



KOYOOE TUKADU: PYRAMID LAKE PAIUTE KIT



◆ WE ARE ALL PEOPLE OF THIS EARTH

The Numu believe that all life is a gift from The Creator. Each animal was thought to have its own personality. The Numu are very passionate about conservation, as they are aware that life depends on the way we treat Mother Earth.

Small fires were used for cooking. The fires were usually made out of small branches and the bark of sage, greasewood, willow or cottonwood. Stones were placed at various points within the fire, distributing heat evenly throughout the area. Carefully taken out, these stones were used to heat things like soup. When the fire was no longer needed, it would be put out with sand to prevent wildfires.

When making the kanee, wickiup, or teepee the smallest area possible was used. First a floor was made by clearing the brush from the area. The brush was then used as additional shelter. Dry brush was used as fuel for the fires. Sites of sickness or death were burned, helping to prevent the spread of diseases and to keep the spirits away.

All life is considered sacred to the Paiute people so when something needed to be killed all of its parts were used. The flesh and internal organs of large game were divided among band members. The skin was used for clothing, shelter lining, bed coverings, and various other uses in everyday life. The ears were often used for rattles. Smaller animals used in a similar manner, with the meat eaten or dried, skins or pelts used for clothing or blankets, and musical instruments were made. For example, after the rabbit drive the men skinned the rabbits and cut the pelts into long ribbons. The rabbits that were not eaten at the feast were dried and stored for the cold months to be boiled whole or pounded into a powder to make soup.

When gathering plants, the Paiutes would leave some of the plants in the ground, for the next year's growth. The seeds were kept and replanted. Fruits, berries, and nuts were harvested carefully. Some plants were used as medicine while others were used for flavor and scent. The barks of many plants were used for weaving baskets, carpets, houses, clothes, basinetts, and many other things. The stalks of plants were used for things like arrow shafts and were used to add color to anything woven.

The Numu were conscious of all life around them. When they filled their water jugs from the mountain springs they were even careful not to catch the algae in the flowing water. "When moss is growing in water like long hair, you don't take it out... You leave it there. If you don't leave it there, the water will dry up because it is 'her' hair." (Wheat 14)