THE NATIVE AMERICANS

Most of the Native American tribes living on the territory of present-day USA have never had an alphabet of their own. In 1821 a half-Cherokee Indian named Sequoya invented a syllabary for the purposes of his own tribe.

The only complete writing system in the ancient New World was the Maya script.

By the time the white settlers set foot on the North American continent, the native tribes had developed a rich oral tradition of lore – myths, legends, tales, songs, prayers, rituals, speeches and spells. Each had a distinctive way of expressing itself in poetry and prose. What they had in common was their reverence for nature, in which they lived in harmony and balance, and a worldview, in which the oneness of the objective material world with the subjective spiritual world was achieved through the immanent presence of the Great spirit.

There is hardly a tribe that has not got a Creation myth of its own, which shows humankind’s undying longing and curiosity to know its origins, the meaning of its existence and destiny. A common feature of the Creation myth of the North American tribes is the belief that the universe and the world of mankind did not emerge from nothingness but through the wish and benevolence of a Power which is itself all-pervasive and limitless in Time and Space.

The world of the Indians is suffused with poetry. Their songs are an expression of their innermost being and of their intimate relationship to the forces of nature and the universe. There are songs of healing and of growth, songs of vision and of dream, death songs and war songs, initiation and individual songs. Their poetry serves practical ends. It helps the singer to renew his/her own spiritual power, to enhance the power of all those natural and supernatural phenomena and forces which induce growth and life, and continually to reestablish his/her harmonious relationship with them, with his/her fellowmen, and with his/her own inner self.

1. Tse`gíhi  
Tse'gihi

2. *H*ayo*l*ká*l* be*h*ogán  
Dawn | house made of.

3. Na*h*otsoí be*h*ogán  
Evening light | house made of.

4. Kósdïlyï*l* be*h*ogán  
Dark cloud | house made of.

5. Ni*l*tsabaká be*h*ogán  
Male rain | house made of.

6. A`'dïlyï*l* be*h*ogán  
Dark fog | house made of.

7. Nï*l*tsabaád be*h*ogán  
Female rain | house made of.

8. *T*adïtdí*n* be*h*ogán  
Pollen | house made of.

9. Anï*lt*ani be*h*ogán  
Grasshoppers | house made of.

10. Kósdï*l*yï*l* dadïnlá'  
Dark cloud | doorposts.

**NAVAJO NIGHT CHANT**

11. Kósdï*l*yï*l* bïké d*z*eétin  
Dark cloud | his road | the exit.

12. Atsïnit*l*í*s* yíke dasizíni  
Lightening | on top | standing up.

13. *H*ast*s*ébaka  
O, Male Divinity!

14. Nigél is*l*á`,  
Your offering | I make.

15. Nadíhila`  
For you I have prepared.

16. *S*ïké saádï*l*i*l*  
My feet | for me restore.

17. *S*ït*s*át saádï*l*i*l*  
My legs | for me restore.

18. *S*ïtsís saádï*l*i*l*  
My body | for me restore.

19. *S*ï'ni saádï*l*i*l*  
My mind | for me restore.

20. *S*ïné saádï*l*i*l*  
My voice | for me restore.

21. *T*ádïsd*z*i*n* naalíl saádï*l*i*l*  
This very day | your spell for me | you will take out.

22. Naalíl *s*a*h*anéïnla`  
Your spell | for me is removed.

23. *S*ïtsád*z*e tahï'ndïnla`  
Away from me | you have taken it.

24. Nïzágo nast*l*í*n*  
Far off | it has gone.

25. *H*o*z*ógo nadedi*s*dá*l*  
Happily | I will recover.

26. *H*o*z*ógo *s*ïtáha dïnoké*l*  
Happily | my interior | will be cool.

27. *H*o*z*ógo t*s*ïdïsá*l*  
Happily | I shall go forth.

28. *S*i*t*áha *h*onezkázigo na*s*ádo  
My interior | being cool | may I walk.

29. Do*s*a*t*éhigo na*s*ádo  
No longer sore | may I walk