Name _____

# PRIMARY SOURCE

The Great Law of Peace is the founding law of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy. In Haudenosaunee tradition, the Peacemaker brought it to the Five Nations. It is an oral law, kept in wampum belts and spoken aloud at councils, and it is still recited today; a full telling takes several days. Arthur C. Parker printed this English version in 1916. Haudenosaunee people say no written version holds all of it.

## The Great Law of Peace

| Parker's words (exact) | In plain English |
|---|---|
| **Law 1: The Tree of Peace** | |
| *I am Dekanawidah and with the Five Nations' Confederate Lords I plant the Tree of the Great Peace. I plant it in your territory, Adodarhoh, and the Onondaga Nation, in the territory of you who are Firekeepers. ...* | The Peacemaker plants a Tree of Peace in Onondaga land. The Onondaga are the Firekeepers, who keep the council fire where the Five Nations meet. |
| **Law 2: The Great White Roots** | |
| *Roots have spread out from the Tree of the Great Peace, one to the north, one to the east, one to the south and one to the west. The name of these roots is The Great White Roots and their nature is Peace and Strength. If any man or any nation outside the Five Nations shall obey the laws of the Great Peace ... they may trace the Roots to the Tree ...* | The tree's roots reach in all four directions. Any other nation that wants peace and will obey the law can follow the roots to the tree and join. |
| **Law 28: The Coming Generations** | |
| *With endless patience you shall carry out your duty ... Look and listen for the welfare of the whole people and have always in view not only the present but also the coming generations, even those whose faces are yet beneath the surface of the ground ...* | A new leader must be patient. He must work for the good of all the people and think about people today and the children not yet born. |
| **Law 54: The Women Choose** | |
| *When a Lordship title becomes vacant through death or other cause, the Royaneh women of the clan in which the title is hereditary shall hold a council and shall choose one from among their sons to fill the office made vacant.* | When a leader dies or leaves, the women of his clan meet and choose a new leader from among their sons. |
| **Law 57: The Bundle of Arrows** | |
| *Five arrows shall be bound together very strong and each arrow shall represent one nation. As the five arrows are strongly bound this shall symbolize the complete union of the nations.* | Five arrows tied tightly together stand for the five nations. Tied together, they show the nations are fully united. |

Arthur C. Parker, The Constitution of the Five Nations, or the Iroquois Book of the Great Law, New York State Museum Bulletin 184 (Albany: University of the State of New York, 1916), sections 1, 2, 28, 54 and 57, from the version prepared by Seth Newhouse (Mohawk) and edited by Parker. Public domain. Text checked against the Internet Archive scans (https://archive.org/details/cu31924101928012 and https://archive.org/details/constitutionoffi00parkuoft). Exact words of Parker's text; ... marks words left out.