

COLORS OF THE FOUR DIRECTIONS

Initiates - Basic Lessons - Cardinal Point Colors

Each Mound culture had a specific color for each of the four directions. These may not be the colors of your culture but, are the ones many used and why.

Red - color for East - "Where Grandmother Sun comes up"

Blue - color for North - "The color you turn when you go too far north"

Black - color for West - "Where the sun goes down and the Darkening land is"

White - color for South - "Where our Peace sits, Peace first, peace at all cost"

The sun is Red in the East. She is represented by the Fire in the Square. Since the Fire represents our Maternal Grandmother, the Fire is highly respected. You should not throw anything in the Fire, like trash or anything from your mouth. The Fire is referred to as "Ancient Red or Ancient White." She is called upon in times of trouble and is called Ancient White for peace. You must be careful what you say around the fire, for it will "reach out and burn you." This means that in some way you will have great trouble in your life. The Fire protects our people and the Red Warrior stands in the East for this. The color Red is also the color of the Paint Clan. As the Aniwodi, the People of the Paint or Paint Clan, the word wodi (meaning paint) is always thought of as red paint first, unless otherwise specified. To get the red paint, one takes some red ochre and crushes it in a mortar with a pestle. The crushed red ochre is kept dry, so when the warrior wants to use it he just adds a little water. Archaeologists have found clay "marbles" of different sizes and could not figure out what they were used for until they cut one open. Inside was red ochre. It was surmised that this is how the warriors kept the paint dry until they needed it for personal use. They placed the crushed ochre in damp clay and placed this in the fire. When the damp clay dried the clay held the red ochre powder dry until they needed it.

In the old days, there was a pole in the middle of Paint town near the square. This pole was painted red when the nation had troubles or was at war. Once hostilities ceased the pole was not painted and left to fade. When someone wanted to paint red on something, all they had to do was get some ochre from the Paint Clan. The bird that stands for this direction and the paint clan is the red cardinal.

Blue is the color of the north and is sometimes thought of with trouble that comes to the people or Nation. A Blue Warrior stands in the North and protects the people from "trouble." This is probably due to cold arctic air coming from the north during harsh winters. The color yellow is also used in medicine to refer to the direction 'North.' This is why the bird for the Blue Clan and North is the blue/gold macaw. To get the color blue one uses crushed blueberries for the paint. It can be darkened or lightened depending on how much water or white is added to it. Recent discoveries have found a breeding center in Mexico for macaw's. The size of the area indicates they bred them to be traded/sold in North America. (See photo below)

Black is for the color of the West, and does NOT refer to death as some of the nations say today. This belief came from the Europeans' and is that anything moving at night, or colored black, was scary and had to be a witch. The Black Warrior stands in the West. The Darkening land is in the West where our people go when they first die. They dance and do ceremonies. It is said that one goes there to dance and sing for a while. When Grandfather calls, they travel to the East until they reach the "edge of the sky" where the person climbs up onto the "sky vault", Galvlati. While on this journey we do not say this person's name or cry for them cause if we do it would interrupt their journey. It is said that the Hawk carries the person to the Darkening land, if they die in the day. If they pass in the night, then the Owl carries the person. The land in the West is always dark. This is so the Fire can be burning all the time to dance with the ancients. There are clans and towns in the Darkening Land just as there are here. The color black can be obtained by crushing a burnt coal and adding some water. There are some berries and sap in nature that can be used also. The Raven Clan has its town west of the Square.

The bird for West is the Raven. Again, this is not a negative thing, by any means, it is just a direction in which "the sun goes down and the earth is dark."

In the South, where the White Warrior sits, is our Peace. You will notice the way the colors are mentioned, you end with the South. The old saying is "Peace first. Peace at ALL cost." When the Fire burns white, it is purifying all, "so it is said". The white color is obtained by taking white chalk and crushing it and adding water. The Dove Clan has its town South of the Square for its color is white. In the middle of the Dove Clan Town there is a pole, like the one in the Paint Clan. These are very tall poles so you can see them from all over the Town. This pole is always painted white and kept with fresh paint, unless the nation is at war or there are hostilities within the nation. During this time, the pole's paint was not refreshed until the hostilities ended. The Bird for the Dove Clan and the South is the Snow Egret, "for it is pure white." The birds' feathers are used at Green Corn for the Pole Dance. The Great Sun, as well as special elders, can wear the long plumes in the front of their headpiece standing up. In the old days it would have been worn in the front of a copper headdress. Now, it is a turban. This is the only time birds' feathers were worn standing up that has white on them. This was the old way.

We went from East to South in describing the colors. This is to keep it going counterclockwise. As with our dancing and in medicine, we almost always go counterclockwise. In going in this direction with the colors, we wind up in the south where our peace sits.

MACAW PENS FOR LARGE SCALE BREEDING

Macaw pens at the prehistoric site of Paquimé in northwestern Mexico were made of adobe and contained stone doors with stone plugs. New research suggests that large-scale breeding of macaws occurred there.

