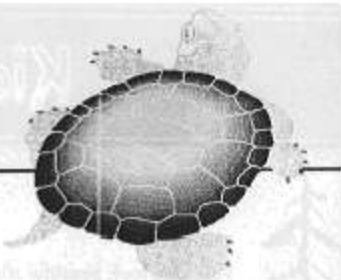


# Creature Teacher: THE TURTLE



Taken from *Creature Teachers: A guide to the Spirit Animals of the Native American Tradition*, by Grandmother Twylah Nitsch, Seneca Elder, Continuum Publishing Company, New York, 1997, Page 99

## DECREE OF MORAL CODE

*Turtle, Turtle, the slowest of them all,  
Moves on his stomach so he cannot fall.  
The wisdom of the ages flows through his mind,  
To teach a moral code, one at a time.*

*Survival of the fittest is his creed,  
His patience seeks to satisfy a need.  
Turtle contribution is a Moral Code  
Setting into practice a Trusting Mode.*

When Turtle first left the Water World to live upon the land, he found that it was quite cold and even wondered if he should have stayed in the water. Grandfather Sun saw the dilemma that faced the Turtle and Spoke to him.



"I'm the one who lights your world and warms it to make it feel comfortable. When you as

a Turtle emerged from the Water World your body was soft and pliable. This body has no protection from Creatures who live out of water. I can help you to move on the Earth with safety as well as return you to the Water World. But there is something that you must promise me before I can perform this change."

"What is it? What is it?" responded Turtle excitedly.

*There is a place called Waterland,  
It lies at the center of the Earth.  
Turtle Island can be its name,  
It's round and flat and with habitat,  
It's up to you to discover its worth,  
By making it a natural, livable berth.  
Sun slipped behind a cloud  
Feeling love and mighty proud.*

Turtle floated upon the water while Grandfather Sun hung in the Sky World. The softness of the Turtle's back began to bake by the warmth of Grandfather Sun. Soon his back was thoroughly baked yet the soft underside remain the same. Presently, Turtle felt his stomach hardening as he moved across the Earth.

"What is happening to me?" he thought.

*You have accepted a Moral Code,  
That sets a truth within your abode.  
As Peace Turtle, natural birth,  
You're the beginning of life on this Earth.*

The Great Mystery has spoken.  
Da nahoi!