

Setting of the Four Directions

A Long Time ago, Spirits who dwell in the Sky World had a feast every evening. They all sat around the table but there was one Spirit who was always late coming in to the feast. Her name was Haŋwi or Haŋhépi Wí (moon) and she sat next to her husband whose name was Anpétu Wi or Wi.

Meanwhile there was an intelligent Spirit by the name of Ksápa who was a trickster who liked to trick everyone and stand back and laugh about it. He was also known as Ksa for short and later was better known as the Iktómi (spider). He would be up in the Sky World and then he would come down to the earth to roam and try to trick animals. One day he went down into the earth through Wind Cave. Down below lived the Pte people (our ancestors) who were happy just to live there under the Earth. Ksápa went to try to trick some humans to come above the ground and he succeeded by enticing a family to come above ground. Ksapa told them it was a beautiful place to live. So a family of Wazí, Wakónka, and their beautiful daughter, Ite (face) came above the ground to live.

There was a Spirit called Tháte (Spirit of the Wind) who saw how beautiful Ite was and he wanted to marry her. He went in front of the Great Spirit to ask for permission and he was granted permission but he had to change himself into a human as he was a Spirit. Then he came to earth to marry Ite. They had five children who were all boys. Tate was busy with his family as his children grew older.

Ksápa was a Spirit who was intelligent. He wanted to play a trick on Ite as she was so vain. She knew how beautiful she was and she paid little attention to her family. Of course Ksapa wanted to see if she would fall for his trick. He went to talk with Ite when she was by herself then told her that she was so beautiful that she can go up to the Sky World with him to sit next to the leader up there during their feast. His name was Anpétu Wi. Ksápa told Ite that there was an empty space next to Wi where she can be seated. Ite did not know that place was reserved for Haŋwí. She never came in until later so the place was empty until she made her entrance. During this time was when Ksápa took Ite to the feast. When they arrived at the feast, there was an empty place next to Anpétu Wi and Ksápa told Ite to go get seated. She went over next to Anpétu Wi to sit down. Anpétu Wi turned to look at Ite and gazed at her beauty. He forgot about his wife, Haŋwí. When Haŋwí came into the room she saw someone sitting at her place. She saw that her husband was looking at another woman and forgot about her. She left the scene crying to the talk to the Great Spirit. Haŋwí told HIM about what her husband was doing and he felt compassion for Haŋwí and He said he would punish those involved.

First the Great Spirit punished Ksápa from ever being part of the Sky World again, and HE told him that humans were not allowed up there, only Spirits. The Great Spirit also punished Ite as her face was made part beautiful and part ugly. She then became Anjúng (two sides) Ite, the Double-Faced Woman. Her spirit is being good and bad. She can be good to you, turn around and be bad towards you. Ite was also banished from ever returning to her family because she left them for her own selfish reasons. The other one that was punished was Anpétu Wi (Harwi's husband) who was not allowed to have Harwi following so close but to be further apart. That is why you do not see both at the same time following close to each other anymore. Only once in a great while when the sun is setting in the west, the moon will rise up from the east.

Meanwhile Tǎ́te was busy raising his five sons and he had to send his four sons to set the four directions. So his first born son was supposed to set the west direction but he was angry and ornery so he thought he should set the direction of the North. So the second born son set the direction of the West. His name is Wiyóǎ́peyata. The first born son was sent to set the North and his name is Wazíyata. The third born son set the direction of the East and his name is Iwiyóhinyanpata. The fourth born son set the direction of the South and his name is Itógaǎ́gata. The fifth born son was a premature child and he liked to play. His name is Wawíyuhomni (whirlwind). He can be called Yumni or Yum for short. He is a playful Spirit of Tǎ́te and Ite. He takes up leaves and dirt and other objects toward the sky and drops it off at another place. Tǎ́te did what he was supposed to do on earth, he had four of his sons set the four directions.

Our Pipe ceremonies are therefore set to follow those directions. West, North, East and South. The other directions that are important are up towards the Great Spirit and downward towards Unci Maka or earth. There is a seventh direction and that is towards self. We are important and we need to take care of ourselves with the seven values. We need to practice them and be respectful.