



CHEROKEE TALKING LEAVES

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FROM THE CHIEF'S CORNER:

Osiyo, Brothers and Sisters,

I am amazed at the number of people who discover they are Cherokee descendents and then decide that the Federal Government or federally recognized tribes owe them something! It reminds me of the animosity that continues today between the northern and southern states over the Civil War. There is no one alive today from either side, yet the anger and hatred continues over a long dead issue.

While it is good to remember and honor the past of one's ancestors, dwelling on past atrocities will only bring grief. It is unfortunate that there are so many Cherokee descendents whose ancestors, for whatever reason, did not go on the Trail Of Tears, thereby leaving us without any rights as Cherokees, to either be recognized by the Federal Government or by our brothers and sisters who are, indeed, recognized.

It is unfortunate on one hand, but on the other it is a blessing. I have visited both with the Cherokee Nation Of Oklahoma and the Eastern Band Of Cherokee Indians, and there is no way I will give up my freedom in order to become a "rez' Indian! They are virtually prisoners of the Federal Government even today. While they do receive a stipend from the government, they still are limited in the choices they can make concerning their lives. Uncle Sam is forever

looking over their shoulder. Being recognized neither takes away nor adds to the fact that I am Cherokee by blood and heart. I do not need another being or organization to validate who I am. So "recognition" is a moot point!

However, it is important that I live m life as a Cherokee, to practice tradition and maintain my religious relationship with the Creator and to know that as a Cherokee, my contributions to my fellow Cherokees makes a difference, for the good, in their lives.

No one is placed at a particular station in life by accident. We are all part of a designed plan, by the Creator, and it is up to us to ask for and accept what the Creator has planned for us. Only through prayer can we know what is expected of us and if we do it right. And, too it is so important that we learn what tradition and ceremony is and to make sure we practice what we preach.

While it is not absolutely necessary to attend the ceremonies on the Tribal grounds every time, (and there are legitimate reasons for not being able to sometimes) it is important that a representative from each of the bands attend some of them so they can learn the correct way to conduct the ceremonies. We are fortunate to have a genuine teacher in Star Singer to show us the correct way to participate on a daily basis.

Through our actions, I am confident that one day, everyone who really matters will recognize that we truly are Cherokee, not only by blood, but by the way we conduct our daily lives.

May Grandfather hold you near and guide you through the days to come.

Wado,

Panther

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