

## Looking Horse Proclamation on the Protection of Ceremonies

I Chief Arvol Looking Horse, 19th Generation Keeper of the Sacred White Buffalo Calf Pipe, would like to thank all the people that attended this historic "Protection of Ceremonies" meeting: Bernard Red Cherries, Northern Cheyenne Nation, Northern Cheyenne Arrow Priest and Elk Society Headsman; Tweety Little Bird, Northern Cheyenne Nation, Northern Cheyenne Elk Horn Scraper Society; Lee Pedro, Southern Arapahoe Nation, Southern Arapahoe Rabbit Man (Holy Man); Dave Chief, Oglala Nation, Lakota Spiritual Leader; Dave Swallow Jr., Oglala Nation, Medicine Bundle Keeper; Kevin Horse Looking, Oglala Nation, Medicine Bundle Keeper; Floyd Hand, Oglala Nation, Medicine Bundle Keeper; Selo Black Crow, Oglala Nation, Medicine Bundle Keeper; Sam Moves Camp, Oglala Nation, Medicine Bundle Keeper; Chris Leith, Prairie Island Dakota Community, Medicine Bundle Keeper; Gaylen Drapeau Sr., I-hank-to-wa (Yankton Sioux) Nation, Medicine Bundle Keeper; Gaylen Drapeau Jr., I-hank-to-wa (Yankton Sioux) Nation, Medicine Bundle Keeper; Ambrose Little Ghost, Spirit Lake Dakota Nation, Dakota Spiritual Leader; Calvin Medicine Bear First, Assinoboine Nakota Nation, Nation Spiritual Leader; Leonard Crow Dog, Si-c'an-g'u Rosebud Sioux Nation, Medicine Bundle Keeper; Roy Stone Sr., Si-c'an-g'u Rosebud Sioux Nation, Medicine Bundle Keeper; Ned Medcalf, Si-c'an-g'u Rosebud Sioux Nation, Interpreter/advisor; Leon Red Dog, Hoh'-wo-ju Cheyenne River Sioux Nation, Medicine Bundle Keeper; Steve Vance, Hoh'-wo-ju Cheyenne River Sioux Nation, Medicine Bundle Keeper; Francis Yellow, Hoh'-wo-ju Cheyenne River Sioux Nation, Medicine Bundle Keeper; Jacob Sanderson, Cree Nation Canada, Medicine Bundle Keeper; Kevin Ta-c'an, Sioux Valley Manitoba Dakota Nation, Dakota Spiritual Leader.

On March 8 and 9, Spiritual Leaders and Bundle Keepers of the Lakota, Dakota, Nakota Nation, Cheyenne Nation, and Arapahoe Nation were called together to discuss the protection from the abuse and exploitation of our ceremonies. The

meeting was held at the Cultural Center in Eagle Butte, South Dakota, hosted by the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe. I would also like to acknowledge the financial donation from the Prairie Island Dakota Community.

Discussions in the meeting included the molestation taking place in ceremony, indecent mockery, mixing of new age beliefs, charging for ceremonies and death, which was never heard of before in our ancient ceremonial history. There was also discussion of the use of other "medicines" (drugs) in and around our ceremonies.

When the White Buffalo Calf Woman brought the Sacred Bundle, she instructed that only those with a pure mind and heart should touch the C'anupa. The ceremonies in question, in reference to all the Plains Tribes, were the I-ni-pi (Purification Ceremony), Wi-wanyang-wa-c'i-pi (Sundance Ceremony) and Han-ble-c'i-ya (vision quest) Sacred Rites.

We put out notice in the newspapers and Native radio stations and also contacted people through the phone. I offered prayers for the safe journey of the People to this very important historic meeting. Those that could not attend, I acknowledge their prayers for a good outcome for our concerns.

After long discussion and testimonies of the concerns and issues, it was decided that it would be up to me, as the Keeper of the Sacred White Buffalo Calf Pipe, to make a decision. It was good to feel the beginning of a unity amongst our People. This has been my concern for many decades, especially now, when we are facing an oncoming war. We need to stand strong with our ceremonies!

I will state what the decision is and also explain the reasons. I will state the protocols to our Seven Sacred Rites, which were passed down to me when I became the next Keeper at the age of 12. These protocols are traditional knowledge passed down through our oral history and need to be brought back to strengthen our Ho-c'o-ka (our sacred alters) once again.

I will also address the areas that I cannot be involved in. My responsibility is the Seven Sacred Rites.

It was decided, from March 9, 2003, and forward, there will be no non-

Natives allowed in our sacred Ho-c'o-ka (our sacred alters) where it involves our Seven Sacred Rites. The only protection with this decision in government law; is that only enrolled members can carry an eagle feather. In all the Seven Sacred Rites, there has always been the understanding of earning and a requirement of an eagle feather while participating in these Rites. The eagle feather stands for Indigenous knowledge and guidance in our spiritual ways.

**The Wi-wanyang-wa-c'i-pi (Sundance Ceremony):** The only participants allowed in the center will be Native People. The non-Native people need to understand and respect our decision. If there have been any unfinished commitments to the Sundance and non-Natives have concern for this decision; they must understand that we have been guided through prayer to reach this resolution. Our purpose for the Sundance is for the survival of the future generations to come, first and foremost. If the non-Natives truly understand this purpose, they will also understand this decision and know that their departure from this Ho-c'o-ka (our sacred altar) is their sincere contribution to the survival of our future generations.

Please understand the Wi-wanyang-wa-c'i-pi Ceremony is not only taking place in the center (Ho-c'o-ka) with the dancers. The ceremonial participation also depends on all the supporters on the outside of the arbor who should be in prayer. From the gate to the cook shack to the fire-keepers to the supporters around the arbor, to even the moon camp, all people are still a part of this sacred ceremony.

There should be a preparation of Han-ble-c'i-ya (vision quest) before you become a participant of the Sundance.

We shall go back into this ceremony with the proper protocols before and during the ceremony itself. Only those that have had the dream or direction through a ceremony, in concern of someone's health, should be dancing. Dancers should be secluded from outside participants, as to not be contaminated by other people's energy or thoughts. There should be absolutely no food or water during this four-day ceremony. If there are health problems, you should choose a person to finish

your commitment. This ceremony is supposed to be for those that believe they can fulfill all required four days of the ceremony.

**Han-ble-c'i-ya (Vision Quest):** The vision quest should be only for Native People that have had the dream or vision. This Rite is also for the young men and women that reach the age of 12.

**I-ni-pi (Purification Ceremony):** Those that run this Sacred Rite should be able to communicate with Tun-cas'i-la (our Sacred Grandfathers) in their Native Plains tongue. They should also have earned this rite by completing Han-ble-c'i-ya and the four days and four years of the Wi-wanyang-wa-c'i-pi.

The other four sacred rites of the **Hun-ka ka-g'a (Making of a Relative)**, the **Ta-pa kah'-g'o-ya (Throwing of the Sacred Ball)**, **Wi-yan is'-na ti (Womanhood Ceremony)** and the **Na-g'i glu-ha (Keeping of the Spirit Ceremony)**, should be only handled by legitimate Lakota, Dakota, Nakota Oyate (People).

It was also decided only legitimate Lakota, Dakota, Nakota Oyate Medicine Bundle Keepers should handle any other ceremonies that are connected to our Ho-co-ka, such as the Lo-wa-pi and U-wi-pi ceremonies.

There should be no price tag allowed to participate in any of our Sacred Ceremonies. The only protocol needed for a ceremony is to o-pa-g'i, meaning to offer your C'anupa or offer tobacco that has been prayed with, in which the Medicine Person accepts or not accepts if he is not able to assist. Medicine People do need to survive, and if people wish to give a monetary or any other gifts after they receive their help from a ceremony, giving it from their hearts, I see no problem with that. We have to have faith that the Grandfathers will provide for our needs to survive in this modern society, whether the gift is money, blankets, food, or anything that represents how much they appreciate the help. Some people can afford big gifts, some people cannot. It all balances out.

My position is only for the Seven Sacred Rites. I cannot dictate to our Medicine People who they allow to attend and support these Rites, in

**See Sacred on page 21**