

EDITORIAL



Walking In Balance And Beauty:

By Rick Runningbear

Our ancestors placed great value on the principal of "Balance". Everything in Nature must be in balance. Everything in the tribe must be in Balance. To do things in a balanced way was to do things in a Beautiful way. Even to this day, we often say "good bye" by adding: "Walk in Balance" or "Walk in Beauty".

As I walk through the woodlands I sometimes see trees that are badly out of balance. I feel the urge to get my saws and pruners and work on those trees and lop off some limbs to where the tree will be in balance. Otherwise, during a storm with strong winds, the out of balance tree is in danger of falling down.

We, as people are much like trees. During the aggravation of just living life, we become out of balance. We get "out of kilter", so to speak. We get to leaning too far in one direction or another. Some of us are leaning too far in the direction of anger, and get angry too fast. Being angry does not accomplish much. Anger is a sign of defeat.

Others of us lean too far in the direction of complacency. Nothing seems to stir us and

we just "float along" without making much impact on anything or anyone. We become too "willy nilly" or "namby pamby".

Our ancestors believed in keeping things in balance. If an enemy tribe made a raid on them and killed 20 braves, they would in turn make a raid on the enemy and take 20 of their lives, no more and no less.

To walk in balance is to walk in beauty. In this modern turbulent world we live in, this is an important principal all of us should see to live by. We as a tribe are faced with important issues that relate to our survival as a modern day tribe of people, widely scattered over this vast land. We need a sense of cohesiveness and of bonding together.

In some ways we are much like the ancient Cherokee nation. Even though they had a "capital city", they did not have an autocratic central government. Each village was autonomous, and there were many of them scattered over what now is eastern Kentucky, eastern Tennessee, western N. Carolina, northwestern S. Carolina, northern Georgia, northeastern Alabama, eastern Virginia and southeastern West Virginia.

Each village had its own peace chief and war chief (the white and red governments). Yet, even being so widely separated, they made it a custom, so far as possible, to travel to the capital city (at one time Kituwah and later Chota) for the most important feasts and ceremonies. Yet, each village also had its own smaller ceremonies each new moon.

In our tribe we have our National Tribal Ceremonial Grounds located near Ochlocknee, Georgia. These Grounds should be the shining light and example to all other bands in the tribe that have their own grounds. Our tribe is about education...and education begins at home. Before we can educate the general public we must be able to educate our own people in the doing of Ceremony and the way to live in "two worlds" as we must in this modern society if we are to perpetuate the ways of our elders and ancestors.

Sometimes pride gets in the way and we do not get along. This is nothing new. Our Native ancestors often did not get along either. Perhaps that is why they had ceremony so often...to come together and get spiritually re-charged so that they could once again put self aside, and work together for the good of the people.

In Nature there exists a natural balance and beauty, if we do not tamper with it. The rain is balanced by the sunshine. The mountains are balanced by the valleys. The winter is balanced by the summer. The spring is balanced by the fall. If we are to be in harmony with Earth Mother and Father Sky, we need to learn the lessons of balance. Without balance there is no harmony.

This is why ceremony is so important. It is believed that the ancient Cherokee actually had a ceremony at each new moon. This would be 13 times a year. After each ceremony there was a 28 day period between ceremonies in which the people sought to walk in balance and beauty. But the

stress of life was then as it is now. They needed to come together for ceremony on a regular basis and this was regulated by the phases of the moon.

All of us who can should make an effort to come to the National Grounds once a year to participate in ceremony. Over and above this, we must do our own ceremonies with our bands our in our households.

If we do our ceremonies regularly I believe there would be less disharmony between us and we would accomplish much more as a modern day tribe. We have a task before us to educate the general public the traditional ways of our ancestors. We must begin this process at home. Let us get back in balance and walk the beautiful path of love and harmony.

Let us walk the Red Road, whether it be the White path of peace or the Red path of protection. We all walk the Medicine Wheel of life. In balance we may approach the gate of the shadow land of the West with clean hands and straight eyes.

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Talking Leaves is a publication of the Southeastern Cherokee Council, Inc. Editor: Rick Runningbear Dunifer