

Chup-Leaves

by Clifford Case, Jr.

Grandfather, it is I, SpiritFeather. I have found my weakness, Grandfather. It is alcohol, a liquid that can send a man in a thousand directions with nothing in common but trouble.

How do I escape this, Grandfather? SpiritFeather, how can you escape something that has already been put upon your heart? This is something you must live with and stay away from this liquid that causes you trouble all the time.

I remember a warrior who has the same bad spirit as you. You will see that it too was hard for him to stay away from this bad spirit that kept him in trouble all the time until his own spirit had overcome this feeling.

His name is Swallows-Again. He was born to a great nation and had become a medicine man, but not overnight, as he grew into the age of becoming a warrior. Swallows-Again stayed close to his grandmother, whom he watched constantly and listened to her words of chant while she mixed up roots and berries for medicine.

Whether it was mental or physical, some of the boys were always teasing Swallows-Again because of being close to his grandmother and not learning the ways of becoming a warrior. In the years to come, his grandmother knew what Swallows-Again was becoming. So what medicines she knew she had passed on to him and gave him up to the medicine man to learn more ways.

During a talk between him and the medicine man, the medicine man was

showing him more ways to mix things up. He told him you must never use this leaf we call "chup," for it will make your mind and spirit crazy. We only use it to heal over wounds. Do you hear me, Swallows-Again? Yes I hear you.

One day Swallows-Again had cooked this leaf to see what it would do to him. The next day, he woke up not knowing where he was. When he got back to camp, his grandmother noticed Swallows-Again's eyes, for they looked sick. She knew what he had done and told him not to cook "chup" anymore. He told his grandmother he would never do it again.

Swallows-Again did cook "chup" once more, only not as long, and once more he woke up the next day not knowing where he was. His grandmother made him do hard work for not listening to her words and the young warriors laughed at him.

So Swallows-Again cooked "chup" again and put it in the young warriors' drinking water. He watched them. After awhile, he saw the warriors laughing and having a good time, so Swallows-Again drank some more, laughing at them and not with them. Again he woke up outside the camp area, not knowing how he got there.

When he got back, he saw the people weeping, for two of the warriors' spirit was taken from another. His grandmother knew what happened, so did the medicine man. They said to Swallows-Again we told you not to cook "chup" anymore.

Why did you disobey us?

I'm sorry, I saw that they were having fun, also wondering how I woke up outside the camp every time. Medicine man said I told you this would make you crazy, now we lost two warriors due to your learning. I shall not teach you anymore medicine, for you make bad medicine toward our people. Swallows-Again pleaded with medicine man to teach him more. He didn't.

So Swallows-Again kept cooking "chup," for he felt that he needed it. The more he drank "chup," the more the people would stay away from him until one day he woke up all alone, for the people had left him.

As time went on, Swallows-Again prayed to Grandfather, the Great Spirit, asking for forgiveness. Every time he saw the leaves, he would turn and walk a different direction and look up to the skies and asking for forgiveness.

One day he ran into the leaves in all four directions. He fell to his knees weeping, asking what it took to stay away from "chup," still weeping until he fell asleep. In his dream, he saw a lot of his people drinking "chup." Some were sick, others were dying, but most of all a lot were dead. The Great Spirit

told him that this is what's going to happen if you keep cooking this leaf. Use it only for good medicine, not bad.

Swallows-Again woke up the next day only to find out that the "chup" leaves were all around him and on him, so he knew there was no way to run or hide. He told himself never again am I gonna cook "chup."

As seasons went, he heard screaming in the distance. He ran toward the screaming and saw some of his people weeping and standing over a little one. He spoke out loud, asking where the medicine man was or his grandmother. They said they had passed on to the spirit world.

It was then that Swallows-Again remembered what roots and berries to cook to make him well. He then covered up his wounds with "chup" to make them heal. As time went on, the little boy became healthy once more. The people saw this and let Swallows-Again back into the circle, for now he takes care of all of them and not just himself. A-Ho

Thank you, Grandfather, for this story and lesson, for I know what alcohol can do to a man if he lets himself drink.

SpiritFeather

Nominate Artist for Community Spirit Award

First People's Fund, a national nonprofit organization, invites you to nominate an artist from your American Indian community for its fifth annual Community Spirit Award, recognizing individuals who have made substantial contributions to their communities.

Five individuals will be honored with a \$5,000 fellowship and recognized at a ceremony at the Journey Museum in Rapid City, S.D., in December 2003.

Community Spirit speaks of the unselfish generosity these artists have for their Indian community. It also describes the teaching of gifts that promotes and sustains indigenous cultures. First People's Fund seeks artist who are:

- ◆ Deeply rooted and maintain direct ties to their tribal community.
- ◆ A commitment to building the strength of native communities by

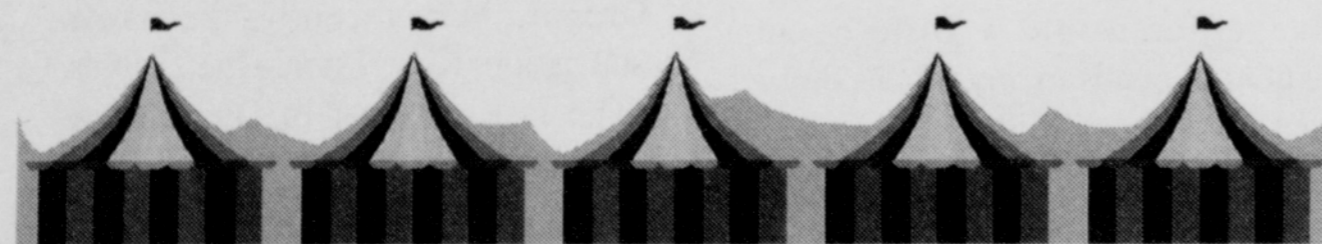
sharing skills and talents with others in their respective communities.

- ◆ An artistic practice that passes on the traditions and life ways of the people

Nominated artists must be:

- ◆ Practicing artists of demonstrated maturity in their field
- ◆ Continually practicing artists for a minimum of 10 years
- ◆ 25 years or older
- ◆ Documented affiliate of a U.S. tribe

Send a postcard to FPF, P.O. Box 2977, Rapid City, SD 57709-2977. Include complete addresses of the nominee and nominator. Must be post-marked by June 15, 2003, or nominate online at www.firstpeoplesfund.org. In June, FPF will mail an application for completion by nominee and nominator.



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Sponsored by Siletz Valley Partnership

May 10, 2003, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

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