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An old proverb in "White Studies" states that "a little learning is a dangerous thing." I would like to paraphrase and say that "a little color is a dangerous thing." Let's pretend an Indian researcher is going out to do fieldwork. Because of his or her appearance (brown skin, high cheekbones, black hair, etc.), the musicians he interviews may assume he has a great deal more information than he actually does. This assumption may actually cause people to neglect telling him the most important and obvious features of the music or ceremony. By his looks, they have decided he must already know the "basics." He might also be expected to know how to behave on certain occasions when he really has no idea. Cherokees are as different from Cheyennes as Ethiopians are from Chinese.

Expectations of behavior extend to another plane when it is time to report the results of the research. Because a researcher is Indian, the musicians he has dealt with will expect more sensitivity than from a non-Indian researcher. Concomitantly, the non-Indian scholarly community will expect deeper insights and perhaps secret, esoteric knowledge to be revealed. Ethics and morality must here override sensationalism in presenting a balanced picture.

A Spanish proverb, "Saber es poder," means that knowledge is power. I believe Indians should study Indian music to gain knowledge and therefore power over this most important cultural expression.

Note: *The poems of William Oandasan are original arrangements of verses selected from Round Valley Songs, a working manuscript. Round Valley Songs is comprised of four songs of twelve verses which are four lines long, each song totalling 48 lines. Each verse and the lines of each verse are written in such a manner that they can be rearranged to become original poetic works. Consequently, some verses and lines in the poems of William Oandasan, appearing in this edition of the American Indian Culture and Research Journal, repeat themselves.*

THE SONG OF ANCIENT WAYS

song gives birth to
the story and dance
as the dance steps
the story speaks

the woman with white hair
only whispered *Tatu*
but through my ears
30,000 years drum

with brilliant feathers and strength
three Pilipino gaming cocks
appear from across the water
in the yard pullets cluck excitedly

swimming up the Eel
a spirit sings *acorn-*
pound-the-old-way-draws
the-milk-of-Earth

free as the bear
and tall as redwoods
throb my red roots
when spirits ride high

long ago brown bears
sang round our lodge fires
tonight they dance
alive through our dreams

in the chipped and tattered
weavings of a willow basket
the voice of an ancient age
dreaming of breath

the cold mountain water
that quenches the deep thirst
drums my fire
drums my medicine pouch

from fresh currents of night air
above manzanitas near the cemetery
the song of ancient ways
turns in our blood again

William Oandasan