

Loma'omvaya, Micah

2003 Interview of Micah Loma'omvaya by T. J. Ferguson and Peter Whiteley at Hopi Tribal Offices, Kykotsmovi, Arizona, on July 10, 2004.

These notes supplement the information provided in Peter Whiteley's notes. Information about specific photographs is entered directly into the photograph database.

Micah discussed the various terms for moisture from snow, snow melt, and gravity and fields that are fertile and ready to produce. Natural processes deposit moisture and organic material. Soil with a clay layer underneath is good for agricultural production. Topography can also be used, like planting on the lee side of sand dunes so that the drying wind is blocked. Bushes are also used to create windbreaks. Hopi farmers dance to pray for rain, and they make the right prayerfeathers. You plant for your wife, and for your own clan.

You look for the best land to farm but you are constrained by what land is available. The first clans to arrive got the best farm land. Later clans went further out to get farm land. The Sun Clan has taken over the Eagle Clan land, which is the furthest from the village.

Moisture affects everything. If fields were not productive, people went out and hunted and collected wild plants. "Water is the source of life for us."

We need to know how to use and adapt agriculture to the climate. We are adapted as a people, with belief and culture focused on the rain, snow, and moist fog.

Some *patni* (cisterns) are seeps; others are filled with snow and rain. A similar feature at Songoopavi is ten feet deep, and bell shaped so it is larger at the base. The sandstone acts as a filter to purify the water. At Songoopavi the area with *patni* is closed to protect the watershed filling the cisterns. These were used for domestic water before plumbing. My generation is the last to understand life before plumbing. I took water from a cistern to peach trees at the base of the mesa. It was hard work to haul the water but that's all they had. They used long sticks with gourds to scoop out the water.

They collect water in many places, and are raised not to waste water. See Peter's notes for names of the rivers that Micah referred to here. Even small amounts of water used ritually have great cultural value. Quality not quantity is what is important.

Final thoughts: "I'd like it to rain. And I'd like to see more farming. We need ground water to irrigate, whether it be for domestic use or commercial production. The coal slurry at Black Mesa is desiccating our resources. This water should be used for domestic purposes."