ways of life have been suppressed and have therefore suffered deterioration and change. Indians must strive to bring to their culture a new and sound form consistent with its many traditional forms and yet appropriate to the new "environment".
- b) The present educational systems have proved to be inadequate for the learning needs of Indians, and their potential for a total development has therefore been stifled.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

3. The basic purpose of Indian education in the province must be to restore dignity to the individual Indian and to the Indian people.

4. The Indian recognizes the need to adapt to certain modern living conditions; the new educational system must prepare him to accomplish this without surrendering the well-founded basic tenets of his philosophy.

5. Indians must be allowed to develop as complete human beings in the context of their own culture and where preferable, through the medium of their own languages. A knowledge of English will be acquired when necessary as a tool for learning and for life in Canadian Society, not as the main medium of learning.

6. Indian communities are recognizing that a large measure of self control over their own lives may be achieved through the development of small and medium sized industries as the Reserves, developed and operated by the Indians. Their schools must therefore incorporate programs that prepare them for this aspect of community life.

7. The education of the Indians of the Province must be a comprehensive and coordinated effort by all the Indians of Alberta; and Indians must control their own educational systems.

8. Both Indian and western teachers will be necessary in Indian schools - Indian teachers, fully trained in the Indian way of knowledge, and knowledgeable in Indian culture imparting Indian knowledge; and western teachers, trained to an appreciation of the Indian culture, imparting western subject matter in a manner relevant to the Indian.

9. The educational system must regard each child as an individual, with unique learning needs, and his education must relate to his specific needs.

10. This educational philosophy accepts the Indians as a nation of the world, with a heritage of knowledge comparable to that of the most ancient cultures of the world; their education must therefore equip them not only for living in Canada, but for an understanding of their fellow peoples and cultures around the world.

11. The learning process must not be confined to a conventional classroom; learning must take place, when possible, in an environment compatible with the Indian's manner of upbringing. Rites that have traditionally been regarded as part of the Indian's "path to knowledge" must be recognized as such, and their revival must be encouraged.

12. Each individual must be offered a freedom to chart his own course of learning that would be unique to educational processes in this country. A "free school" concept must be adopted which tears down not only conventional concepts of "school hours" and "text books", but also the traditional separations between the "student" and the "community" - everyone may be a student, and everyone may be a teacher.

THE EDUCATIONAL NETWORK

13. Since Indian educational needs are felt in all areas of Indian life, these needs must be met by a comprehensive network consisting of a wide range of types of educational facilities.

14. Broadly, these types may be grouped under these headings:

- a) The community - level resources centres.
- b) The Alberta Indian Educational Centre.
- c) Other special facilities to be developed as needs in special fields are progressively felt.

While the roles of the first two are dealt with in the following recommendations, the nature of the special facilities must be developed only from newly realized needs, as and when those needs are felt.

15. The role of the community-level resources centres must include the following:

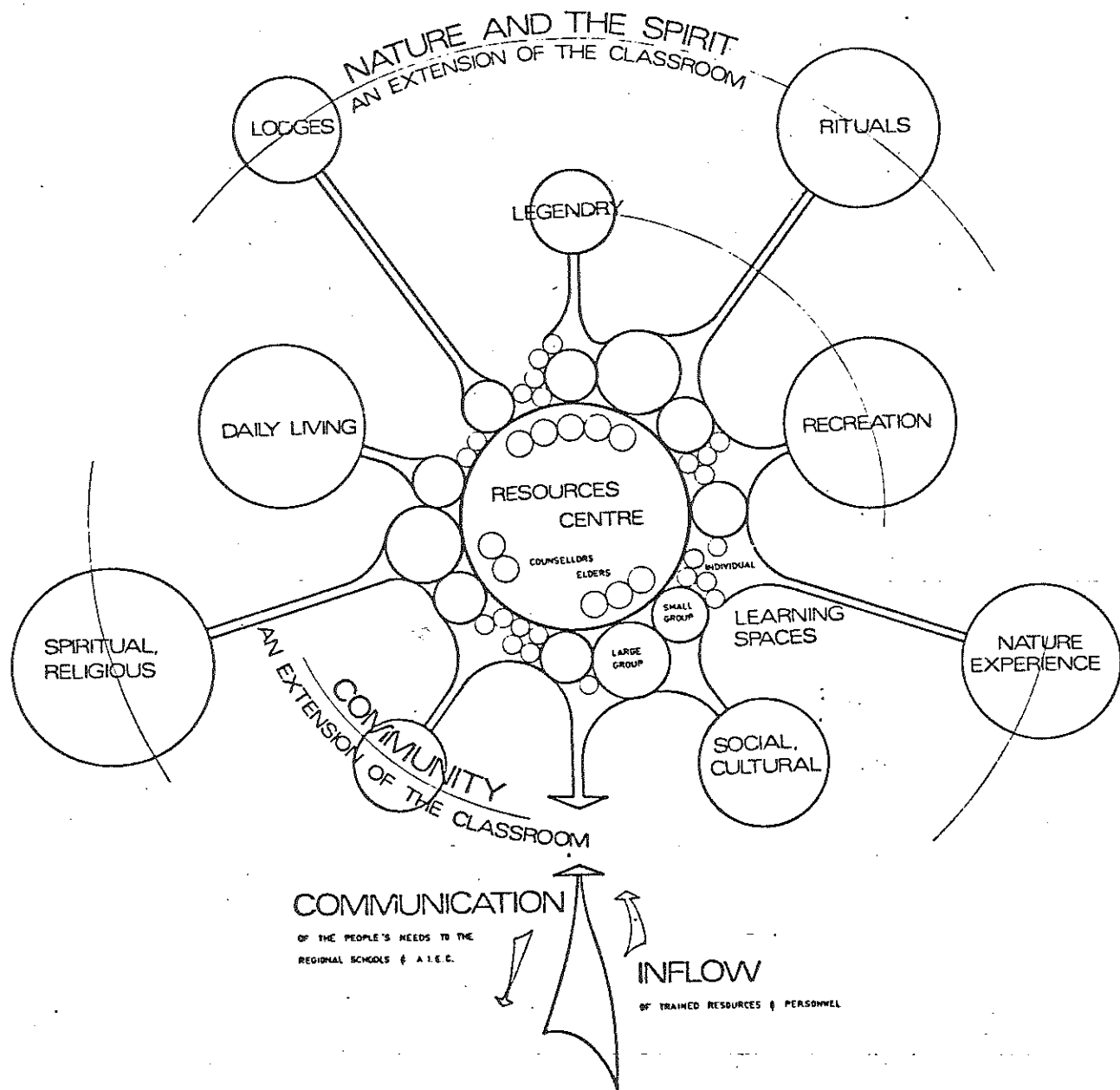
- a) These centres will be based in each community expressing a need for such a facility, and will cater primarily to the very young of that community, although each person in the community will have access to its resources.

- b) These centres will be totally "community shared facilities", with no rigid definitions of "student" and "school boundaries".
- c) They will inculcate in the child an understanding of and respect for the Indian culture, at the same time offering the child an opportunity for education in the western subjects at par with that found in leading schools of the dominant society.
- d) Smaller communities can be assisted in the area of resource facilities and personnel by the efforts of larger nearby Indian communities, through a sharing of educational facilities in a district.
- e) These educational goals can be achieved only if control of its education lies totally in the hands of each individual community; each band must therefore develop the necessary organizational machinery to determine, establish and govern its total educational system.
- f) Such a machinery involves acquiring "in-house" expertise in all areas of community and educational planning, and a decentralization of funding to make the band independent in this effort. A carefully planned approach should then be adopted in ensuring that school programs and curriculums are tailored to felt needs.

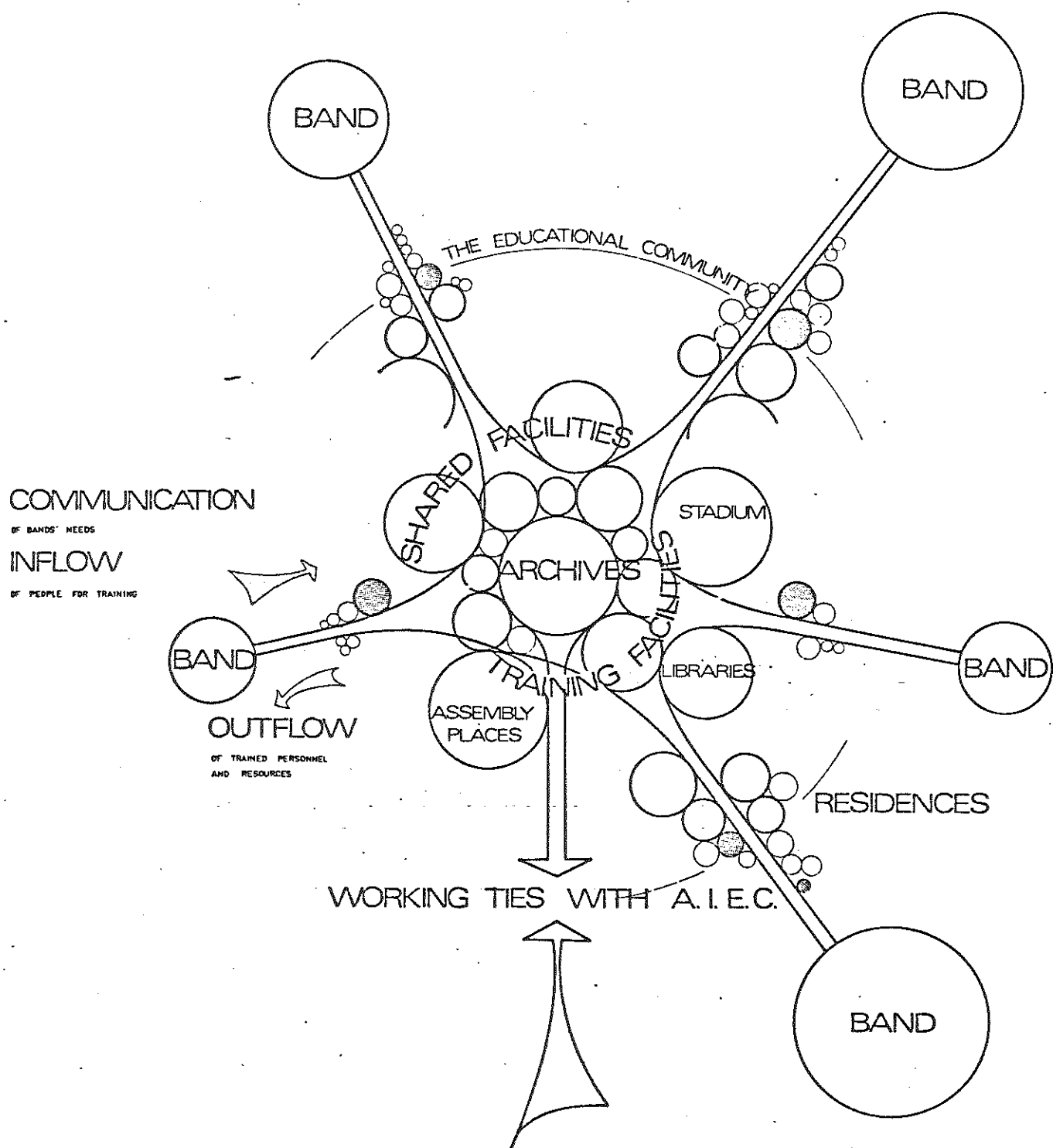
16. The Alberta Indian Education Centre will serve the following functions:

- a) It will be dedicated to serving the varied needs of all Indian communities in Alberta, and its function will continually be adapted in response to the varying felt needs of each community.

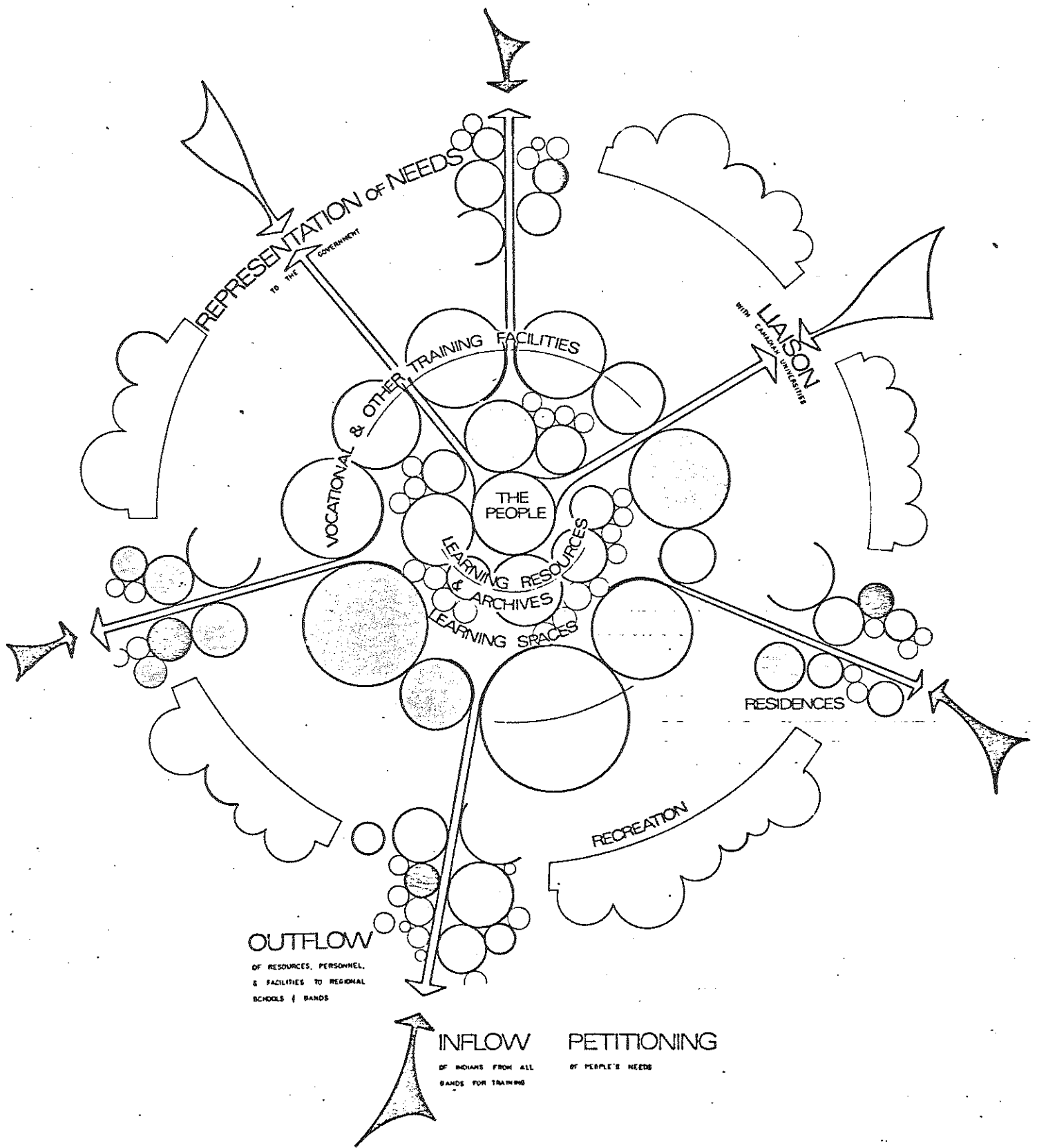
- b) It will develop and supply educational facilities, resources, and trained personnel beyond the means of each of the other centres, and in keeping with the latest developments in educational communications media.
- c) It will prepare Indians wishing to enter the higher learning institutions of the dominant society, by training them up to the required academic level and certifying them at a level of proficiency consistent with the requirements of those institutions.
- d) It will initiate exchanges of knowledge between the dominant and the Indian cultures to encourage full mutual understanding to the benefit of both.
- e) It will be an effective means of conveying the needs of the Indian people of the province to the Governments of Alberta and Canada, where a concerted and joint effort by all Indians of the province is called for.
- f) It will train both Indians and non-Indians for a wide range of non-educational services both on the reserves and off, in roles ranging from community service to professional consulting services.
- g) It will serve as a major archives of all the Indians of the Americas, to which people from all parts of the world may come for an understanding of a culture comparable with those of the most developed cultures of the world.
- h) Along with the other Indian places of learning in the province, it will offer, for observation by the native peoples of several countries, a unique working model of a viable, dynamic system of native education, fully developed and controlled by the natives themselves.



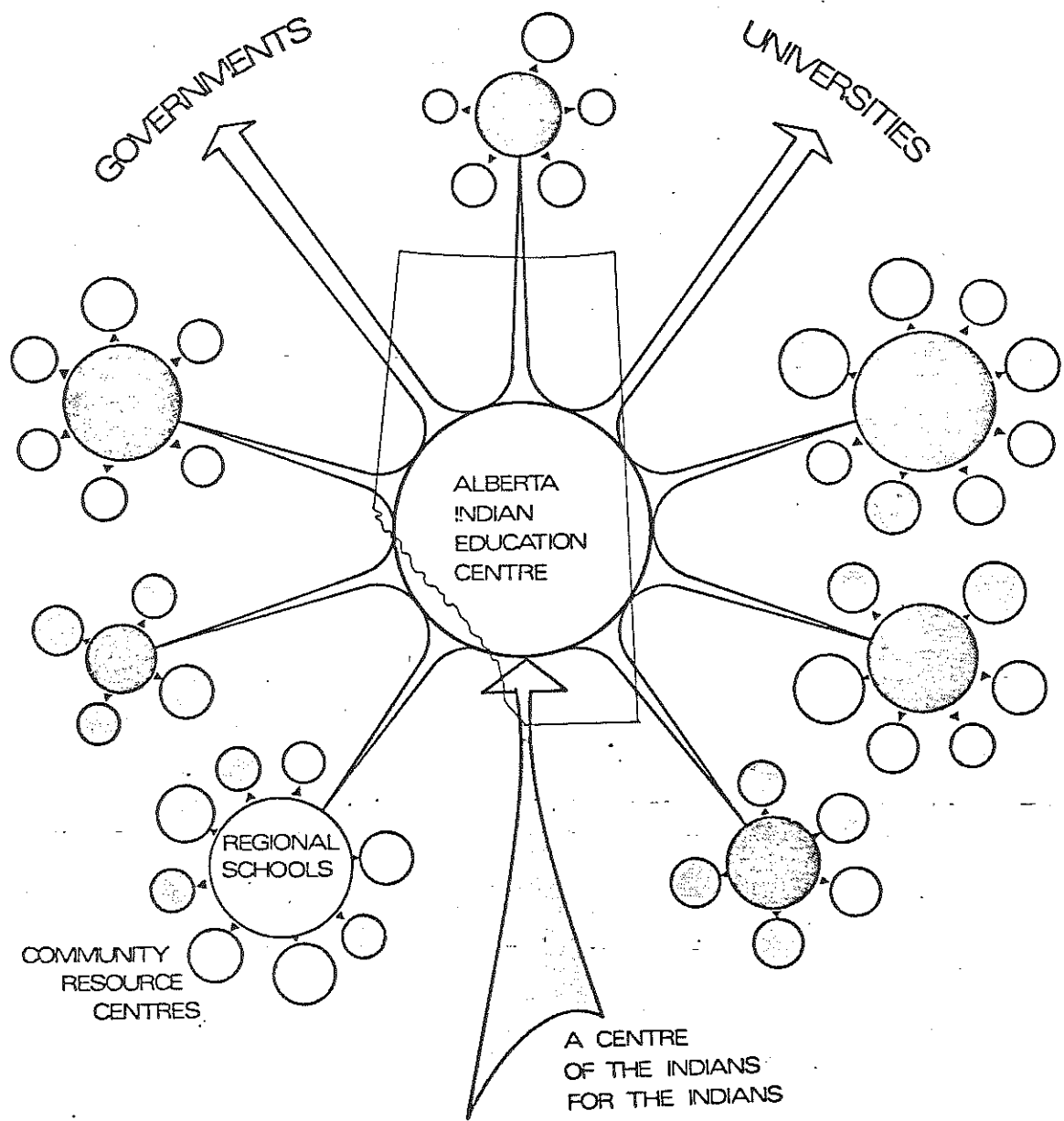
the community resources centre



the regional schools



the alberta indian education centre



the a.i.e.c. and the indians of alberta

PART IV - IMPLEMENTATION PROPOSALS

For the Alberta Indian Education Centre

It would not be easy to overemphasize the importance of the relationship of the Alberta Indian Education Centre to the community schools. This report has recommended that the basic primary thrust of educational effort in the Province be at the level of the Community School. If education primarily concerns the younger generation, then all moves in planning should be directed first towards the early establishment of educational facilities on the Reserves; and because of their mutual inter-dependence, the AIEC will simultaneously need to be developed in order to fulfill its own role in the educational system.

Indeed, since educational effort on the Reserves is already underway in some communities, there is even now an urgent need for a functioning AIEC that can supplement the effort of the smaller schools. It is necessary for the total concept of the Centre, therefore, to be developed in phases so that its first phases may cater to the first felt needs of Indian Communities.

Following consistently, then, from the recommended roles of the Centre, its first phase of development can be seen as performing the following functions:

Training

Community schools will be developed -- and will begin to cater to the learning needs of their people -- at a faster pace than that at which the necessary personnel can be trained at the Reserve and made available to the school. Each Reserve, further, will not be likely to possess the facilities to undertake the training of the staff. The

AIEC will be required to provide training facilities and equipment to undertake this task. Consistent with the commitment to function in sympathy with the needs of the Reserves, the Centre will have to ascertain these needs and provide the facilities to train resource people for the Reserves. These facilities will serve such programs as teachers training, language instruction, band scout training, leadership and community service training, life - skills counselling, and management skills.

Research

While the development of curriculums will be undertaken by each community to reflect its needs, the Centre can provide not only a valuable foundation to such curriculum development, but also the research work to compile the necessary data on educational and cultural matters. Such research would furnish a wealth of material for the use of all Indian communities.

Archives and Libraries

The compilation of data of historical and other significance can form a skeleton of the major archives envisaged for the Centre in its complete form. The provision, therefore, of a central archives and library for Indian knowledge can commence with a limited facility right in the first phase.

Resource Materials Development

Both the volume, and the diverse and complex nature, of the resource materials needed for education in the communities will require that materials development be undertaken jointly by the reserves and the Centre; major work beyond the capability of community-based facilities will be handled by the Centre.

Administrative Functions

The administrative plant of the Centre will have to grow constantly, in anticipation of the progressively expanding spectrum of the Centre's activities. The first responsibility of the administration will be the careful monitoring of community needs, and maintaining strong channels of communication with each Reserve.

Social & Recreational Functions

It is expected that as the Centre grows, a small community will develop around it, consisting of staff and their families. Amenities for this community will have to be provided, such as housing, cultural and recreational outlets, food services, day care and kindergarten centres, health facilities, and so on.

Based on a preliminary assessment of the needs for physical facilities generated by these functions, and in order to offer a preview of the scope envisaged for phase I of the Centre, the following area summary is offered. An elaboration of this summary must come, naturally, from a detailed operational program for the facilities, when the functions of the Centre have been adequately crystallized.

SUMMARY OF FACILITIES FOR PHASE ONE

Training Facilities

Classroom, instructors' offices, laboratories seminar
and discussion rooms, miscellaneous service requirements
such as storage spaces, maintenance shops, etc: 6,160 Sq. ft.

Research Facilities

Research workshops, workrooms, researcher's offices, display
rooms, study areas, and support services: 3,070 Sq. ft.

Archives & Library

Museum & archives, library, archivists' & librarians' offices,
workrooms, display areas, support services: 5,540 Sq. ft.

Resource Materials Development Facilities

Audio-visual centre, workshops, offices, technical shops,
studios, library, support services: 2,980 sq. ft.

Administrative Facilities

Offices, clerical spaces, conference rooms, information and
miscellaneous storage rooms, support services: 4,500 sq. ft.

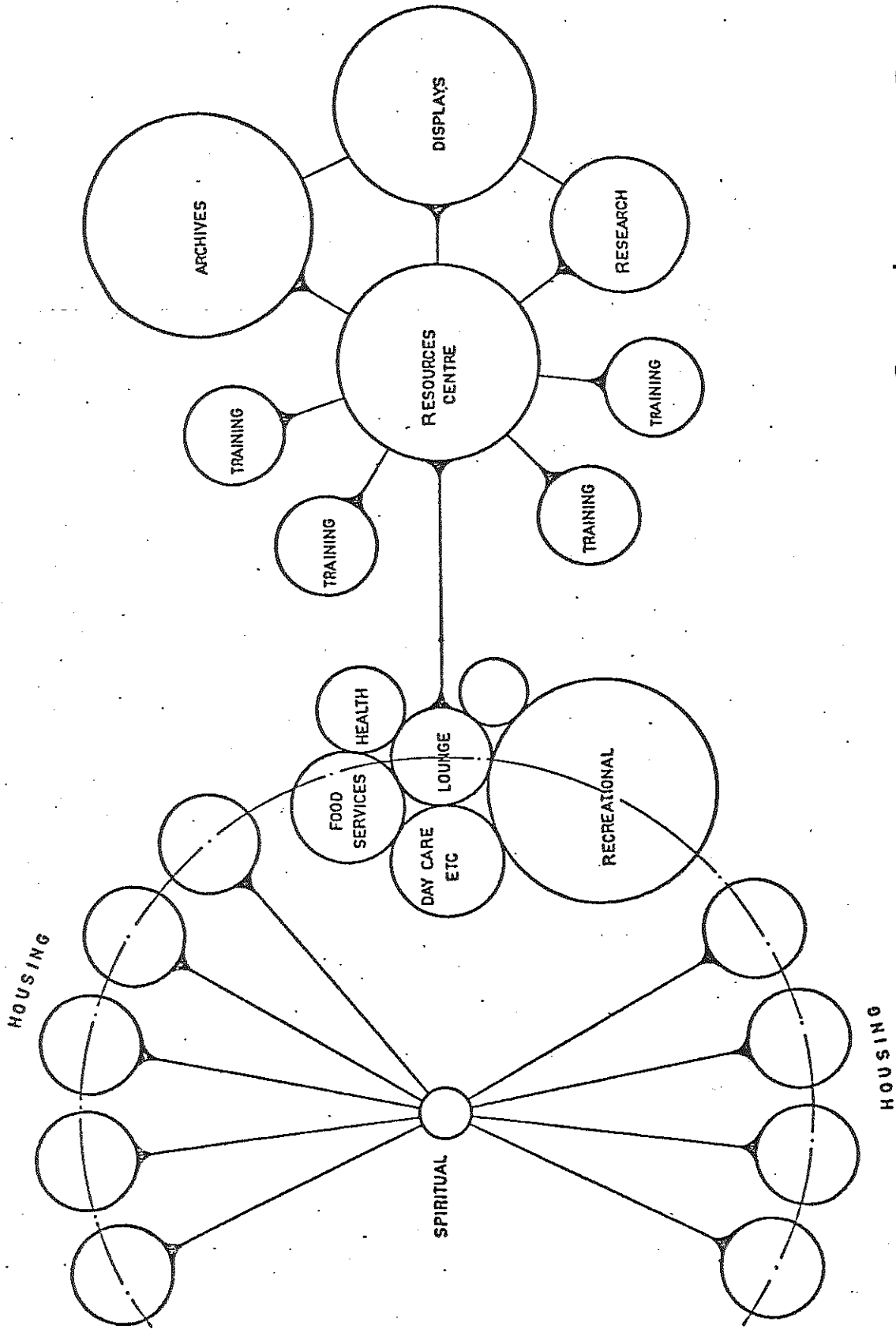
Housing, Social & Recreational Facilities

Housing, day care centre, kindergarten & nursery, food services,
gymnasiums, medical and health facilities, lounges, etc: 49,200 sq. ft.

Service Facilities

Janitorial rooms, mechanical room, loading docks, etc. 2,380 sq. ft.

TOTAL PHASE ONE 73,830 Sq. ft.



■ a concept for phase one

