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Segment 5
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Dan and Mary Lou Smoke tell listeners about a new book, 'Peace, Power, and Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto' by Taiaiake. Dan tells listeners about the teachings of the Great Law of Peace (particularly the important role Clan Mothers play in a nation), which are used throughout the book in order to educate a new generation of Indigenous leaders. After, Dan explains a recent agreement that the Kahnawake Mohawks came to with the Quebec provincial government regarding tax exemptions on- and off-reserve.

Host(s): Dan Smoke, Mary Lou Smoke

DAN SMOKE: Koolamalsi, sge:no, aanii, waajiiye! Now, Mary Lou is going to read about a new book that has just recently been released by Oxford University Press out of Toronto. The book is by **Taiaiake**, who is a **Mohawk** academic from **Kahnawake**, who is now presently out at...well, he was at Simon Fraser University, and now I believe he's back in Montreal.

MARY LOU SMOKE: Miigwetch, Dan. "*Peace, Power, Righteousness* is the most important and explosive book on Aboriginal politics today. It needs to be read by everyone involved in and concerned about Aboriginal politics in Canada and the United States." And this is said by James Tully, who is from the Department of Political Science at the University of Victoria. Bound to generate controversy and fundamentally alter the debate on Aboriginal self-government, *Peace, Power, and Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto* challenges conventional wisdom and calls on Indigenous peoples to return to their traditional teachings to educate a new generation of leaders committed to serving Indigenous nationhood. Critical of the assumption that restored Native government should simply replicate Western models, Gerry Alfred argues that such governments must be based on a solid foundation of traditional values. Gerry Alfred boldly asserts that the current process for land claims and self-government negotiations cannot achieve justice for Indigenous peoples. He points to a widespread colonial mentality among Native leaders and false representation of Native goals by those who favour cooperation over confrontation. Exploring what is needed to make self-determination real, Alfred concludes that Native leaders must stop participating in their own colonization. The keys to freedom, he believes, are leaders who heal and strengthen their people, and who fight to defend the integrity of their lands and rights. A revolutionary document, *Peace, Power, Righteousness* promises to transform one of the most important debates currently confronting North America.

DS: And it's interesting that he uses the words peace, power, righteousness from the title of his book, because in the **Great Law of Peace**—the Great Law of Peace was the great law that was brought to us, the **Iroquoian** peoples, the **Ongweoweh** people, original human beings, **Haudenosaunee**, people of the long house—the Great Law of Peace came to us from the **Peacemaker**. The Peacemaker, also known as **Deganawida**, was a **Huron** who was born in present day **Tyendinaga**, across the Bay of Quinte, across Lake Ontario, into the southern shore of Lake...I'm sorry, yeah Lake Ontario, the southern shore and arrived around what is present day Oswego, New York. And there, he embarked on a journey to bring the teachings of the Great Law to the five nations of the **Iroquois Confederacy**. The first group that he encountered during this journey, this pilgrimage, and this journey of sharing and teaching of the Great Law of Peace was to **Jigonhsasee**, who is a **Seneca** woman who had a kind of a bed and breakfast home on the trail that the Native nations used before they would go off on their hunting parties, or would go off to go hunt, or to go and trap, or to go and gather, or to go and defend their territories.

It's the...it was kind of a bed and breakfast who anyone who's travelling and had been travelling for a long distance, they could check their rivalries, if they had any territorial disputes with another nation, they would check that at the door and they would be welcomed in, they would be fed, and their horses would be rested, they would have a place to sleep for the night, and then the next day they would begin anew another day to complete their journey. But they would get that rest and they would get that time with Jigonhsasee. Now, she treated all people equally, and because of her treatment of people in such a fashion, the Peacemaker saw the gift that she had, and he saw the power of woman, and how this power of woman was very special. It was very integral part of human beings, and she always exuded this human warmth and kindness gift to travellers who were travelling through her territory. She would always welcome them, she would always let them rest, she would feed them, and then she would allow them to have a roof over their head, and then she would help them on their journey as they went and left shortly after their arrival to go and complete their journeys.

And so, he...in the Great Law of Peace, it talks about the importance of **Clan Mothers**, and Jigonhsasee was the first Clan Mother. And this is where we get the importance and how the importance of Clan Mothers was given to us through the Great Law of Peace. And Clan Mothers are very, very important in our culture because it is the Clan Mothers whose responsibility it is to select the chiefs, whose responsibility it is to select the spokespersons of a particular clan of a particular nation. For example, the Mohawks have three clans—the Bear, the Turtle, and the Wolf. And a Mohawk Bear Clan Mother, it's her responsibility to ensure that there is a spokesperson who will represent the Mohawk Bear Clan in the nation council meetings as well as the Grand Council. It entails watching the young people and how they interact within the community, how they interact within family, and she watches them grow, and watches them grow up and mature. And if they display gifts of being able to look after their people, then she will ask them. She will ask them, if they are part of her clan, of the Bear Clan, she will ask that person if they would consider becoming the spokesperson, the **Sachem**, or the [to be transcribed]. [To be transcribed] is the Mohawk term used to describe the spokesperson for a nation and a clan.

And she would ask them if they would be interested in becoming the [to be transcribed] of the clan, of the nation. And if that person refuses, then she will ask again and if after two refusals, it is said that they will not be asked a third time, and that someone else will be considered for that position. Now, this position is a very demanding one. To be a spokesperson for a clan, for the nation, it's a very...your time is not your own, because you are now a servant of the people, and the Clan Mother had that responsibility to ensure that their spokespersons were indeed servants of the people; that they did not have an inflated ego, they were not full of themselves, that they were truly dedicated and committed to looking after the interests of that clan and of that nation. And so that was her responsibility. And she is also served with the responsibility of making sure that whatever he says when he's in council, be it in the clan meeting, or in a nation meeting, or in the Grand Council, that that [to be transcribed], that that spokesperson, always speak with respect about the future generations and about the family, the community of that nation and of that tribe, of that clan. And if they didn't, then she had the right to dehorn a chief. She had the right to take away that title of Chief, of [to be transcribed]. And she was invested with that duty because she knew, she knows how that person is, and she knows that that person would not disrespect the clan and the nation into which he was born.

And so, it's her responsibility to teach that young man to be a true servant of the clan and of the people of the nation. So, that's how the principles of the Great Law of Peace, of which they are serving the people, are the precepts of peace, for the peace of the people, maintaining peace

amongst the people, maintaining peace and respect amongst the nations and the clans; power, to help unify the people so that there is no dissention, because in power, power comes from unity of the people, and it's not the kind of power that is the force kind of power, it's the power of unity, the power of becoming of one mind, the power of being of one mind. There is a lot of power when you have that unity, when you have all the people arriving at a decision based on consensus, based on unanimity. There is a lot of power in that. And that was the responsibility of the Clan Mother to ensure that that power be preserved, and that that Chief, he has the responsibility to help ensure that that power be there amongst all the nations, amongst all the clans. And so, that duty was a very hard duty. It was a sacred duty to uphold, but that's why the Great Law of Peace is a hard teaching, but it's a teaching that will benefit future generations if people live according to the protocols and live according to the teachings of the Great Law of Peace. And so, this Great Law of Peace talks about righteousness, which is the third precept, peace, power, and righteousness, and that is where the Clan Mother and the clan Chief, spokesperson, [to be transcribed], are vested with the care and the consideration of the welfare of the people. Ensure that the people are looked after. Ensure that the people have equality and respect in their community, and that everyone is treated so that everyone else is of equal height. We say that no one is any shorter, no one is any taller in the sacred circle of life, and that is the Great Law of Peace. And all the teachings of the Great Law tell us how to live according to that relationship that we have with the Creator, that relationship that we have with ourselves, and that relationship that we have with each other, and that relationship that we have with creation, with our relatives of the natural world.

DS: And so, this book will probably bring forward a lot of the teachings of the Great Law, so we are going to read this book and we will review it on the air at a future date, but it seems like it comes at a good time, especially with the Mohawks at Kahnawake are just now forging new agreements. And one that they have recently forged is one with the Quebec provincial government, and it's an agreement that the federal Finance Minister says no to. The Kahnawake Mohawks who aren't taxed on goods or services bought on the reserve, now will also be exempt from taxes on items purchased elsewhere in Quebec. The arrangement is covered in a new tax deal that Mohawk **Chief Joe Norton** signed last week with the Quebec provincial government. Under the new plan, the Mohawk council at Kahnawake will ensure that cigarettes, alcohol, and gasoline sold on the reserve are from legal sources and are not contraband. "This is a win-win situation," said Norton, who was joined by Quebec Finance Minister, Bernard Landry, and Guy Chevrette, the Quebec Minister of Native Affairs. Landry told Norton, "It's a great day for your people, your nation, and for Quebec."

The Mohawks will make tax-free purchases off the reserve by presenting an ID card. The magnetic card will show the purchaser is a Native person, and so should not be taxed. No federal representatives attended the signing, but Francois Leroux, Ottawa's chief negotiator, said that that doesn't mean the federal government is unhappy. "I'm happy about it," Leroux said, who has led federal negotiations with the Mohawks since 1995, said in a telephone interview. He dismissed a newspaper report that said unnamed federal officials were angry because they were told only last Friday about the Parti Quebecois government's arrangement. He said, "Ottawa isn't angry," and he's well placed to say so. "I'm the guy at the table." Steve Outhouse, an Indian Affairs Department spokesperson, also welcomed the signing. "It's a positive step," he said in a telephone interview from Ottawa. Ottawa Finance Minister, Paul Martin, says Ottawa won't follow Quebec's lead by signing. Martin categorically rejected giving Natives the power to collect special taxes from non-Natives on reserves or exempted Natives from paying the GST off reserves.

“What Quebec does is Quebec’s business,” Martin said. “I’m telling you what the Canadian government is going to do.” Martin said that it isn’t right that some people are going to be taxed on reserves and not others. He also expects Ottawa to continue collecting the GST from Natives for Ottawa as required under an existing federal-provincial deal. Quebec is the only province that collects the federal tax and turns it over to Ottawa. The Quebec-Kahnawake agreement will allow the Mohawks to charge a levy to non-Natives who shop within the reserve but not Natives who live there. The Supreme Court of Canada last year supported Ottawa’s contention that Natives are sales tax exempt only for on-reserve purchases, or off-reserve purchases delivered to the reserve. So, that’s a new development that’s happening in the Kahnawake and Quebec, and it will probably lead the way in other tax arrangements and cutbacks with the provincial governments across the country. We shall see and we will keep you posted.

DS: We’re now going to listen to **Indigenous**, this comes from their third CD, ***Love In A Mist***. And this is “**It’s One of Those Things**,” here on Smoke Signals.