

## Healing and the Drum

The drum dates back at least to 5800 B.C. and was often painted red as this color – the sacred color of the earth became symbolic of the pulse of creation. Out of this rich and ancient heritage of the drum came the drum's connection to shamanic healing. The drum is the Shaman's voice, a sacred tool that facilitates healing.

As well as a basic tool used for balancing, grounding, and clearing of the energy centers; the drum is also used in shamanic healing as the sonic drive that carries the shaman in their journey to the other worlds. It is in the non-ordinary reality that they will gain information on ways to heal and to carry out specific healing such as soul retrieval. The drum plus the rattle are also used when working with ecstatic trance healing postures.

I encourage my students to move back to the place of stillness where they will once again feel the heart beat of Mother Earth. Ironically this stillness is often achieved through the use of the drum. Scientific study has demonstrated that through using the consistent voice of the drum we are able to rebalance ourselves and move into the right hemisphere of the brain. The right side of our brain is often neglected or dominated by our linear or logical left side of mind. It has been shown in scientific study that during times of severe stress we are out of balance and not functioning in the right hemisphere of the brain. Ultimately it is from this right side that we are able to truly open our hearts - truly make a connection to one.

Most indigenous traditions see the drum as a mirror for Mother Earth's heart beat and that rhythm connects us to our intuitive self, to each other and to nature. I have experienced this sense of connection many times and specifically recall a time when a group of us were visiting a small village on an island on Lake Baikal, Russia. As we began to drum we soon had several villagers, including children coming to play. Watching small children making this ancient connection was truly delightful. Their small smiling faces shinning with delight told the story. Now, when our world stage seems so chaotic, I encourage the reclaiming of these ancient tools of our ancestors. Bringing back the sacred brings back harmony. Ho! Margaret West.