



~ The Drum ~

All life is rhythmic. We see it in the coming and going of the day and night. The ebb and flow of tides. The swaying of trees in the wind. We hear it in the patter of rain. The repetition of footsteps. The beating of the human heart. We respond to rhythm when we sense it and seek it out when it is not present or it is invariably pleasant. This little wonder that throughout history of mankind, people from all over the world have prized drums – the instruments of rhythm.

Perhaps no other people have attached a greater significance to the spirit of the drum than the Native American. It is a very special tie to the traditional Indian way of life, the heartbeat of the Native People. The heartbeat is the first sound you hear inside your mother, even before you come into the world. It is soothing and gentle sound which reminds us of our connection with life and with all things.

The drum has played an inherent role in the lives of Native Americans for centuries. Prior to battle, the beat of the drum aroused a sense of strength and solidarity. In gatherings of celebration, it created a sense of social and spiritual harmony.

The drum represents the Wheel of Life, which is also a circle. On the Wheel, all directions are indicated, encompassing the entirety of Creation. Each of us is somewhere on the Wheel, progressing in a circular fashion, learning our lessons. All singers must know the strict and exacting protocol to be observed while seated at the drum. The drum is accorded the highest respect by all tribes as a most important part of any powwow.

