

THE SAMTSIRTIC SEASON

By Lyn Potts

Centuries ago a small village of women were celebrating Samtsirtic Season [in our language it is known as the Christmas Season]. They would go out collecting Mother Nature's supplies to make decorations. One day the women ventured too far out of the village. They travelled over boulders walking up hills and down, which lead them to a cave. A dark cave that smelled like something had died. Some of the women waited outside, afraid to enter. On entering they could see above their heads glowing lights. They followed the trail of lights to a large opening; in the middle was a big glowing rock. The most beautiful thing they had ever seen. They carried the rock back to the village. For the next eleven nights they had light and warmth. On the twelve night just before midnight a cool breeze floated throughout the village. Swirling in the breeze was darkness; the air became thick and dark.

They heard a deep loud voice

"Take the rock back".

Straight away the same women took the rock back to the cave. They climbed over boulders, walking up hills and down, straight back to the cave. They placed the rock back in the same spot only to be approached by the darkness again.

The air turned cold and heavy. A voice came out of nowhere

"Every Samtsitic Season you must come back to the cave and stand in a circle looking at the rock. On the first day of Samtsitic Season you will obey what is said. This will go on for twelve days."

The women were so scared they ran out of the cave tripping over boulders, cutting their feet but that didn't worry them. The villagers could hear the women screaming and crying. They could not believe the state the women were in.

The village elders gathered around listening to the story of what happen in the cave.

"You must do what the darkness say's, otherwise he will punish everyone." One of the elders stated. The other elder's agreed with him.

Every Samtsitic Season the village was in darkness from the first day to the twelve day. No one celebrated while the women were gone. What was a tradition was gone. The elders drew their story on rocks so no one would forget what happened.

The elders would sit in a circle chanting over and over for twelve days. No villagers were allowed to talk to them or talk at all. All the villagers had to pray every day and eat very little.

This continued for years while the women travelled back to the cave on the first day of the Samtsitic Season. They came back to the village on the thirteen day tired and weary. They could not remember anything. This took a toll on some of the women; they were getting too old to travel to the cave. They all decided not to go back. This angered the darkness; he came and swirled around the village. What he didn't know the elders drew a large circle in the dirt. The darkness swirled into the circle. The elders started chanting, getting louder and louder. The darkness couldn't escape only to disappear into nothing. Some of the villagers went to the cave, blocking it so no one could enter or escape.

The head elder spoke to the villagers –

“Today is a day of celebration. We have a tribe come together in troubled times. The curse is lifted, so now we will pray one more time as a whole village. We will have a big feast and light up the village so the gods above can see.”

The villagers held hands and prayed together. The feast continued into the night with dancing and singing.

“Let the Samtsitic Season continue every year”. AN elder yelled waving the decorated tribal stick in the air.