**Ceremonial Use vs. Habitual Use**

“When we conduct a Sacred Pipe ceremony we fill the pipe with sacred tobacco and offer it to Grandfather, the Great Spirit, then to the spirits of the East, South, West and North and finally to Earth Mother. Taking part in this ceremony allows an individual to become centered in this life.”

Adam Fortunate Eagle, Ojibway Pipe Holder, Bear Clan (Tobacco Chronicles, p. 23)

Many Tribes have traditional stories of how Creator gave tobacco to our ancestors!

Because tobacco is a Gift from the Creator, some Natives think that we are protected from the hazards of *habitual* use of commercial tobacco.

Anyone who uses tobacco *habitually* is likely to cause health problems in themselves and in their family or co-workers who are exposed to their secondhand smoke.

Some Native teens rebel by using tobacco *habitually* rather than reserving it for ceremonial use only.

“The offering of the sacred peace pipe has been the method of communicating by the Indian people with all other peoples and the Great Spirit since ancient times. It symbolizes the sacred relationships of the brotherhood of all mankind and consecrates mankind’s nearness to the Great Spirit, making possible the tranquility necessary for peace and harmony among them.”

Abbott Sekaquaptewa, Former Chairman, Hopi Tribe (Tobacco Chronicles, p. 23)
How is ceremonial tobacco mis-used today by Tribal and Urban Indian communities?

- Natives who *habitually* use commercial tobacco may say they are “praying” when they are only smoking.

- Cigarettes are sometimes in large baskets for “guests” to smoke after a contemporary ceremony (like a funeral) [Mixed message similar to previous bullet]

- Packages or cartons of commercial cigarettes are given as gifts to honor people (Mixed message: The tobacco is given to honor the individual, but then the individual may smoke the product through habit rather than keeping the tobacco sacred or for ceremonial purposes).

- People who don’t grow plant as “spiritual” tobacco may use commercial tobacco for ceremonies

- Tribal Smoke Shops that sell to Native youth (Some profits go back to the tribe; but the youth become addicted).

"There is a tremendous need for ceremonial tobacco in the Native American community," explains Winter, "which is one reason why they use so much commercial tobacco. Many American Indians no longer have access to traditional tobacco. Over half of all Native Americans live in urban settings, so we raise it and give it to them so they don't have to use commercial tobacco."

Lawrence Shorty, Navajo/Choctaw (as a student at UNM, created the *Traditional Native American Tobacco Seed Bank and Education Program*)

http://www.unm.edu/.../quantum_spring_97/tabacco.jpg
The rising smoke of tobacco is a method to talk with the Creator.

American Indians with traditional beliefs will use tobacco today only for ceremonial purposes.

On average, between 30%-50% of Natives (both urban and reservation) take part in ceremonies that use tobacco in traditional ways.

Respectful versus “non-respectful” ceremonial use

“It is not respectful use of the sacrament, ‘tobacco’ when you hold the cigarette away from your body, drop the ashes to the ground, and smash the butts with your foot – that is not how we treat our sacraments”

Paul Ortega, Mescalero Apache, Traditional Healer, 1993 Rockville, MD

Why are ceremonial tobacco practices less of a concern than are habitual use of tobacco?

Ceremonial tobacco use is:

- Not used as often (like many times each day of the week / frequency)
- Not used regularly with kids (limited exposure with children)
- Not used in its strongest form (intensity)
- Less “frequency”, “duration”, and “intensity” than commercial tobacco (not used for as long; thus, exposed during ceremony, but ceremony may only be done monthly or a few times each year
- Rarely inhaled (only a few tribes inhale as part of the ceremony)
Native American Tobacco Education Fact Sheets: 
Ceremonial Use versus Habitual Use

How was Tobacco Used as a medicine by our ancestors?

- Asthma
- Rheumatism
- Chills
- Fevers
- Headaches
- Ear aches
- Tooth aches
- Childbirth pains
- Stomach aches
- Many Medicinal Uses
  - Remedy for open wounds
  - Bug Repellant
  - Keep evil spirits away

How was ceremonial tobacco used by our ancestors?

- Honor and welcome guests
- Bless the food crops
- Communicate with the Creator
- Ensure the welfare of the people
- Bless the hunt
- Bind agreements between tribes
- Payment to the Healer

For further information

Linda Burhansstipanov, DrPH (Cherokee Nation)
Lisa D. Harjo M. A. (Choctaw Nation)
Project Director
Native American Tobacco Education
Native American Cancer Research
3022 South Nova Road
Pine, CO 80470-7830
1-800-537-8295

Native American Cancer Research (http://www.NatAmCancer.org) supported by and in Partnership with the National Tribal Tobacco Prevention Network, Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board