

## **“Tales from the Ridge”**

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Feather began her presentation with some comments about the belief system of the Native Americans. She said that

- The worlds operate in a continuous cycle – never ending
- “People are always moving – migratory. Without movement there is no life”.
- People are always exchanging things – ideas.
- The symbols used in rock art are used to tell a story at the level of the student. Therefore the same panel can mean different things to different people depending on your level of understanding.
- The ancestors used symbols rather than “writing” because they realized that the language would change over time. They wanted the glyphs to be understood by future peoples.
- The Hopi believe that the village around Anasazi Ridge was a “teaching village”.

She then went on to give an interpretation of one of the main panels (Figure 1) on Anasazi Ridge. This interpretation comes from a Hopi elder. This panel depicts the Hopi Creation Story.



Figure 1 - The “Creation Panel”

The story begins (Figure 2) with the thought process of the creator (spiral) and how he wanted to create the world. The large circle is the portal from the creator to the individual and back. The smaller portal is the individual. The vertical line is the “spirit line”.



Figure 2

The story continues in Figure 3. Here the creator instructs the “Nephew” to create seven universes (plus one for the creator and one for the Nephew) – the large image at the left of Figure 3. He also instructed the Nephew: to create solids, water, and air (the 3 concentric circles). He then instructed “Spider Woman” (top right of Figure 3) to create the twins. The circle at the bottom of the spider woman symbol is her “egg sack”.



Figure 3

The twins are shown in Figure 4. Note that they are joined by an umbilical cord. The twin on the left created the solids. The twin on the right gave vibration, sound, rhythm to all things. The twins were opposites and were sent to the north and south poles.



Figure 4

Then “spider woman” created the four races from the four colors of the earth (white, red, yellow and black). Then spider woman used her placenta as a “cape of wisdom” where she gave the people compassion, love and wisdom (Figure 5).



Figure 5

Figure 6 symbolizes the traits given to the people. The open circle (left) is the portal for the creator to enter the body – the open chakra at the top of the head. The circle with the dot is the chakra beginning to close and the next shows it beginning to open. The circle and dot above the larger symbol is the brain beginning to think. The two rectangular forms represent the two brain centers, one for the physical and one for the creative processes. The next two rectangular forms represent the two types of hearts that humans have; kind and compassionate or hard and angry. The foot on the right represents the solar plexus – “gut feeling”. The horizontal line above the large image represents voice. All of the human chakras are represented – head, brain, throat, heart, solar plexus.



Figure 6

Figure 7 represents the seven worlds.

The first world was where the two legged “people” talked to the four legged “animals”. This world became out of balance and the creator decided to destroy it and “try again”. Here coyote lead the people to safety by following a cloud by day and a star by night (the

circle and dot at the top left of Figure 7. The first world was destroyed by fire and the people survived by going into an ant hill (the A shaped image in Figure 4). The ant people showed the people how to survive.

The people climbed out of the ant hills into the second world. This too went out of balance because the people spent more time on worldly goods rather than the creator. The twins left their places at the north and south poles and sent the world askew hence destroying this world by cold (ice age??). The people survived as they did before, by going to live with the ant people.

The third world was dominated by technology which the people worshiped. This too went out of balance and was destroyed, this time by water (Atlantis??) (the great flood??). This time the people survived by using reeds to breathe. The vertical line on the fourth rung of the ladder in Figure 7 represents the reeds that saved the people.

The fourth world (the current world) is one of a balance between technology and spirituality. The fourth world is near an end (in 2012??) when we will enter into the fifth world.

The fifth world will be a world of choice.



Figure 7

The final image (Figure 8) represents the seven universes. Note that the universes are not ordered. We can remain in the current universe (where the human image is located) or we can go out to any one of the other universes. It becomes our choice.



Figure 8

Feather noted that there are many versions of the creation story (both in Hopi culture and Native American culture). A version of the Hopi creation story can be found in **“The Book of the Hopi”**, by Frank Waters, Penguin Books, 1963

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