

Ayayun made sure time is never interrupted

The middle part of the mask is the "Time Caretaker," and it is a spirit that Ayayun (Great Spirit) created to insure that time is never interrupted — that it will always continue.

Everything in this world happens in sequences — the seasons, sun and moon activity, tidal changes. The Time Caretaker watches over time so that it will always be. The right eye can see into the future so that he can always be prepared for anything.

The center of the mask is the Time Caretaker with two rings that symbolize Mother Earth and the Cosmos. The top of the mask is the Brother Sun, and the bottom is Sister Moon. The sides are Yupik Spirit Drummers who assist the Time Caretaker in maintaining the rhythm of time and life.

The two whale ribs on the sides of the drummers represent the spiritual bond that Yupiks have with the earth. The raven spirits and the spirit feathers represent the mystery and the powerful strength of the Time Caretaker.

The four posts of the mask are strategically located and symbolize the significance of a human being.

The top post represents Ayayun, the right post represents new life, the bottom post represents growth of life and renewal and the left post represents the end of life. All are placed in the sequence in which they occur.

The inner ring is an era known as the "Time-of-Shorter-Days." It was during this time when the earth was only rocks and water, and there

were no people. The outer rings represent the "Time-of-longer-days." This was the beginning of time when Ayayun spread soil over the rocks and breathed on earth and gave her life.

The most important symbol of the outer rings is that all living things on Mother Earth inherited the power to give life, so that is why grass grows again, flowers and

trees re-seed and animals and humans give birth.

The mask is made of yellow cedar, and the posts are Douglas Fir. The rings are alder; the sun/moon, clear pine; the sun/moon rings, spruce roots; the sun/moon posts, seal skin. The drummers, raven spirits and whale ribs are whale bone, and the spirit feathers are raven feathers.