



CALLING THE SPIRITS POSTURE

A small clay figure stands in this posture, his elongated head and long jaw line characteristic of the statues of the Olmec people. His mouth hangs open. His hands, which are the keys to this ritual posture, are spread into the seams of his body at the groin.

The Olmec figurine I always see when I think of this posture is the one displayed in the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City. He stands only 2½ inches tall and looks strikingly similar to other Olmec figures and drawings.

The Calling the Spirits posture was not specific to the Olmecs, however. There is a beautiful carving from the Pacific Northwest of a woman lying on the back of a dogfish, her hands in the characteristic position of this posture. The woodcarver obviously knew the experience of trance, since the woman's eyes convey that unmistakable inner gaze so well known to those who have made trance journeys.

DESCRIPTION

This is one of the standing postures. Stand with your feet parallel, about six inches apart, and your toes directed straight ahead. Keep your knees slightly bent to prevent a strain on your lower back. Spread the fingers of each hand as wide as possible. Position the middle finger of each hand in the crease where your leg joins your torso, with your other fingers lying against your body. Hold your upper arms stiff and away from your body. With your eyes closed, tip your head back slightly. Keep your mouth open during the trance, as though you are calling out,

