



MEDICINE WHEEL

The Medicine Wheel is the symbol of health and well-being. It symbolizes the continuing cycle of life from birth to death. The spokes of the wheel are reminders of the four directions. The number four has always been an important part of the Indians' culture. Each of the directions has a color associated with it, and a prayer said to that direction.

South – the color is white

White symbolizes the Great Spirit, creator and provider of all things. White symbolizes his purity from which came the purification ceremonies, especially the Sun Dance, Sweat Lodge and Fasting. The prayer to the south is:

Tunkasila, we need your strength to heal us and the earth, to be our friend every day. We will be patient and wait for your sign. Thank you, Tunkasila.

North – the color is red

Red symbolizes the Great Spirit in the rising sun of light and life. A new day is born to sing the praises of the Great Spirit. The special prayer said to the north is:

As we pray for you to see and hear, lead us Great Spirit and shield us from evil spirits. Thank you, Great Spirit, for all the benefits of your guiding hand. We are lost without you.

East – the color is yellow

Yellow symbolizes the Great spirit as the provider of all blooming nature for man to use, multiply and store for future use. The Great Spirit expects man to share his good fortune and give verbal thanks and sacrifice in thanksgiving. The special prayer for the west is:

Tunkasila, guide us in the harvest so that we do not destroy your gifts nor be wasteful, but be conscious of the needs of our fellow man at all times.

West – the color is black

Black symbolizes the Great Spirit in the setting sun of light and life. Man should be conscious of time passing and ending. He should review each day and its blessings and ask Tunkasila to guard him through another day. The special prayer for the west is:

As darkness overcomes us, we pray in thanksgiving for all the blessings given us from the bounty of your love, Tunkasila.

East – Yellow – The Deer Nation

South – White – White winged animals

North – red – The Buffalo Nation

West – Black – the Horse and Dog Nation