

The Pipe Ceremony



By Jim HowlingWolf of Chota

The Ceremonial pipe we call "sacred". Yet it holds no magical powers. It is only a tool of what it is made of. It is an instrument by which we use to give thanksgiving. Its use gives us time to meditate upon Creation and the awesomeness of our Creator.

The pipe ceremony gives us two opportunities. One is to seek understanding of who we are and secondly, to pay honor to the traditions of our Ancestors. There is no right or wrong in holding a pipe ceremony as long as it comes from the heart. Each ceremonial leader adds his or her own spirit and thus no two ceremonies are the same.

To me, the pipe ceremony holds the following messages in the Seven Sacred Directions:

East: The rising of the sun, the beginning of a new day, a new adventure, a birth. It is a time of the present, not the past or future. This is the time to give thanks for life and show respect for our ancestors. A time to ask for their blessing to be upon us, and a time to seek directions for the new day.



South: The time of the sun's fullness. A time of growth, fun, and exploration of our bodies and our environment. A place where we give thanks to youth and to the traditions of our ancestors. A place where we ask the spirits to always remember the wonderful faith without doubt which we experienced. A time to ask for this joy to ever be with us.

West: Tradition teaches that this is the direction where exists the "Shadow Land", where the spirits of our ancestors abide. It represents also the setting of the sun at the end of the day or at the end of our life's journey. It represents the time of maturity when we should work together for the betterment of mankind and not self. This is the place to which we give honor and respect for our ancestors who have completed life's circle. A time to seek their advice so that we may walk in balance and harmony.

North: A place of rest during the Cold Moon period. A time when the elders would tell the stories of their people to the young. Stories that tell them where they come from, to help them to know where they are going. North is a time for mending, rest, and meditation. A time for one to count their blessings A time when Mother Earth rests. A time to seek wisdom. But, be aware that wisdom sometimes comes from trials and tribulations. North is a place to give thanks to the spirits of knowledge that we may learn to love one another.

Mother Earth: A time to remember we are made from the dust of the Earth. We must

respect Mother Earth as well as our bodies or we will pay the price. A time to pray for the respect of Earth that she may reclaim her balance and harmony. A time to pray for mankind to stop his abuse that we all may live better and longer.

The Universe: The Great Mystery: A time to look upward into the heavens in wonderment and awe and ask "how?" A time to know that we are not alone but are part of life and all creation. A time to realize that just as Creation has no end, neither do our spirits. A time to be humble and thankful that we are a part of this master plan.

The Creation: In space of time and travel, all creation points to the point of origin. The Master Of Creation, The Master Of Life and Love. A time to ask for His instructions that your life may be lived to the fullest. A time to listen to His words that speak so softly to our spirit, and our minds. A time to reach out and receive His blessings.

This is what the Pipe Ceremony means to me. Walk in love and peace, my brothers and sisters!

Jim Howling Wolf of Chota

