

CHEROKEE TRAIL OF TEARS GARDEN LAYOUT

Our largest project in the 2004 season was a project to create a garden and then a combination Flower Essence from this garden called Cherokee Trail of Tears. The layout of the garden was a seven pointed star with each point marked by a hill of Native American corn. The varieties of corn were *Anasazi Flour*, *Rainbow Inca*, *Oaxacan Green Dent*, *Stowells Evergreen*, *Bloody Butcher*, *Black Aztec* and *Mandan Red Flour*. The outer rings encircling this star were composed of many varieties of lettuce, carrots and seven colorful varieties of beans including *Tongue of Fire*, *Dragon's Tongue*, *True Red Cranberry*, *Brittle Wax* and *Purple Queen Snap Beans*. The lettuce was also a kaleidoscope of color from ruby red to chrome green. The Angels asked us to let this lettuce go to seed. In the late summer the garden was filled with wands of yellow lettuce blossoms. The star itself was created by a combination of non-hybrid *Red Spider Zinnias* from Mexico and a hybrid orange marigold called *Orange Lady*. The orange marigold held a strong vibration of gratitude and celebration. The *Red Spider Zinnias* had slender deep red petals. The blossoms felt ancient as well as timeless, offering a vibration of support and encouragement. The center of the garden was a large teepee shaped pole arrangement covered in a pole bean called *Cherokee Trail of Tears*.

GROWING THE GARDEN

Initially, we had a difficult time with slugs eating all the carrot seedlings in the outer rings. The carrots had to be replanted several times due to slug activity.

After I planted the outer rings, the Angels asked Vicki, who is part Peruvian Indian, and Patricia, who is part Mohawk, to plant the corn and the beans while I sat outside the outer ring with the grandfather guardians of the garden.

From the time we finished planting, this garden had a deep restorative vibration. It was a physical pleasure to be in the garden or even walk by it. When weeding, harvesting or just sitting in the garden, I felt deeply comforted by the energies of the space.

On Vicki's 29th birthday in early August, more than a dozen turkey vultures flew circles over the farm and this garden in particular for SEVERAL hours. When we went outside to bear witness to the dance of these enormous graceful creatures, the turkey vultures came so close to us that their shadows fell on our faces. Turkey vultures are birds traditionally associated with purification. We had no idea exactly what they were weaving above our heads, but we felt the joy and wonder of it. Later, we were gifted with some prayer feathers to hang on the center teepee of *Cherokee Trail of Tears* pole beans.

When it came time to make an Essence from the garden, the Angels chose the autumn equinox as the moment to begin the process. This is a day of balanced light and dark. It has often been a day when we have made wonderful Essences.

On this particular occasion, the grandfathers were still present outside the garden, facing outwards in a position of protecting the garden. The grandmothers, the sacred wisdom keepers of the garden, sat facing inwards, encircling the *Cherokee Trail of Tears* bean planting. I was asked to sit with the grandmothers. The Angels asked Vicki to pick a bouquet of flowers, corn tassels and other living things in the garden and then offer it to the grandmothers. Her bouquet was breathtaking. As she reverently offered this to the grandmothers, the Essence entered the final stage of its birth. All summer, I had expected Patricia to be in the garden when the Essence was made but as life would have it, Patricia was literally walking a part of her own Cherokee Trail of Tears and was in the midst of recovering from a bad car accident.

Why an Essence called Cherokee Trail of Tears? Why this focus for an Essence on a tragic journey which was part of a tragic policy that decimated a people? I know there is a lot about this Essence that is beyond my ability to understand or explain, however I share here what I have learned about why this Essence was the focus of our growing season.

THE HISTORY

The Removal Act of 1830, signed by President Andrew Jackson, argued that, "No state could achieve proper culture, civilization and progress, as long as Indians remained within its boundaries." Jackson ordered that five tribes, the Cherokees, Creek, Choctaws, Chickasaws and Seminoles move from the southern states to the Indian Territory now known as Oklahoma.

The Cherokee people, about 16,000 in number, put up the greatest resistance and were the last to be evicted from their land. They lived in established communities on lands owned communally by all Cherokee. They had a

Constitution and were recognized by world powers as a sovereign and free nation. A treaty with the United States preserved rights to their homeland in parts of Tennessee and Georgia. When gold was discovered in Georgia, the state proclaimed that, "All laws, orders, and regulations of any kind made with the Cherokee Indians are declared null and void." A horrifying land grab by white settlers was followed by a force march for the Cherokee community from its lands to Oklahoma territory.

The US Army commanded some of the 13 groups that walked the 1,000 mile trip to Oklahoma while other groups were hired out to contractors who were paid \$65 by the government for food and medicine for each person in their care, money that was often not used for either purpose. It is estimated that at least a quarter of all Cherokees died on the journey.

Working very hard to establish a new community on the Oklahoma frontier, the Cherokee were well on their way to reestablishing themselves in the region around Tahlequah, Oklahoma when the Civil War once more set the community back. Surrounded by confederate territory they were aligned with the south even though Cherokee fought for both sides. A promise from the Confederacy to help them reclaim their status as a sovereign nation came to naught when the Union Army won the war. About half of the Cherokee's new territory was reclaimed by the North and the rest of their land suffered greatly from war damage.

DUALITY AND BEYOND

This event is an example of humanity divided into roles of good guys and bad guys. As I began this project, I thought about it in these terms. I was ashamed to be, by ancestry, more linked to the bad guys involved than to the Cherokee people. The first time we planted the garden as a group, I misunderstood my placement at the outside of the ring as a sign I was being excluded. I thought I deserved it. Actually the Angels had placed me with the grandfather guardians of the garden to join them in their role as protectors of what was being grounded in this space. My judgments were red herrings.

Another perception of mine that the grandmothers corrected was that Vicki and Patricia were chosen to plant certain plants because they were Indian, the good guys in this sad affair. The grandmothers explained to me that they were chosen because they were of mixed blood, carrying in their lineage both the old world and the new world and therefore existing in bodies beyond the duality of cowboys and Indians, good guys and bad guys.

So the energies of the garden were about something beyond the duality of this historic event. What was it that the grandmothers were planting and holding for us in this garden?

I decided the best thing to do would be to have the grandmothers explain the project themselves. These women appeared to me in spirit form.

CONVERSATION WITH THE GRANDMOTHERS

Grandmothers: We are containers. Our job is to hold the wisdom of our tradition and people in a pure form, distilled beyond the dramas of right and wrong, good and bad. At best, this is a wisdom in which personality and personal dramas are not factors.

Corn is a sublime expression of the process of holding pure wisdom in form. This is one reason why seven traditional corns were part of this garden. Each variety of corn holds many generations of wisdom as well as knowledge about how to be containers for such wisdom.

The Cherokee Trail of Tears called us, the traditional wisdom keepers, to refine our wisdom profoundly. The event was a convulsion in our culture, leading to a new wisdom and self knowing. It helped us remove strands of previously unknown illusions so we could hold a more refined and pure experience of ourselves.

During the creation of this garden, this purification was both remembered and amplified by the weaving flight patterns of the turkey vultures above the farm.

While our refinement process on the trail eliminated misunderstandings about ourselves, it also served to transmute the illusions of our persecutors. Our harvest from the Cherokee Trail of Tears is an offering to the collective human consciousness of a deeper wisdom than existed before the event.

Q: What is this wisdom?

Grandmothers: Let us look at the notion of duality. When we label people in a drama good guys versus bad guys, the only eternal truth about the situation is lost, namely the truth that all is God.

To define ourselves as good guys is just as detrimental as when we define ourselves as bad guys. Both labels feed an illusion of separation. Both labels cut us off from an experience of sacred oneness. If we assign ourselves the role of good guys then we cut ourselves off from the sacred life flowing through the bad guys. If the "bad guys" also perceive the dynamic as us against them, they too are cut off from their wholeness and oneness with all creation.

This dynamic of judgment impedes harvesting the lessons of a drama more than any other factor. This collision of cultures during the Cherokee Trail of Tears was a drama set up to lead all of us forward in our spiritual evolution. It was not created to polarize us further in duality.

Let us explain.

Separation is the defining idea of the old world with its creation story of being thrown out of the garden of Eden. The Cherokee Trail of Tears and all actions to removed us from land where we lived was an acting out of the old world's primary myth, that a child of God can be thrown out of God by an angry father God.

For the natives of this continent, this myth of separation from an angry parent was an alien myth. Experiencing the drama of this myth at the hands of our conquerors created a tear in the fabric of our own experience of life and our, until then, unchallenged mythology.

Our own mythology was not so much story as experience for us. Our mother was the earth that cradled us. Our father creator poured down his life in the form of sunshine to sustain us. We, like the corn, were children of both sunlight and earth. Our myth was different but still involved duality. We separated ourselves from our creator by experiencing ourselves as loved children while the new arrivals to this continent separated themselves by experiencing themselves as unloved children. Neither of us experienced ourselves beyond duality as one with our creator.

This meant that the drama of the Cherokee Trail of Tears was a gift for all. The harvest is a lifting of the veil of separation from God for all of us.

The intention of any human drama is to move us towards a clearer view of truth. This drama was no exception. The people of the new world played one role and the new arrivals from the old world played another. The point is not assigning guilt or pointing fingers of good guy or bad guy but harvesting the crop we planted together.

Q: A Green Hope Farm friend called the farm this summer to say she felt we were working on a remedy that would help with not getting stuck in guilt. The Angels said this is the remedy.

Grandmothers: Yes, this garden and its Essence is about receiving the harvest and not getting log jammed in blame.

Q: What about the issue of justice?

Grandmothers: True justice is a universal law which takes care of itself. Each soul involved will come to a balancing of his or her own behavior with or WITHOUT enforcement by other humans.

This universal law frees us to harvest the lessons of the drama without emotional baggage about what did or did not happen to the participants of the drama. The universal law of justice returns us to the priority of harvesting the events' lessons. This harvest was why the drama was created in the first place.

That said, getting to the harvest took even us seasoned wisdom keepers time.

As we began this walk, it was hard for the women of the tribe, the traditional containers of sacred truth, to believe there could be a harvest from such suffering. This is one of the reasons journeys of suffering are so difficult. They take us away from our familiar structures of faith and leave us no certainties. Being ripped from our experience of "mother" and relocated to alien territory was a profound suffering and loss of our old faith.

However, as we walked our trail of tears, we found that we had not lost our mother. Our mother was in the chaos as much as she was in the land we had loved and lost. We discovered we could not be lost from our mother father God because everything is in God and of God. God traveled within us as our own eternal identity. This was a new and more complete faith than existed before the walk.

As our self awareness clashed with the self awareness of the old world, something better for both of us was born. We, the grandmothers, have harvested and held this wisdom. Now this transcendent experience of oneness with God is ripe for everyone to harvest.

Q: Why only now can this harvest be gathered in by everyone?

Grandmothers: The dominance of the old world culture means that most events have been and continue to be analyzed and understood not through the heart but through the mind. The mind likes to feel in control. It is easier to feel in control when events are organized by the mind in terms of duality. The mind clings to duality as to a life raft. In fact, the mind cannot move beyond duality, only the heart can do this. So, to be in the mind, frozen in good guy bad guy thinking, is to miss this harvest.

As the limits of the mind become clearer to the prevailing old world culture, the movement will be back towards the neglected heart which can hold this harvest, the wisdom that ALL IS GOD.

Q: What will open people to receive this harvest?

Grandmothers: For most people, it will be personal versions of the Cherokee Trail of Tears that move them from their minds to their hearts where this wisdom can be experienced fully.

Usually the mind does not serve the heart willingly or abandon its structure of duality unless there is serious stress. This is why suffering may be necessary to bring in this harvest. A realization of the limitations of the mind must be experienced. This kind of realization often comes from experiences of suffering. Once the limitations of the mind are acknowledged, the resources of the heart are ready to serve and in this case, bring in the harvest of life beyond duality.

The intent of all the new Flower Essences you have brought forward this year at Green Hope Farm is to make each person's personal Cherokee Trail of Tears as gentle a journey to the heart as possible. This Essence offers comfort on the trail that you are not alone and that the destination, however unclear to you, is a good one. From our vantage point, we truly know "you and I are not we but one". We offer this Essence combination to encourage you on your journey to knowing this for yourself.

Q: Why can't we learn this from your experience?

Grandmothers: We are way showers but we cannot walk your trail for you. We can encourage you on the dark part of the trail when you feel disoriented or lose faith. We can promise that all that is genuine, essential and eternal is not lost in your suffering but will be uncovered in your suffering. We can tell you that the journey is worth the pain but you must walk these trails yourselves to know this. This is because mind wisdom is not true wisdom. You can understand something intellectually by hearing about it yet not understand it fully. Your journey in your body and in your heart take mind wisdom and transform it into heartfelt body wisdom. This kind of wisdom is fully yours.

Just as we are way showers, this Essence is also a way shower, lighting your way to your heart and a new self awareness, ever encouraging you onwards on your journey to reclaim your true self.

This particular Essence offers a vibration that you are safe in God, no matter the personal chaos, because you ARE God. By ringing this vibrational note in your electrical system, we hope to help every cell in your being to recognize and embrace this truth when you encounter it on your trail.

We created this garden and its Essence so that we could offer support to you in as tangible a way as possible. We know that we cannot walk the trail for you as it is your own unique journey. Nor would we want to walk this for you because we know there are great gifts to be had from walking your own trail. However we believed it would be a gift if we could create an electrical vibration of companionship and comfort amidst your troubles, a sweet song of our love to take on your journey. So we did.

ANOTHER WAY SHOWER

Meher Baba has been a part of everything that has happened at Green Hope Farm from its birth. Meher Baba is also linked to the Cherokee Trail of Tears. In May of 1952, Meher Baba took a car trip from Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, heading towards Meher Mount in Ojai, California. When the woman driving the car came up with a route for the trip, Meher Baba changed the route to stay as close as possible to the route of the Cherokee Trail of Tears. Upon reaching Oklahoma, the end of the trail, he was involved in a terrible car crash about which he said, "This personal disaster, for some years foretold by me, at last happened while crossing the American continent causing me...much mental and physical suffering. It was necessary that it should happen in America. God willed it so."

About the topic of duality Meher Baba said, "Now is the time to cast off the veil of imagined duality and unreservedly surrender to the life of open and undisguised love which is pure and selfless and which knows no fear and needs no apology."

THIS BEING HUMAN STUFF ISN'T EASY

The last few years have seen me struggling with the illusions of duality on my own sort of Cherokee trail. As those of you who have been reading this newsletter for the past few years know, my family has been living through a situation in which we have received repeated death threats.

As this trail began, my ideas for how to manage this situation were woefully inadequate. I think that is how these trails to new wisdom always begin. If we knew how to walk the trail then we wouldn't have to walk it. This particular trail has been a prolonged experience of birthing a different way to live and a different way to understand the world. Again, the nature of these trails is to take us deep into new territory. For example, my tendency to view this event from a good guys versus bad guys framework ended up being unhelpful and distracting. It was a framework I ultimately decided to try and abandon completely.

One thing which did serve me well was the basic way I made decisions. For many years, before these threats began, I went to my heart to receive guidance about the farm and my family life. I often refer to this as "checking with the Angels" but that isn't very accurate. I go to my heart to access the part of myself that knows itself to be one with Angels and other spiritual beings, the place where I feel one with the divinity in myself and everything else.

These conversations in my heart didn't start off as rocket science. I got practice asking things like, "Do the turnips need kelp?" Checking with my heart about practically everything became second nature. As my family encountered this scary situation, my heart was the place I naturally gravitated to for guidance.

About this situation, my heart delivered its guidance without justification, judgment or defensiveness. My heart gave me things to do and things to let go of. Some of the directions were so radical that it was hard to do as asked, but I did. It was a wrenching process to abandon my old ideas of the world and how to manage it.

My problems came not from my heart's unusual guidance which has proved over the years to be more sound than I could have imagined. My problems came from the fact that I was riding two horses at once, my mind and my heart. My heart was an oasis of calm. No matter how often I checked back, I was always reassured by the peace I felt while talking to my heart, but I never seemed to rest there. Instead I would return to my mind and let it rip. My mind never wanted to rest with its analysis and reanalysis of the situation or my decision making process. My mind wanted to both challenge and justify decisions I made, often simultaneously. My mind amplified my fears and also my judgments, both of myself and other players. My mind proved to be the most exhausting thing about the situation!

At one juncture, when I thought my mind was going to drive me crazy with the way it escalated my fears and played devil's advocate, I had a light bulb moment. I realized my mind was NEVER going to solve any problem and that I needed to simply stop giving my mind such a powerful role. My mind, if it is meant for anything, is meant to help implement the decisions of my heart, not run its own show.

This was a turning point for this particular trail. Since then I try to give my mind minimal air time and then only in service to my heart's guidance.

Unlike my mind, my body has been my ally in this ongoing situation. While following my heart's guidance, I learned to check how my body felt about my choices. My body felt in accord with the decisions. When I felt how my body responded when it considered the suggestions of my mind, I felt tremendous resistance. I am so grateful for my

body's support. I am also grateful that I have finally started to appreciate its wisdom versus letting my mind argue endlessly about dismissing the body's input as well as the heart's.

The Sacred Feminine has been a godsend during this messy process of birthing a different way to be BE in the world. For me, discovering that a person I had known and loved wanted to kill me and my children really tore up my world view. But ultimately it wasn't so much what this person and other people did or didn't do that was the problem. The problem was the way I kept expecting people to be different or events to be different. What I really needed to do was let go and allow myself to become a different person that could contain these strange new realities in my life. Again, I would have to say that my mind wanted life to be different than it is and my heart knew a way to love what is.

The Sacred Feminine returned me again and again to my heart. It helped me to cut myself free from how I thought the world should work to surrender to what actually is. It also helped me birth the self that could live in this world I am in and even be happy there. I do not know how others have worked with this Essence or will work with it, but for me it offered a midwife energy, containing me and encouraging me in a rebirth process in which I really did not know what, if anything, was going to be born. This is the one I will reach for in any birth process I experience in the years ahead.

The Sacred Masculine helped me in my struggle to protect this birth process, my new born self and her new wisdom. As a newborn inhabiting a new self, I didn't always feel strong enough to handle what people thought of me or my new world view. The Sacred Masculine helped me to feel safe without defensiveness. It has helped me with my baby steps towards a new way of being.

Our Cherokee Trails of Tears can be lonely and bewildering. I love that the Grandmothers offer their presence on our journeys. I am so glad to have their love in my pocket. If you find yourself on a Cherokee Trail of Tears, I hope you will feel the love of these grandmothers one way or another. An embrace across time and space from one part of yourself to another.