

The Strength of the Earth is in Diversity

Turtles have witnessed the comings and goings of diversity for millions of years. They waddled beside dinosaurs, watched mammals evolve, and nourished the first humans. Today, many describe turtles as slow, lazy, and sleepy, but maybe we should look again.

"Conservation-minded" might be a more appropriate way to view the turtle. Few other animals have remained so relatively unchanged for so long. After "doing it right the first time," turtles have adapted slowly to changes in climate, predation, and food resources. Their protective armor is the cornerstone of turtle architecture. Of course, turtles have built other adaptations around their shells, but the shells account for both the longevity of the line and the limited diversity of turtles.

Throughout history, many cultures have considered turtles objects of reverence. Many treated them as sacred or conferred upon them high religious significance. The turtle plays a major role in the creation legends of Native American Indians, peoples from the Far East, and several other cultures. In many of these legends, the turtle supports the earth on its back . . . the strength of the turtle supporting the diversity of the earth.

But now even the steady, reliable, determined turtle is in danger. Human predation and habitat destruction have taken their toll. People have admired the wisdom of turtles for thousands of years. The turtles may be speaking to us. Are we listening?

This logo graphically portrays the beauty and necessity of both cultural and biological diversity. Many peoples, spanning thousands of years, have contributed their artwork to this design. From the top left, working clockwise around the design:

Senufo peoples of the Ivory Coast of Africa. Painted on cloth used for the costumes of wild animal and fire spitter masqueraders.

Native Americans of North America. Inscribed on skins, bark, and stone as a symbol for storytelling and recording events.

Natives of Arnhem Land in Australia. Painted on bark in red, yellow, white, black, and light brown. This "X-ray painting" may give us a clue to early peoples' understanding of animals.

Children of the World, represented by Adam Mittermaier (age 3). Drawn on paper—in honor of all the children whose art and love for diversity is universal.

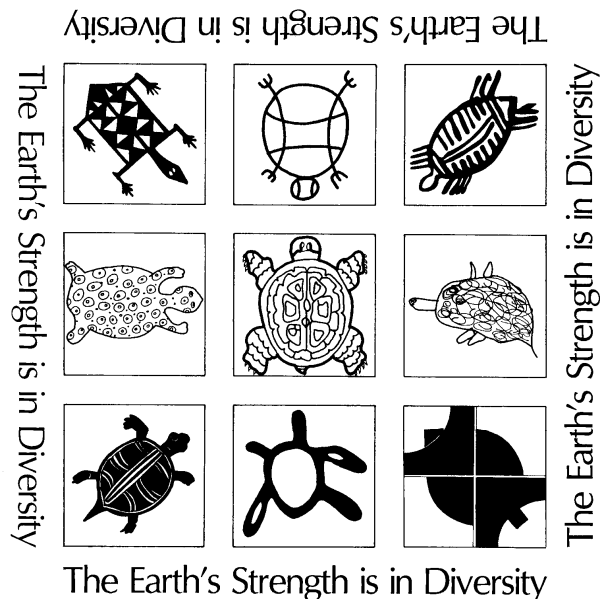
Quilters of the New World, 20th century. Patched from fabric using four Drunkard's Path blocks.

Laps of Sweden. Painted on the skin of a shaman drum. The drums were used to induce the trance that is central to the shaman's magic rites.

Cassites of Babylonia, 1150 B.C. Carved into a boundary stone or *kudurrus*, which were placed in sanctuaries, covered with inscriptions, and carved in relief with figures of kings and gods.

Hindus of India, 18th century. Painted on a canvas showing symbolic uses of reptiles in Hindu mythology.

Mexicans of Palenque, Mexico. Carved into the facade of a ruin. (center)



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