

Ancestor and Teacher

Some History

I tend to think of the system or rather 'way of seeing' as a package deal. Think of it in terms of a box that is passed down through the generations. The box can't be divided up among a generation at any time for to do so would destroy it's ability to be passed intact down through time. So in my mind it has nothing to do with polarity or who is male or female, it has everything to do however with survival. There is another factor here which has to be considered. My grandfather's way of looking at the world was not a secret he kept from anybody or saved up just for certain people.

His view of how everything worked was available to whoever would listen. Now consider the sheer brilliance of the way this was set up, the system only takes root and grows in those people who can make use of it. I know it was this way with his grandfather and then him, and now me. He had eight grandchildren, seven boys and one girl. I was the oldest and the only one as far as I know who paid attention and asked questions. The box naturally flowed in my direction. Now here is the really strange part. Still using the metaphor of the box, stop and consider that the original purpose of the box is shrouded in a cloak of practicality. In other words, they passed the box but they couldn't make full use of its contents. Most of the stuff in there wasn't something they could make fit into their worlds at the time. Don't get me wrong, it was powerful stuff, but the most powerful stuff in it was primarily internalized, they had no where or way to use it without getting into trouble. My grandfather on the other hand was a very intelligent and curious man, so through the course of a life time he took a lot of those things out and played with them and looked them over and learned a great deal more about the contents of that box. Then he passed it all on to me. I have spent even more time piddling through that box and discovered that in some ways it is a time bomb and it has gone off. I figured out, or rather "saw" the purpose of it. It is awesome in its simplicity and powerful in its complexity, as a sorcerer's movement it was sheer brilliance.

This is the hardest thing for people to understand about me. I am a shaman, I did not "learn" to be a shaman. My grandfather spent 86 years working through that box, I have now spent 43 years doing the same, building on all the past. I wonder at times that if I told people that it would take them forty years to get to a certain point if they wouldn't just say to themselves that's too much work, I'll have to move on to something else.

This is why I have no real ego about it, don't feel that people have to think of what I say as being right. I look back across all those lives, those struggles and those deaths and think to myself that I am just the next in a long line, to have ego about it would be an insult to those people who worked hard, passed on their knowledge and died. I am grateful for their sacrifice. They didn't ask for anything in return and I know that I can't either.

All this explains something else which I think makes serious shamanic students today uncomfortable with me. There were no ceremonies, rituals, complicated spells or hierarchies of spirit critters. All that is in the box too, but seems almost an anachronism compared to the true nature of the practice. It uses simplicity like a knife cutting to the bone of what matters in all this. So I never did seminars, never got to sit around with people and drum up a storm, never learned complicated rituals or spells. All I learned to do was connect to the heart of life and fly, without ego, without desire, without fear to stand at the edge of infinity and gaze. Why? Simply because it is so beautiful, awesome and plants in us the understanding of ourselves.

Is there a polarity in all that? I don't really know, I can't see the ends of that infinite river of energy, somehow it doesn't seem to matter except here, in our world. And our world isn't where I intend to end up.

Conversation

My Grandfather was my first teacher. I started learning as a child at about age six or so. Imagine teaching shamanic practice to a six year old, and doing it in such a way that it wouldn't conflict with the world in which he had to live. I was taught to look at the world through the eyes of nature. It was passed down from my grandfather as it was passed to him from his grandfather, and so on back to somewhere.

Was your grandfather your mother's or father's father?

My mother's side.

And none passed to her?

Nope, it seemed to go grandfather to grandson

Did he also teach anyone else?

Not as far as I know, just me. So nobody to compare notes with.

Where did he learn? Was he Native American?

No, not really. It seemed to come out of a European tradition handed down for a long time. They were originally from France and then to Britain, etc. They were French Huguenots. Before that who knows, supposedly they descended directly from St. Valentine.

What did he do for his 'day' job?

He was a teacher, 44 years and a farmer.

Did he work with you with animal knowledge, or any of the other kingdoms?

Animals, the heavens, inner space, but all in a way that was easily combined with the everyday world, very odd, really. I have pieced it together this way; somewhere in the dim past a shaman figured out that to pass his system down he would have to disguise it to keep his progeny from being burned at the stake. So he developed a system which embodied all the practices but in a way that was non-threatening to the world. He taught his grandson without his even realizing it was being taught then it passed from grandfather to grandson thereby keeping it intact and moving it through time faster. He knew that at some point someone would come into the line in a time when it could be reawakened as systematic knowledge and would do that - poof! What a brilliant shamanic maneuver.