

Mi-ta-ku-ye (my relatives),

I have been called upon to perform the Spirit Releasing ceremony for the thousands of buffalo that have lost their lives in the last decade, in the mountains of the Yellowstone River country.

Many, many generations ago, our relatives, the Pte O-ya-te (Buffalo People) came up from Wind Cave in the Black Hills; the heart of Un-ci Ma-ka (Grandmother Earth) and prepared the way for our existence. From that time forward, they gave of themselves for our survival, as long as we respected their gift. They taught us how to live in an honorable and respectful way by example and through the teachings of the White Buffalo Calf Woman. She brought the Sacred Canupa (Pipe) to remind us of our responsibilities and also provided us with the knowledge of the sacred rites that are necessary to discipline ourselves.

From the Buffalo Nation, our ancestors learned to have an honorable relationship of being connected with Un-ci Ma-ka; this “way of life” that identifies us of who we are as an O-ya-te (a People), with all it’s sacred teachings. They understood the gifts from Un-ci and carefully lived in harmony with her wellbeing. For that reason, we hold them to be sacred. We co-existed in a good way until we were nearly destroyed. *Ob un-ka-so-ta-pi tka*. The sacred Buffalo Nation in these mountains are the survivors of that natural way of life. We are culturally and spiritually indebted to them and we still need their guidance, to remind us how to be at peace and harmony with Un-ci Ma-ka.

Let it be known that Yellowstone territory; the habitat of the last wild Buffalo Nation - is sacred ground, it has been a SACRED SITE for the First Nation’s people, and for all humanity who hold deep respect for all Creation. The Buffalo Nation has confirmed this fact; by where they have ended up, continuing to survive in their natural migration, struggling to live in a peaceful manner. Our ancestors also gave us this message by fasting in this area long ago, as they recognized this place of sacredness. This understanding is how we maintain the balance upon Un-ci Ma-ka, to protect these places, especially for the survival of our future generations to come.

These Buffalo that lost their lives in Yellowstone did not die by Natural Law, nor were their spirits honored with ceremony. This is why we must go there to perform a ceremony of honor for those that lost their lives by the misunderstanding of human-kind and pray to Wakan Tankan (Great Spirit) for pity of how gifts were unappreciated. We must pray with all those who grieve and be grateful for them.

Many of the people who are deeply concerned of what has happened in the manner of which their lives were taken; we see this as an unnecessary massacre. We have known that this particular herd is the last original Buffalo Nation that still follows their migration pattern, the little that is left in tact; they are the sign of our connection to our wellbeing of living in harmony. I humbly ask for all People to make prayers on April 15th, at high noon; for a healing of humanity - for the decisions that are being made with no regard for the sacredness of life, for the massacred Buffalo's spiritual journey and to protect what is left - in understanding of what our journey in this life represents in being responsible! We must pray for the healing of the human Spirit, to understand the connection to all living beings on Un-ci Ma-ka.

In a Sacred Hoop of Life, where there is no ending and no beginning!

Can-te Mi-ta-wa I-ta-han (from my heart)

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chief Arvol Looking Horse". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid and personal.

Chief Arvol Looking Horse

19<sup>th</sup> Generation Keeper of the Sacred White Buffalo Calf Pipe