

CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIGENOUS RELIGIONS

General definitions:

- Arise out of, are native to the land and original people
- No clear starting point or founder
- Do not generally proselytize or seek converts
- Seldom make any changes, no great departures
- E.g. Shintoism, Hinduism, Judaism, Native religions

1. Mana: Wholly Other, something beyond us that has power over us, over the world of nature, called the Great Spirit in Native American terms, can be beneficial to us, is involved in our lives.

2. Sense of Awe: individuals stand apart in wonder and amazement at this power beyond human talent or ability.

3. Deep respect for Nature.

4. Ongoing unity, relationship with Ancestors.

5. Life After death.

6. Holy Places.

7. Totems = objects that remind people of the Mana.

8. Taboo = prohibition coming from the Mana.

9. Rites of Initiation for the young into adulthood.

10. Shamans = priests or religious leaders who teach, help keep their religion alive by telling stories, performing healings, saying rituals.

11. Rituals = to praise the Mana or ask for help.

12. Offerings = gifts to the Mana for blessings bestowed or to make requests.