



Jingle Dress Dance

The Jingle Dress Dance is known as a healing dance. It originated in the upper Great Lakes region back in the 1920's. The dress is made with tin lids from a canister of tobacco snuff. The lids are shaped into cones that make a beautiful sound when the dance is performed. Each dress should have around 200 tin cones. The sounds of the cones are said to ward off bad spirits and welcome good spirits into the dancer and to all those who are watching the dance.

Fancy footwork and grace is what makes this of dance special. This style dance is a dance of pride and dignity to those ladies who perform this special dance. There are two step styles of this dance: The traditional straight dance and the side step. The side step is said to have special healing powers. Each dancer has their own special steps and moves but their feet have to move right along with the beat of the drum.

The dresses are made from colorful fabrics with the tin cones. The women also wear an eagle fluff in their hair as well as some other accessories that accompany their regalia. These include a feather fan, bone and bead necklaces, sashes, beaded belt, beaded hair pieces and a beaded leather bag that is used to carry items that are sacred to each of the dancers.

The dance itself is said to have originated to help an elder man heal his granddaughter.

A medicine man's granddaughter was very ill. He had a dream in which four spirit women wearing jingle dresses came to him. They told him to make one of these dresses and put it on his granddaughter to cure her. The four ladies also gave him special songs to sing when his granddaughter wore the dress. When he awoke, he and his wife proceeded to assemble the dress as described by the spirits of his dream. When finished, they and some others brought his granddaughter to a drum ceremony and she put on the dress. During the first dance circle around the room, she needed to be carried while she danced. During the second dance circle around the room, she could barely walk and needed the assistance of several women. During the third dance circle around the room she found she could walk without assistance and during the fourth dance circle around the room, she danced all on her own and was cured.