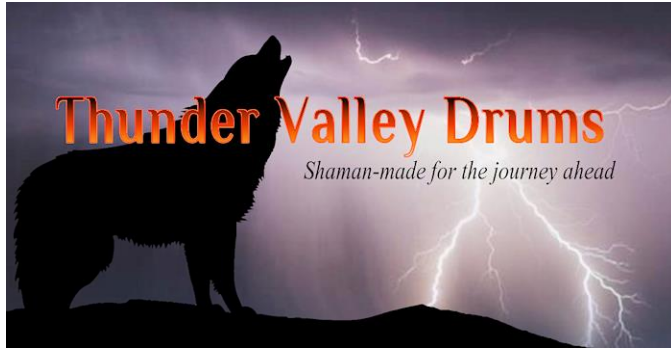


About The Radiant One



On Audio Version, Music Courtesy Big City Indians https://bigcityindians.com/start_en from their Tribal Vision album

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About The Radiant One: Insights Into An Extraordinary Drum

By Shaman Bob

I have so much in my heart to share with you about this joyful drum, the first new Lightning Drum in nearly a year. And, oh my, it has a story to tell.

It's about the principles of inside-out, oneness, and theoretical / quantum physics, all of which originated long ago with the ancient practice of shamanism. So this humble medicine drum, while maintaining a regal moniker and the outward appearance of lively and colorful verve, reminds us that the illumination necessary for spiritual healing begins deep beneath what we can see. At its heart, it is a drum of balance, standing at the center point of the Medicine Wheel where the Road of Woe is intersected by the Good Red Road. In other words, it knows of suffering and of the enduring strength of love, through and through, inside and outside. It existed as one thing and is now another, just as the Wheel teaches.

The Radiant One is made from a cherry tree, my preferred wood for shamanic drums and other tools. Its deep red color bespeaks its association with the fire element, making it a natural mate of lightning. Once the two are in brief union, it is no longer tree, but potential. The microscopic sand particles within it are fused into crystals during the sudden, powerful tryst with a lightning being.

Healers around the world know of crystals healing properties, and shamans recognize that same power through their use of Lightning Drums. The drums sound the thunder of their transformation present during the intense encounter that formed them. The drum's heart then is strongly suggestive of the East, the place of new beginnings, where the sun rises with such penetrating majesty that our vision is challenged to behold but for a short time. It is the direction where healing illumination awaits the willing body.

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The specially prepared deer rawhide used for the drum head creates a yellow-gold glow, suggestive of the seasonal movement into summer when hot sun fires storms, life force and water. The Wheel has turned toward growing abundance and repair, where gratitude and healing are united in the South. This is the fertile direction called forth by the shaman.

But nothing lasts forever, so the Wheel moves inexorably to a place of uneasy rest within the mystery of the darkness, the West. This is the place of the ancestral road, and the inevitable swallower of light. But it is not to be feared, for although it is a permanent and inescapable, ay, mandatory portion of existence, it is not the master. Within its mysteries lie the birthing potential, the abode of lightning beings, the progenitors of light and life itself, and temporary death, the Kali place. In these ways, then, it becomes the teacher of balance and the guardian of maturity. It marks and weighs the harvest. Because of these powers, it is the abode of Wisdom, and calls forth the daring explorer to seek answers and healing for all. For the shaman, The Radiant One is a torch to light the way into the mysteries.

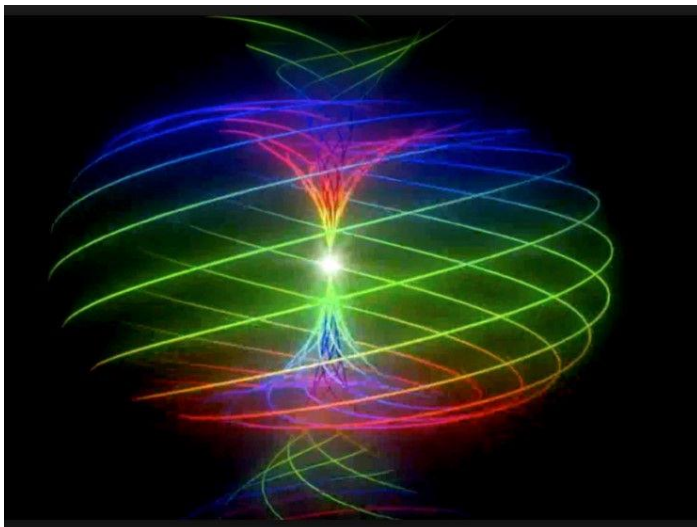
Then, once again, the Wheel churns on to the perplexing North, where freshening winds reveal truths in cold hard light. The bear and other hibernators know it is time to turn inward and reflect, to learn, to experience the battle place where Truth is victorious, even if hard to accept. It is also the place of the old stories, spoken by elders who know first-hand the battles they have won and lost. They have passed through the fires of birth, the trials of growing, the pains of accumulating wisdom, so they tend the fire to warm all hearts around them. Here too in the North reside the many spirits of the warriors, for they understand hardship and suffering... and endurance. They rest here, awaiting the call. In many ways then, the North is a gateway leading many shamans to the Three Wolds, separate but connected to the spiral of existence, just as the birthmark of The Radiant One reveals.

Though it may appear by now that the Wheel is complete, the seekers and travelers and shamans know there is more. The Radiant One teaches this.

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Beneath it on the square base of the drum stand is the likeness of a passageway deep into the Earth, a section of a limb from which the board was cut. It's visible, of course, but it continues through to the other side when turned over. If this were illustrated graphically, one would see not one but two spirals, their tips joined at a center point and emanating away from each other in exact proportion, just like the beautiful image you see behind the drum on this page, called a Torus.



So, the base can serve as Mother Earth on the Medicine Wheel, representing the 3-D axis at the center. On top of the base is the vertical line in the form of the actual roots and trunk of a small cedar tree that I recovered in nearby woods. The little tree was long gone as a tree, but I saw it as potential, a great representation of the Good Red Road which joins Mother Earth with Father Sky.

Another way of seeing it is as the Tree of Life, a predominant icon of many cultures, and which shamans frequently climb while on a shamanic journey. And sitting on top is the Radiant One, the final directional point on the basic Medicine Wheel.

Wait... what direction does the drum actually occupy? We have already covered the four cardinal directions, and then added the Earth as representing the

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downward direction and Father Sky representing the upward direction. Where's that leave the drum?

It's easy. The Radiant One stands at the center point, what the ancient cultures variously called the King or Queen's position, or the Wakan Tanka, or what in this modern age is referred to as the Zero Point.

In reality, The Radiant One is holding the space, for when it is used properly, it becomes one with all things. And who guides it? Well, the one in the center...YOU, the true Radiant One.

Aho & Namaste,
Bob