

The Ute Shaman's Stone: a Meso-American Calender

Loren Jeffries 2018

Last year Jim Leslie, of the Midwestern Epigraphic Society, sent me photos of a stone found in a sandbar of the Duchesne River on the Ute Indian Reservation in Utah, sent to him by an associate, Steve Shaffer. The stone fit nicely in the hand and appeared to be some sort of an effigy. An effigy of what had not been determined, and they wanted some input on it. Steve said none of his Ute contacts were familiar with this type of effigy stone.

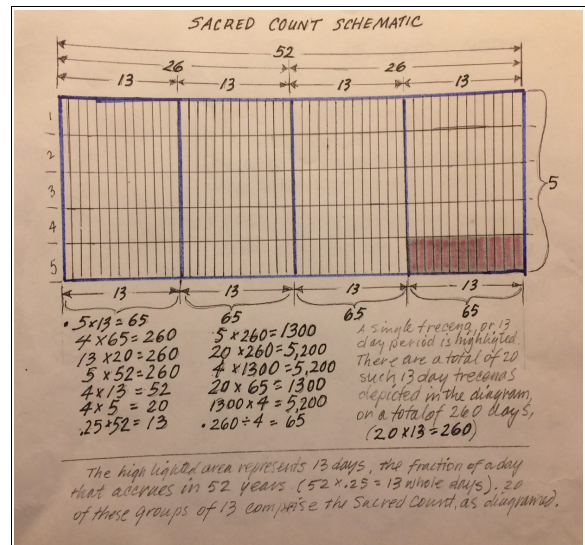
When I looked it was immediately evident, to what use it would be to a shaman. My son's grandfather was the Ute shaman who brought the Half Moon Fireplace of the Native American Church to the Navajo Nation.

The stone had five lines etched horizontally in the area of the mouth, and 13 lines perpendicular to those across the nose area. Only someone familiar with the Sacred Count Calendar, would recognize the significance of these numbers, so I have included here my schematic layout of that calendar, from my book, *The Sacred Count / The Fractal Calendar of Ancient Mesoamerica*.



Having pondered over these numbers for some forty years, it was no problem to understand how a shaman could utilize this implement; Multiplying 5 x 13, yields, 65, and that, of course, is one quarter of the Sacred Count (260 days). The Sacred Count is comprised of 20 trecenas of 13 days each. If you will refer to the diagram, notice the 13 days highlighted in the bottom right corner (the reading of this arrangement is right to left, and bottom to top, exactly opposite of how we would read something.)

If one were to count off each of thirteen days, five times (representative of the five horizontal lines), one quarter of the entire count has been achieved, and doing this four times achieves the entire count of 260 days. In other words this hand held device would allow the user to keep track of the calendar.



Now one might ask why an artifact related to the Mesoamerican Calendar is found in the Western United States, or more precisely, in Ute Country? And I would thank one for asking, because it brings up something of particular interest.

In another article I wrote last year, I pointed out that the name of the city on Puget Sound, Seattle, is of the Nahuatl Language. For those unfamiliar with the subject, Nahuatl was the language of the Aztec people, and translated, Seattle (properly spelled in Spanish, Ce Atl), is actually two words, meaning, One (Ce), and Water (Atl).

Once again, for those unfamiliar with this subject, One Water, is actually the name of someone's birth date. It was the custom among Nahuatl speaking peoples to incorporate one's birth date into their name. There were 13 numbers used, and 20 Day Signs, rendering names like 4 Monkey, 9 Wind, 12 Alligator or 1 Reed.



It was actually the name One Reed that solved this puzzle for me. In Mesoamerican Studies, the name of the well known figure, Ce Acatl Tolpiltsin Quetzalcoatl, translates as One Reed Our Lord Feathered Serpent. This is the figure who, after being forced out of Tula by his rival cult of Tezcatlipoca, finally disappeared into the Eastern Ocean on a raft of serpents, promising to return again sometime on the date of his birth One Reed, or Ce Acatl. It was this promise to return on the date One Reed that played a part in the history we know, because it was on this date that Cortez made landfall in Mesoamerica, leading Montezuma and the Aztec to believe Cortez was the returning Quetzalcoatl. Cortez learned of this belief and orchestrated it to his advantage in his conquest of the Aztec Empire.

This name was on my tongue for years. I knew that Ce was the number one, and that Acatl was one of the day signs, Reed. I also knew that Atl meant Water, and it too, was one of the Day Signs. It was not until I moved to Seattle, that I realized the name Seattle, was an Americanized version of the Spanish spelling of Ce Atl.

I had always thought the city was named for the famous chief who had befriended the folks from Boston who had founded the city. And so it was, but it was also the name of Chief Seattle's birth date, meaning people were also of the custom of taking one's birth date as part of their name. It merely follows that doing so also meant these people were using the same Day Signs and numbers as their Mesoamerican cousins, and therefore were using the very same calendar known to the Aztec.

Now it is not recorded anywhere, to my knowledge, that this calendar was in use anywhere other than Mesoamerica. Of course, the Maya were using the same numerical operation in their calendar, but the names of the Day Signs and the numbers were in the varied dialects of the Mayan language (Quiche, Yucatec , Chol, et al), and they , too, were of Mesoamerican habitation.

When I realized that the name Seattle, ultimately meant that some of the native people of the Puget Sound area were using the Sacred Count, it was somewhat unsettling. This was because the nature of my research already contradicted the academic paradigm of the Maya or Aztec Calendars. To assert the Sacred Count could be traced over a thousand miles from Mesoamerica only added to my apostasy. And so to find an artifact (I believe they call this an OPART, or out of place artifact) in Ute country, was actually the second piece of evidence that the use of the Sacred Count extended beyond Mesoamerica.

This is really not so strange if we consider there are other Nahuatl speaking peoples in the Northwest and Puget Sound areas, like the Kwatquitl and Quinalt tribes. We might also consider that the Ute, Shoshonne , and Comanche tribes are of the Uto-Aztecan language group, as, of course, are the Aztec, and other Nahuatl speakers.

So, while this artifact may appear to be a mysterious effigy stone, I would offer it is a hand held calculator of the venerable Sacred Count.

Once again, I hope this will be helpful to my friends of the Midwestern Epigraphic Society and all those having interest.

Loren W. Jeffries ©2018