



Kéet Shuká

An Indigenous Tribute to Killer Whales

Weaving together Native culture, science, and art

By Odin Lonning & Ann Stateler

The Tlingit phrase *Kéet Shuká* means killer whale ancestors, descendants, and their images in crests, stories, and art. Killer whales are sacred to many Coastal Native peoples. Our *Kéet Shuká* program integrates Tlingit regalia, song, dance, stories, and Odin's artwork with standard teaching tools such as maps, video, and photos by orca researcher Mark Sears.

Drawing from Tlingit tradition, Native science, and the natural history of orcas, *Kéet Shuká* illuminates the killer whale's spiritual and ecological significance in the Pacific Northwest. We describe our extraordinary experience with Springer (A73) the Orphan Orca, who lived near our Vashon Island home for six months. Springer inspired us and other First Nations people to honor her ceremonially. In *Kéet Shuká*, we explore the enduring bond between killer whales and Northwest Coast Native peoples.

Puget Sound's orcas are facing extinction. In *Kéet Shuká*, we detail threats to our cherished killer whales and specify ways to protect them. We examine the value of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) in mainstream conservation. From elementary grades to college,

Kéet Shuká supplements curricula for Pacific Northwest history, science, and art.

Odin Lonning is a professional, award-winning Tlingit artist, cultural educator, and traditional dancer. He created the original artwork for *Kéet Shuká*. Odin contributes indigenous wisdom gained from tribal elders, Native artists, and other culture bearers. **Ann Stateler (Orca Annie)** is a marine naturalist and environmental educator of Choctaw/Five Tribes descent. She has studied orcas since 1992, collaborating with researcher Mark Sears to document killer whale travel and behavior in Vashon-Maury Island waters. Ann coordinates the Vashon Hydrophone Project for Puget Sound whale research, www.Vashonorcas.org, sponsored by the American Cetacean Society's Puget Sound Chapter (ACS/PS). Ann and Odin are ACS/PS Board members.

Odin and Ann have staged *Kéet Shuká* for diverse audiences, from San Diego, CA to Glacier Bay, AK. Venues include classrooms, conferences, museums, Northwest Folklife and other festivals, culture camps for Native students, and Native art events. Visit www.OdinLonning.com to learn more.

To schedule *Kéet Shuká*, call **206-463-9041** * e-mail Vashonorcas@aol.com