

## BLACKFOOT WAYS OF KNOWING: THE WORLDVIEW OF THE SIKSIKAITSTAPI

Edited by Betty Bastien

ISBN 978-1-55238-745-0

**THIS BOOK IS AN OPEN ACCESS E-BOOK.** It is an electronic version of a book that can be purchased in physical form through any bookseller or on-line retailer, or from our distributors. Please support this open access publication by requesting that your university purchase a print copy of this book, or by purchasing a copy yourself. If you have any questions, please contact us at [ucpress@ucalgary.ca](mailto:ucpress@ucalgary.ca)

**Cover Art:** The artwork on the cover of this book is not open access and falls under traditional copyright provisions; it cannot be reproduced in any way without written permission of the artists and their agents. The cover can be displayed as a complete cover image for the purposes of publicizing this work, but the artwork cannot be extracted from the context of the cover of this specific work without breaching the artist's copyright.

**COPYRIGHT NOTICE:** This open-access work is published under a Creative Commons licence.

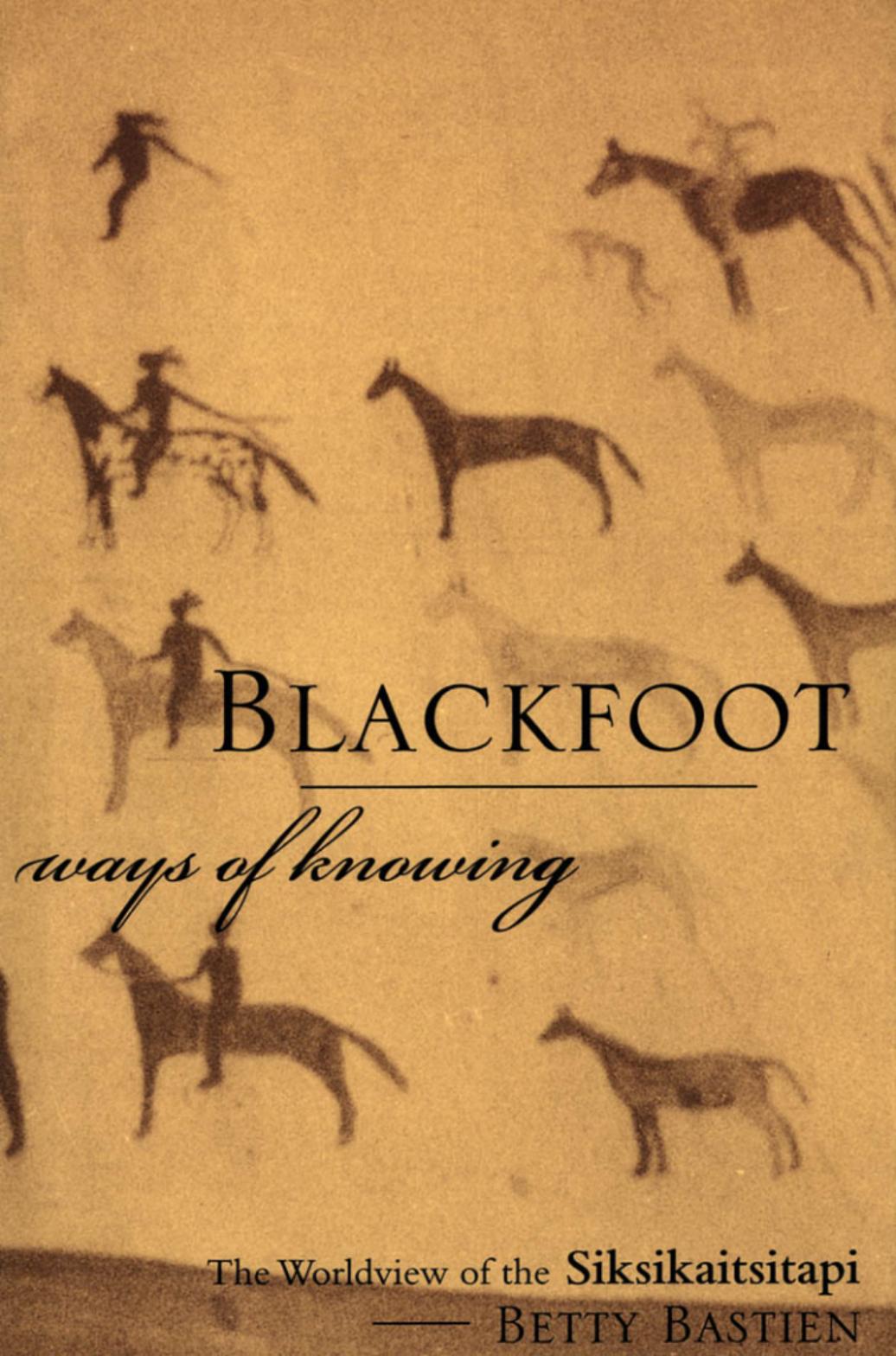
This means that you are free to copy, distribute, display or perform the work as long as you clearly attribute the work to its authors and publisher, that you do not use this work for any commercial gain in any form, and that you in no way alter, transform, or build on the work outside of its use in normal academic scholarship without our express permission. If you want to reuse or distribute the work, you must inform its new audience of the licence terms of this work. For more information, see details of the Creative Commons licence at: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>

### UNDER THE CREATIVE COMMONS LICENCE YOU **MAY**:

- read and store this document free of charge;
- distribute it for personal use free of charge;
- print sections of the work for personal use;
- read or perform parts of the work in a context where no financial transactions take place.

### UNDER THE CREATIVE COMMONS LICENCE YOU **MAY NOT**:

- gain financially from the work in any way;
- sell the work or seek monies in relation to the distribution of the work;
- use the work in any commercial activity of any kind;
- profit a third party indirectly via use or distribution of the work;
- distribute in or through a commercial body (with the exception of academic usage within educational institutions such as schools and universities);
- reproduce, distribute, or store the cover image outside of its function as a cover of this work;
- alter or build on the work outside of normal academic scholarship.

The background of the cover is a light tan color with a repeating pattern of dark brown silhouettes. The silhouettes include several figures on horseback, some appearing to be in motion or riding, and several horses of various breeds and colors. The overall style is reminiscent of traditional Native American art or perhaps a woodcut print.

# BLACKFOOT

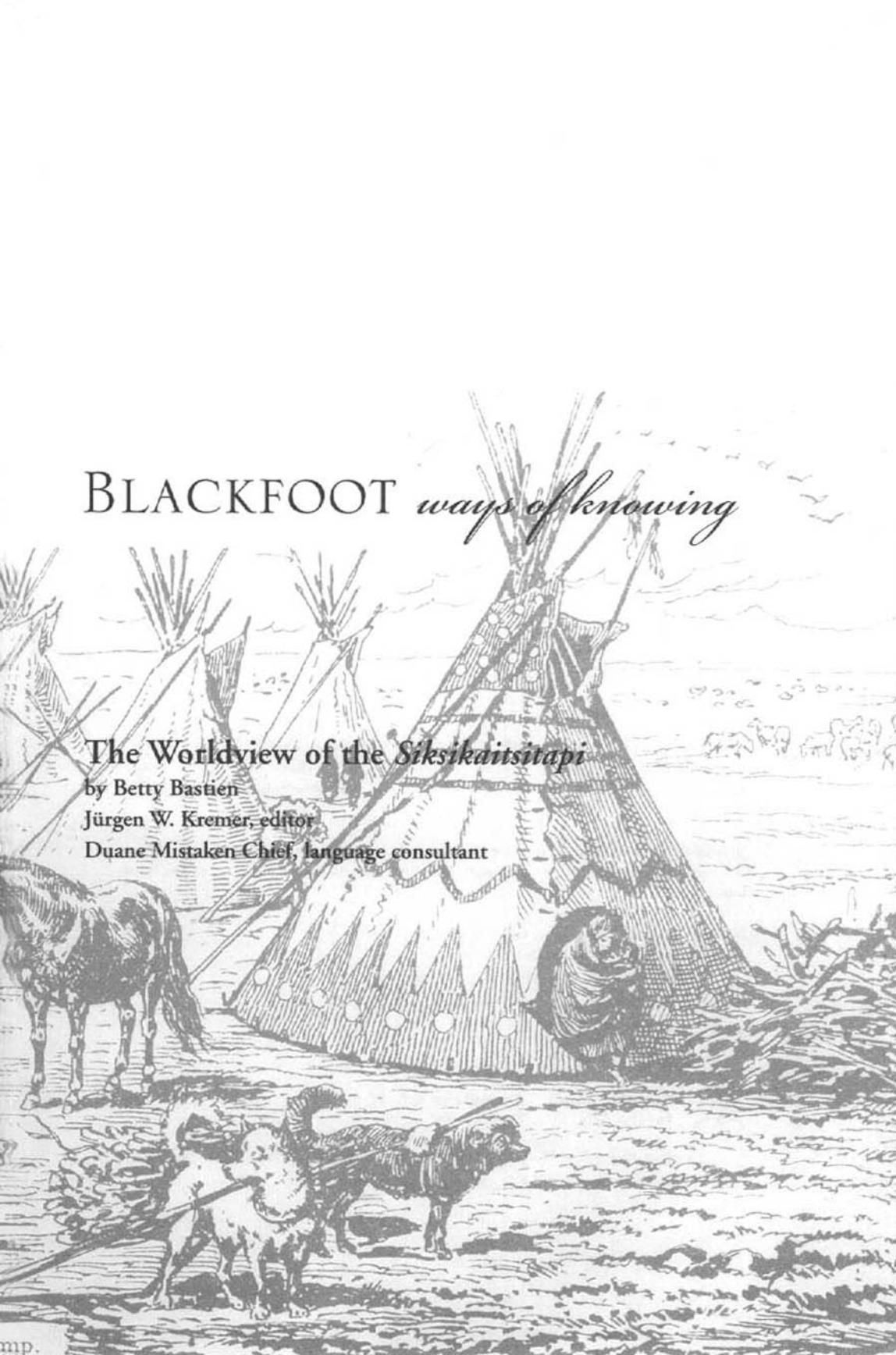
---

*ways of knowing*

The Worldview of the **Siksikaitsitapi**  
— BETTY BASTIEN

BLACKFOOT *ways of knowing*





BLACKFOOT *ways of knowing*

The Worldview of the *Siksikaitstapi*

by Betty Bastien

Jürgen W. Kremer, editor

Duane Mistaken Chief, language consultant



© 2004 Betty Bastien. All rights reserved.  
National Library of Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Bastien, Betty, 1948-  
Blackfoot ways of knowing : the worldview of the Siksikaitapiti / Betty Bastien.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 1-55238-109-9

1. Siksika philosophy.
2. Siksika language.
3. Bastien, Betty, 1948-.
4. Knowledge, Theory of. I. Title.

E99.S54B37 2004 191'.089'97352 C2004-900735-1

Published by the University of Calgary Press  
2500 University Drive NW Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2N 1N4  
[www.uofcpress.com](http://www.uofcpress.com)

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior written consent of the publisher or a licence from The Canadian Copyright Licensing Agency (Access Copyright). For an Access Copyright licence, visit [www.accesscopyright.ca](http://www.accesscopyright.ca) or call toll free to 1-800-893-5777.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Book Publishing Industry Development Program (BPIDP). We acknowledge the support of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts for this published work.

Printed and bound in Canada by Ray Hignell Services Inc.  
This book is printed on 100% Recycled, acid-free paper  
Cover design by Mieka West, page design and typesetting by Dwayne Dobson.  
Production by Mike Stickel.

# Canada



Canada Council  
for the Arts

Conseil des Art  
du Canada

Title page Illustration: Women hauling wood to Blackfoot camp, ca. 1875. Original artwork by Richard Barrington Nevitt. Glenbow Archives NA-1434-28.

# Contents

Foreword by Pete Standing Alone ( <i>Nii'ta'kaiksa'imaikoan</i> )	vii
Preface by Betty Bastien ( <i>Sikapinaki</i> )	x
Blackfoot ( <i>Siksikaitsipowahsin</i> ) Pronunciation Key, by Duane Mistaken Chief, Sr.	xviii
<b>I. Context</b>	
1. Introduction	1
2. <i>Innahkootaitsinnika'topi</i> – History of the Blackfoot-Speaking Tribes	7
2.1 Introductory Remarks	7
2.2 <i>Iitotasimahpi Iimitaiks</i> – The Era of the Dog or the Time of the Ancestors (Pre-Eighteenth Century)	8
2.3 <i>Ao'ta'sao'si Ponokaomita</i> – The Era of the Horse (Eighteenth Century to 1880)	14
2.4 <i>Ao'maopaosi</i> – From when we settled in one place (1880) to today	19
3. Cultural Destruction – Policies of Ordinary Genocide	26
<b>II. Tribal Protocol and Affirmative Inquiry</b>	
4. <i>Niinohkanistssksinipi</i> – Speaking Personally	35
5. Traditional Knowledge in Academe	44
6. Cultural Affirmation	51
7. Protocol of Affirmative Inquiry	63

### iii. Affirmation of Indigenous Knowledge

8.	<i>Kakyosin</i> – Traditional Knowledge	77
9.	<i>Kiitomohpiipotoko</i> – Ontological Responsibilities	84
10.	<i>Siksikaitsitapi</i> Ways of Knowing – Epistemology	98
11.	Knowledge is Coming to Know <i>Ihtsipaitapiyo'pa</i>	111
12.	<i>Kakyosin/Mokaksin</i> – Indigenous Learning	119
13.	<i>Niitsi'powahsinni</i> – Language	127
14.	<i>Aipommotsspistsi</i> – Transfers	140
15.	<i>Kaaahsinnooniksi</i> – Grandparents	147

### iv. Conclusion: Renewal of Ancestral Responsibilities as Antidote to Genocide

16.	Deconstructing the Colonized Mind	151
17.	Eurocentred and <i>Niitsitapi</i> Identity	165
18.	Reflections and Implications	172

Afterword: Remembering Ancestral Conversations,

by Jürgen W. Kremer 184

Glossaries, by Duane Mistaken Chief, with Jürgen W. Kremer

*Siksikaitsipowahsin*–English 194

English–*Siksikaitsipowahsin* 216

Bibliography 231

# Foreword

by Pete Standing Alone (*Nii'ta'kaiksá'maikoan*)

It is a great honour to have been part of Dr. Betty Bastien's work, namely *Blackfoot Ways of Knowing*. For the first time in my lifetime, an inquiry into the worldview of the Blackfoot-speaking people has been done by a *Niitsitapiaki, Sikapinaki* (Blackeyes Woman), Betty Bastien.

Betty Bastien asked me to participate in the study of the *Niitsitapi* – I not knowing all the questions she might ask.

I suggested that we go to the *Kaaahsinnooniksi* or *Aawaahskataiksi* [ceremonial grandparents]. These are men and women, who have gone through the transfer ceremonies of our spiritual ways of knowing.

I, myself, am one of those *Aawaaaahskataiksi*, I was taught by *Naaahsiks*, and they were taught by *Otaawaaahskatawaiksi* and so on.

The federal government and the churches did not succeed in totally destroying our spirituality and our identity, sources of our ways of knowing. Things have changed in the last thirty years since I got involved with the *Ihkanakaaatsiiksi* [All Comrades Society – in this case the Horn Society]. White people were not welcome at *Aakokatssin* [Sundance] then.

Now there are white people who are interested in our spiritual ways.

I was an *Aawaaahsskata* member of the Horn Society.

I was painting faces and giving blessings to his clients when a white couple with their two children came in the teepee to be painted and blessed.

Later I asked the *Iitssinnaiyi* about his friends, and he said, "They are not my friends; they are tourists travelling through southern Alberta, when they saw the *Aako'ka'tssin* and asked about the teepee in the centre and were told that is where you get your face painted and get blessed, so

they went and got painted and blessed.”

It has been said that white men have no place in the spiritual world of *Niitsitapi*. I wonder.

This book can be a vehicle for *Niitsitapi* to regain who they are, where they came from, and their identity, and therefore know their place and take their responsibilities in the universe.

## **Oki, Kita’ahkipohtsi’kaiyis Si’tsi’pssa’tohpowawa Annoh Aamo Kitaiyaa’ a’a’ko’kstso’powai.**

Nitsiikohaahsitak Ni No’ohk Ohko’tsitsspomissta’ahs Annohk Aamo Sinnaksinni: *Blackfoot Ways of Knowing*. Annohkai A’ahkaiyistsitsai tais tsi’p Niitsitapiaki – A’mowa Sikapinaki, Betty Bastien – Isstssinnakiwa Niitsipoiyiwa Onno’ohk Anist tssksinni’pi Niipaitapiiysinni.

A’mo, Sikapinaki, Nitsstsim’a’ahka’k Nita’ahkitsspomssta’ahsi O’tai yak Saaak O’tsistapi’tsiss Niitsitapiwa O’paitapiiysowai.

Niisstowa Niino’ohkannistsi’ta’ki Nita’ahk So’powahtsisatahsinnaan Kaahsinnooniksi, Aamo’ksihk AawaaahskataiksOnno’ohk Annistsskinni’powai Niipaitapiiysinni. Anni’ksisskai Iipommowaiyawa, Ki Isstannisksinnimiyawa Naatowapi.

Niistowa Nitaawaaahska’kowa. Nitaisstama’tsooki Naaahsiks, Kii Ostowawa O’no’ohka’tsiistapaisstama’tso’kowi Oomaaahsowaiks.

Aowka’ksstsimmaiksi Maatohkotssikaaatstomaiksawa Kitsitsitapiiysinnooni, Kit Atsimoyihka’nnooni, Kii Annik Inna’ahkota waistamatsotsiyo’pi. A’kaiyiiksstoko’ohkiitsiwa. Aotsitsk Iiyi’poisstoyiwa Nitsitsiitsinihpi Kanna’kaaatsiiks – Napikowaiks annihk Maatohko’tsitapo htowaiksa Aako’ka’tsinni.

Ki Annohk Napikowaiks Ai’yaitsinna’paisiyawa Natowapi.

Nitaawaaahskakowa – Niiksi Iitskinnaiyiiks, Nitaahska’ki.

Nitaohpoisskinna’katomowai, Niiksi Iitsskinnaiyiiks,

T’amsooksi piimma Niiksi Napikowani. Naatsitapi O’ko’sowaiks.

Nitao’ohpoiskinnaiyawa.



Nii'taikaiksa'maikoan, Pete Standing Alone, transferring the right to wear a war bonnet to my son Piita Bastien at the Blood Tribe annual celebrations.

Aiksisto'ohpoiskiyawa, Tsit So'powahsisatai Miiksi Iitsskinnaiyiiks,  
 "Ta'ahka Miiksi Ki Kso'kowaiks." Ma Iitsskinnaiyiwa, Ta Ni'k,  
 "Nimaatsikso'kowawaiksa, Tourists Nistapssiyawa. Anno' Iinimmiyawa  
 Aakokatssinni, Iitaistoma'ahkaiyawa. Aisopowahtsisiiyawa, "Tsa  
 Nisstapapiwa Ammi Ta'tsikiiyakokiiisinni." Iitohkannistaiyawa, "That's  
 where you get your face painted." Anniskai Isstsihihtohpoisskii'yawa.

Aawaaniyo'p "Napikowaiks, Ihkotsowaitsinna'paissi  
 Kitatowa'pssinnooni." Tai'kamsookohtaiksimsst [Ka'tannistiwa?]

Annohk Ammo Sinnakya'tsissi, A'kohko'tsiik Itapso'kapi Ma Ni-  
 itsitapiwa Aissaiyaa'a'k O'tsisstapitsim O'tsiitapiiysinni. A'kohtohkot  
 Otsistapi'tsim Annistsihk Ihpipo'to'tsspissti [Kitsiisitapiiysinnooni,  
 Kit Atsimoyihkannoon].

Translation by: Ai' ai'stahkommi

# Preface

by Betty Bastien (*Sikapinaki*)

The book is dedicated to the ancestors and grandparents, to my children and grandchildren, and to future generations who are the daily inspirations for the renewal of our sacred responsibilities.

The need for this work arose a long time ago, but the inspiration and opportunity came with my doctoral studies. As a student of the social sciences, I understood that the scientific approach that I had learnt was embedded in a particular history and carried particular assumptions about the nature of the universe. I had also realized that these scientific assumptions were often contradictory to the understanding of my ancestors. As I began to listen to the conversations of Leonard Bastien, Audrey Weasel Traveller, the late Priscilla Bruised Head, Narcisse Blood, Dr. Pamela (Apela) Colorado, Hunbatz Men, David Peat, and the students of the Bachelor of Social Work Degree Program at the University of Calgary (Yellowhead Tribal Council cohort), these conversations seemed to nurture the soul and inspire me to continue the inquiry. I knew almost immediately that I was on a journey. The journey continues; however, it was the generosity and kindness of these people that made a concept a reality. The purpose of the book is to share my journey with the hope of inspiring others in coming to know their place in the universe – the hope that others will come to know the wisdom of their bodies and listen with their hearts and hear the wisdom of the

ancestors. It is my hope that our ancestors and ancients will again have their openly acknowledged place in our ways of being and become apart of our daily living. It is my hope that our educational institutions and social organizations generate the ways of being created by the spiritual connections among all people and that “which is.” This is the hope and conviction that balance is a possibility.

The journey that I share in this book is one of “coming home.” Coming home means knowing and connecting to the mysterious force, Source of Life, and the essence of one’s being and at the same moment the totality of existence. It means coming to know the ancestors, the nurturing knowledge and the transformational pedagogy of our ways of knowing, and understanding that our ways of knowing are not lost, but perhaps it is we, the First Nations peoples, who are lost, as the grandparents have said.

The book is my journey of inquiry into the heart and soul of the Blackfoot world and the wondrous possibility of becoming, once again, keepers of the land, raising our children with the healing wisdom of the ancestors and speaking the sacred words that bring balance into our place. I share the possibility that we have the wisdom and knowledge within each one of us to address the challenges of our societies and the ecological crisis of our communities. It is my hope to support others in their inquiry into indigenous ways of knowing. I believe this is a key that will ensure the continual survival of life on the planet. My story is only a seed in the endeavour. Without those that supported my work, my experience would have remained only an idea.

I would like to acknowledge the ancestors who guided me to the teachers, our grandparents, and *Nii’ta’kaiksá’maikoan* (Pete Standing Alone) who, through his wisdom, guidance, and support led me on the path of experiencing the sacred teachings of the cosmos and created the opportunity for “coming home.”

I would like to acknowledge the grandparents and ceremonialists who, through their commitment and responsibility to the sacred world of the ancestors, gave their stories with love and generosity. I am deeply grate-

ful for their gifts, their permission, and their encouragement to share the stories in publication.

They must be acknowledged for carrying the responsibilities for another generation, so they too could survive. They are:

- Pete Standing Alone, Horn Society
- Rosie Red Crow, Horn Society, Medicine Pipe Holder, Motokis Society, Brave Horse Society.
- Adam Delaney, Horn Society, Medicine Pipe Holder.
- Frank Weasel Head, Horn Society, Medicine Pipe Holder.
- Francis First Charger, Horn Society, Medicine, Pipe Holder, Brave Horse Society.

I am truly indebted to the following persons: Dr. Jürgen W. Kremer, who, through his unrelenting support, friendship, guidance, and editorial work, made the possibility of this book a reality. Duane Mistaken Chief, who, through living the traditional teachings and speaking the sacred language of Blackfoot, was able to create the opportunity for me to experience the relationships of an inclusive universe. I would like to express my deep appreciation for his generosity, kindness, and friendship.

I would like to acknowledge the following for making the journey possible. The learning community of the Traditional Knowledge Program, Russell Barsh, and Marie Marule-Smallface for their foresight and commitment to the indigenous ways of knowing.

I would also like to acknowledge Henry Big Throat for the opportunity to learn from the history of the land, the valley, the trees, the river, and the wildlife, and the people in Native American Studies at the University of Lethbridge, who trusted and presented challenges that deepened my inquiry into the sacred world of *Niisitapi*.

A special acknowledgment and thanks are due to Dr. Pamela (Apela) Colorado, Dr. Busaba Paratcacharya, Dr. Daniel Deslauriers, Dr. Gwendalle Cooper, the late Peggy Robins, Dr. Gayla Rogers, Louise

Woodrow, Chantel Molar, Carloyn Lastuka, Tania Big Throat, Walter Hildebrandt, and the Nechi Insitute.

I want to thank the Piikani Nation Chief and Council, the Peigan Board of Education, the Guggenheim Foundation, the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary, and Nechi Institute for their financial contributions.

A unique debt is due to my sister, Babette Bastien, for her unconditional support and her tenacity for working late into the nights and on holidays. I thank my son, Piita, who with humor and insight so often puts the issues of the day into context and provides me with the opportunity to laugh at myself. Special thanks to my dogs Pirate (who has passed) and Wilamin; and my cats Eddie (who has passed) and Ugly for their unconditional loyalty and companionship.

## **Okī, Kita'ahki'pohtsi'na'ki'tsini'ko'ohpowawa Annohk Aamostsi Sinnakssiistsi.**

A'kaissamitao'taa'a'p Annohk Anni Nistapsinnakssinni Ma'ahk A'potsi'ssi. Nitaomatapsskinnima'tsoko'ohsi my Doctorate, Annikaiyai Tsitsii'ikato'p Nita'ahkohkotsistspi'ta'ki Nita'ahkoht Sinnaaksinni. Sootamma'totsistapi'tsihp Nitsika'ksi'tsii'ikatosi Napissksska'ta'ksinni, A'mi Social Science, Maatohksitsitapissksskatsispa. Nappikowaiks No'oh ka'taiyo'ohkitaisksskatsimiyawa Anno Iitapaisaopi, Ki Niipaitapiysinni. Ni'towao'k No'mohto'taiskskataki. Sootamma'totsissta'pi'ta'ki Anni Ommaanistaiskskata'kihp Napikowaiks, Otsao'ao'ohkitapitsstapiss Kiipaitapiysinnooni, Kii Anna'k Issko'ohta'k O'no'ohkannistsskatsihpowa iyi Niipaitapiysinni – Niitsinnahkotawaistama'tssto'ohkato'pi.

Nitao'mata'pisstsiwatahsi: Aapaomaahkaan (Leonard Bastien); O'pitaami, (Audrey Weasel Traveller; Annam, Naamitapiaki (Priscilla Bruised Head); Kiina'ksap'opa (Narcisse Blood); Dr. Pamela (Apela) Colorado; Hunbatz Men; David Peat; Kii Niiksi Aisksinnima'tsaiksi Social Work, Ammi Mo'ohkinnihtsis (The-Elbow/Calgary) – Aapatohsiisin-

naikowanniawa (from Yellowhead Tribal Council). Ommohtaipoissawa Niipaitapiiysinni sootamohtsiksistsspi'taki, Kii Niitaitohtso'kimmohs.

Sootamohpiista'pssksinni'p, Nikaomata'psspiyowaa'a'to'ohsi No'mohtaiyaa'a'k Otsisstapitsihpi. Kii Annihkaiyai Ni'tsiimaiyii'I'ka'kima't o'ohp Annohksiistsikoi. Aamoksi Matapiiksi Nitsiinikhkataiksi, Nitsiyiiksin i'sto'to'kyawa, No'mohtohko'tomatapaa'a'to'pi.

Noomohtsinnaihp Annohk Ammo Sinnakyatsissi, Matapiwa Ma'ahko'ohka'tsi'tsi'ksisstsspi'ta'kssowa Ma'ahko'ohka'to'tsisstapitsihs owai O'mohtsitsipo'to'wahpyawa Anno Iitapaissao'pi, Anno Ksahkoi. Ma'ahko'ohkitssksinnissa Annik Inna'ahkotawaistama'tsstohkato'pi.

Niino'ohkaiso'ki'taki A'ohko'ohka'tainihkatsima'tahs Anna'k Isski'ki'wa, Ma'ahko'ohkatsitssko'to'toihpommihthaaniyawa.

Iika'kso'kapiwa, Aamostsihk Iitaisksinnimatssto'ohkyo'pistsi Ma'ahk o'ohkohpowaistamatsstohkssawa No'ohkannistsi pototsspi, kitsiitsitapi-iyisnnooni. No'ohkanistai'tomma'tapaissao'pi A'ahko'ohka'tsitapitsstapissi Niitsitapiipaitapiiysinni. A'ahko'ohkatohtsa'pao'aohsi Niitsisstsi. Nitsii'i'k o'ohkannistsi'taki A'kohko'tssksso'kapihsi Niita'paitapiiyao'pi – Ma'ahka'tss katsimmipaitapiiyao'si.

Annohk Ammo Sinnakiya'tsissi Miiksistsitsinni'kato'ohp Nitsskotohkai'si – Niino'ohkatsitapo'ta'ksipoissi Kiipaitapiiysinnooni. Niitaanistapowaanisto'p “Nitsskota'ahkaiihpi” Nii no'ohkatohkannaiskom ata'potsistapi'tsissi kiipaitapiiysinnooni – Niima'tssksi'tapitapiiyissinni.

Nistapiwa, No'ohkatskomatapotsistapitsissi Annik Inna'ahkotawaistam a'tsstohkato'pi.

Ahksi'kamannistsiwa, “Maatonnowawa'tsto'pa Kiipaitapiiysinnooni, Kiistonnoon – Niitsitapiyo'pa – Anniksiyai A'tso'ohsao'p,” Anniyai Aawaani Ommahkitapiiksi.

Annohk, Ammo Sinnakkyatsissi, Miiksist Annistapi, Nitsskawawakinno'tsihp Kitsiksikaitsitapiiysinnooni, No'ohkanistsipaitapi iyo'pi. Ahkamma'po'ohkatsitsskaotoi'tsikato'ohp Anno Kitao'ahsinnooni, Anno Ksahkoi. A'ahkamma'po'ohkatsitsskomatapo'ohpai Stawatayi Ko'ko'sinnooniksi Annik Aatsimoyihkaani, So'kapiyi'k, Pommikapiiyik.

Nitsiiyiko'ohkanistsi'taki Ihkanaissksinni'p Niitaiyaa'a'kssksso'kawa'ta o'aopi, Iiso'ksipaitapiiyo'pi.

Niitsii'i'ko'ohkanistsi'ta'ki Nita'ahksspommowa'ahsi Anna'k No'ohka'ta iyaa'a'ksii'I'ka'kimma'tooma Ma'ahk O'tsistapi'tsihs Kiipaitapiiysinnooni.

Tsii'i'k kannistsi'ta'ki A'kohtomanistaikamo'tao'p, Aomanistaiyii'i'ka'ki ma'to'ohsi Kiipaitapiiysinnooni.

Annohk Ammo Nita'po'tsihipi Sinnakyatsis Nimaatohko'tsi'tapaotsih pa, Aakaitapi Iitsspommihtaiksi. Aomatsowaitaohkoisspommokoini'ki, Nita'ksika'ksammo'ohkaiksimmihta'to'ohp.

Nomohsi'ksimmatsi' Annak Iikaiyissaa'a'kiwa, Niitsitapaistama'tsii'ii's, Anniksi Kaaahsinnooniksi, No'ohkawaistama'tsstohkatooma Kiipaitapiiysinnooni.

Oki, Ni'ta'kaiksa,maikowan, Nitsii'i'ksinii'i'towawa Niino'ohkanistsspo mmoisspi. Nitsii'i'kso'kaistama'tsok.

Oki, Tsii'I'ka'tsinii'I'towaiyi, Anniksi Awatowa'pssiiksi, Ki Anniksi Aawaaahskataiksi. Ii'i'ksii'i'ka'kimatoomiyawa Annik Ihipo'towahpiyawa Aatsimoyihkaani. Annikihkao'kyawa Ihkanaitsina'po'takiiyawa Annihkai "Guggenheim Project."

Niitsii'i'katsinii'i'tsihp Annistsi Nitsiitsinni'koihpiyawa. Nitsii'i'ka'ahki mminnihpiyawa Nita'ahksinnaisi Anohk Ammo Sinnakyatisi. **Kammitst-sihki Pahtsapi, Pahtsisinnaihipi, Niistowa Ni'taitotapihp.**

Niiksi Omahkitapii'ksi ihkotohtsiiyana'kowiayawa O'tsiiyika'kimato'ohsawa Ma'ahkomanistaipo'oh'to'ohsi Kiipaitapiiysinnooni. A'ahkohtomanistaikamotaosi Kiistonnoon, Ki Anna'k Maanaiyaa'a'kitapiwa.

Ammoksi No'mohtaiipoihpiksi Omahkitapii'ksi, Anniksiyo'ki:

Nii'ta'kaiksa'maikoani (Pete Standing Alone)

A'kaotsskinnaiyiwa

Tsiinaki (Rosie Red Crow), A'kainaimihkawa, A'kaotoki,

Kanna'tsomitawa, A'kaotsskinnaiyiwa.

Mamiyo'ka'kiikin (Adam Delaney), A'kaapa'ksipistawa/

A'kaotsskinnaiyiwa.

Mi'ksskim (Frank Weasel Head), A'kaotsskinnaiyiwa,  
A'kainaimihkawa.

Ninnaispisto (Francis First Charger), A'kainaimihkawa,  
A'kaotsskinnaiyiwa, Kanna'tsomitawa.

Oki, Ammo'ksi Niitsii'i'kspommokiyawa, Ni ta'ahkam sao'ohko't so'po'k  
Annisto'p Nitaanist So'ksspommoihipi:

Jürgen Kremer, Niiniitap So'ksi'ksokowamawa. Maat Omatsskaoh-  
siwa. Aa'a'ya'a'aksitaksinnaim Ammo Sinnakyatsis, Miitsi O'tsi Nihpi  
Ni'pahtsi Sinnaksii'i'st. Nomoh'tssa'pa'kih'p Ammo Sinnakyatsis Nitsii'i'ka'  
ahkimminii'ihpi.

Ai'ai'stahkommi – Otsipaitapiyi'ihkihtsis Annistsihk Aistam  
ma'tsstohkssii'ih'ts, Ki Otsitsipowa'to'ohsi Annik Iimaatsimapii'ik  
Ki'tsi'powahsinnooni, No'moht O'tsistapi'tsihp Niitohkannaiksokowamot-  
siyaopi, Matapiwa'k, Iipotawa, Ksahkomma, Kannaomiiyanistsipiksiwa.  
“Kita'ahkohtsskinnihp Nitaanistsinnii'i'tsihpi Kinno'ohkso'ksi'kso'kowam  
mo'kssi, Kitaanistsikimmo'kihpi, Ki, Kita'ahsitapiiysinni.”

Oki, Ammoksiyaiyi, Niima'tohtsiyana'kowiya Niitanistsspommoihipi:

Anniksi Nitohpokssksinnimatsotsiimaiksi Amii Traditional Knowledge  
Program; Pinnapi'tapi (Russell Barsh); Ki, Isstoikamo'saki (Marie Small-  
face-Marule), Otsii'i'ka'kimma'to'ohsawa Kiistonnoon Noohkanistssks-  
satsihpi Niipaitapiiysinni.

Iitsskinnaipo'kawa (Henry Big Throat), Nitsii'i'katsinii'i'towawa.  
Annohk Oomi Ni'topissinni, Oistoi Nommoh'tsi'topi. Anniksi Miitsiiksi,  
Anni Nii'i'tahtai, Kyaniksi Kanaomiiyanistsipi'kssii'ks Iitopiwa  
Anni Ksissa'po'ohtsi, Nitsii'i'kohtakaotsistapi'tsihp Niipaitapiiysinni,  
Nitsitsspiyaopissi.

Ki Ammiiksi Iit A'paotakiiksi Native American Studies Ammi Univer-  
sity of Lethbridge. Miiksit tohtsstskima'kyawa Nitahk A'kyotsistapi'tsis  
Niipaitapiiysinni – Niitsitapipaitapiiysinni.

Oki Amoksi Niitsii'i'katsso'kspommokiyawa, No'ohtsitsiksimsatii'i':

Dr. Pamela (Apela) Colorado, Dr. Busaba Paratcacharya, Dr. Daniel  
Deslauriers, Dr. Gwendalle Cooper, Peggy Robins, Dr. Gayla Rogers,



Landscape of my home along the Belly River, my companions Pirate and Wilamin.

Louise Woodrow, Chantelle Marlor, Carloyn Lastuka, Tania Big Throat, Walter Hildebrandt, and the Nechi Insititute.

Nima'tsiksima'tsimaiyi, Piikani Board of Education, the Guggenheim Foundation, Ki Niiksi Faculty of Social Work, Ammi University of Calgary, Noomoh'tsspommokya'wawa Ihtaohpommaopi.

Oki Niimatsi'tsspyonowawa, Nississa, Babette Bastien.

No'moh'tsspommok Nika'kso'kitsihtai'ai's. Toksskai'ai'st  
Imma'taipanapotakiwa, Ki No'ohkssikopii'i's, Niita'ka'tsspommo'k.  
Kii, No'ohkowa "Piita (Bastien)." Nitsii'i'kaikya'ahpi'ksisto'to'k, Iimakom  
aisinnasii'i'ni'ki. Oki, Niimaatsaipo'towawa Nitohpoosiima, "Ugly,"  
Nitoomitaamiksi, "Pirate" (A'kaohka'psiwa/has passed on), Ki, Wilamin.  
Sootamiitapa'komimmokya'wawa, Maataiyamimo'kaiksa.

Translation by: Duane Mistaken Chief, Sr.

# Blackfoot (*Siksikaitsipowahsin*) Pronunciation Key

by Duane Mistaken Chief, Sr.

Recognizing the difficulty in reading and pronouncing the Blackfoot words in the text of this book, the following pronunciation key has been assembled in an effort to assist the reader. The following are very simple guidelines that will enable you to pronounce most words adequately; they do not require knowledge of linguistic rules. This “key” is not based on standard linguistic practices. If the reader wishes to undertake a more detailed linguistic analysis of the Blackfoot Language – often referred to as *Niitsipowahsinni* by Blackfoot people – other materials should be accessed (e.g., Donald Frantz and Norma Jean Russell’s, *Blackfoot Dictionary of Stems, Roots, and Affixes*). Most letters in the written Blackfoot language are pronounced the same as they are in English. The following list gives pronunciation guidance for those letters pronounced differently from English.

- a** is pronounced similarly but shorter and less drawn out, as in “alternator.” A good rule to follow is that the two are similar in pronunciation, but the double “*a*” signifies that the “*a*” is more drawn out, e.g., *Aawapssp* – “eye.”
- a’** with a glottal stop is pronounced the same as the single “**a**,” however stopped abruptly in the throat. Oftentimes, the glottal stop is described to be like a swallowed “*t*.” For instance, “[The] person is drunk,” in Blackfoot would be said in the following manner: “Aawa’tsi.”
- aa** is pronounced as a drawn-out short “*a*” in the English language, as in: “Baa baa black sheep....” For example: *Aawapssp* – “eye.”

- aaa** This is one of the possible combinations of double vowels and a single vowel which modify pronunciation. For example, “*Naaamai*.” This indicates that the first two letters are drawn out, followed by a third (same) letter, which is pronounced briefly in addition. The “**aa**” is pronounced distinctly in a drawn-out fashion, followed by the second “**a**,” also distinctly pronounced, although much shorter. In each case the “**a**” and “**aa**” are still pronounced as indicated in the previous parts of the key. They are only pronounced in quick but smooth succession. The same rule applies to other letters written in the same sequence.
- ah** spelling in Blackfoot is pronounced as in the German “ach,” as in “**Achtung**.” Example: *Abkoomohkasin* – “vow.”
- ai** in Blackfoot is similar to the “*a*” in “alley.” Example: *Siksikaitsitapi*.
- ay** The difference between “**ai**” and “**ay**” in Blackfoot words is that in the “**ay**” the “*y*” modifies the pronunciation after the “*a*” as in the “*y*” in “yikes.” So it would be equivalent to pronouncing a short “*a*,” as in “about,” followed quickly by a “*y*” as in “yikes.” Examples: *Ninnayawa* – “authority,” *Kimmapiiyipitssinni* – “values.”
- i** is pronounced similar to the “*i*” in “tin” in English. We can find an example of this in the term, “*inna’kotsiysin*,” – a word often associated with the English term, “respect.”
- ih** in Blackfoot, is pronounced similar to the “*iss*,” in the word “Swiss,” however with a very slight “*ish*” tendency. Example: *Aatsimoyihkaan* – “sacred way of speaking.”
- ii** is pronounced similar to the double “*ee*” in “seen,” as in *Piit*, which means, “come in.” The double vowels denote the drawing out of that particular letter.
- iiy** This letter combination is pronounced as a long “*e*,” as in “Lee,” followed quickly by a “*y*,” as in “yes.” See “**ay**,” for similarity. Example: *Niipaitapiiysinni* – “lifeworld of *Niitsitapi*.”
- o** in the Blackfoot language is pronounced similar to the “*o*”

in the English word “do.” For example, “*Koitapiisin*” – “receiving a gift.”

- o’ with a glottal stop is pronounced as an “o” in “oats.” We see this in the Blackfoot word, “*Kommo ’sissta’pi*,” which means “cylindrical case.” This example shows both the “a” and “o” glottal.
- oh is pronounced similarly, except the “o” (short “o”) modifies the German “**Achtung**,” to “**Ochtung**,” or in the town name “Ochtrup.” The “**ch**” portion is not pronounced any differently; it is only modified by the “a” or “o” accordingly. Example: *Kiitomohpiipotokoi* – “what you have been put here with.”
- oo in Blackfoot is pronounced as in the double “oo” in the English words “noon” and “soon.” For example, “*Kokonnoon*” – “our home.” As in the cases of the “a” and “i,” the doubling denotes that the letter is drawn out.
- y As in the “y” in “yikes.” Example: *Kakyosin* – “understanding” (see glossary for contextual explanation).
- ’ All glottal stops indicate the abrupt stopping of the pronunciation in the throat.

*This page intentionally left blank*



On the March.

Blackfoot camp on the march with horse and dog travois. ca. 1875. Original artwork by Richard Barrington Nevitt. Glenbow Archives NA-1434-30.