

Peyotism in North American Indian Groups¹

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I. Introduction

The aims of this paper include the description and comparison of peyotism in North American Indian groups. It will be concerned with: 1) the nature of peyote as an hallucinatory alkaloid; 2) its diffusion among the American Indians; 3) the Plains "type" of peyotism, to include some of its variations from group to group; 4) the development of the Native American Church; 5) some of the legal problems concerning the practice, and 6) some of the aspects of the relationship between the individual and peyotism.

This paper is designed as a survey of existing literature on peyote, rather than an analysis in depth of more specific problems within the sphere of "peyotism." Such an analysis is planned for the future, using Kansas Potawatomi data and the background information contained herein. From time to time brief comments will be made on aspects of Potawatomi peyotism as I have experienced it during a single ceremony, but otherwise no extensive statement on peyotism in this group is included.

II. What is Peyote?

Taxonomy: Peyote bears the botanical name of *Lophophora williamsii*, the sole representative of its genus and species (LaBarre, 1938: 10). Immature peyote plants are classified as *Anhalonium williamsii* (anhalonium: without salt), and the mature ones as *Anhalonium lewinii*. As the peyote plant matures it acquires additional alkaloids; the mature plant differs in its chemical composition from the immature one, hence the different taxonomy. It is a cactus, with much of its bulk growing beneath the ground in the shape of a turnip or carrot; the top of the plant does not protrude much above the surface of the ground, and for that reason it is often difficult to locate (LaBarre, 1938:11). The top of the plant, i.e. that portion above the surface of the ground, is the only portion consumed; it is lopped off with a single knife-stroke and, because of its flat appearance, is frequently called a "button." Peyote among the Indians of northern Mexico is known generally as *hicori* or

Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science, Vol. 68, No. 1, 1965.
Published May 14, 1965.

¹ K. U. Potawatomi Study Research Report No. 5. This report was written while the author was a Research Assistant on the K. U. Potawatomi Study conducted by Dr. James A. Clifton. The funds for the extended Potawatomi research project were provided by National Science Foundation Grant No. GS 400, and from the General Research Fund of the University of Kansas.

bikuli; among the Mescalero Apache it is *ho*; and in Kiowa it is *seni*. The common English term is derived from the *peyotl* of the Aztecs (Barnard, n.d.:578; Newberne, 1922:3). From time to time there is confusion as to whether or not some of the herbs mentioned in old documents from the Spanish Conquest period were in fact peyote (c.f. LaBarre, 1960). For some time it was believed that *teonacatl*, the "God-flesh" of the Aztecs, was peyote (Documents on Peyote, 1937 e.g.); LaBarre cites botanical evidence to the contrary, showing that *teonacatl* and *peyotl* are different plants (1938:7). A more widespread confusion is that of peyote with the mescal bean, *Sophophora secundiflora*, also known as "coral bean" or "mountain laurel," although the appearance of the two cannot possibly be confused. LaBarre (1938:126) and Howard (1957:76) note that the physiological effects of mescal are considerably more marked than those of peyote. Another hallucinatory plant, *Datura* ("Jimsonweed" or "Toloache") had ritual importance in the Southwest area. It is the "narcotic exhibiting perhaps the most numerous parallels in usage with peyote," and it is interesting to note that its distribution is contiguous to, but mutually exclusive of, the distribution of peyote.

Range of Peyote: Peyote's natural habitat is in the arid area of the lower Rio Grande and south along the gulf coast of Mexico (see Shonle, 1925). Its procurement for use in rituals aboriginally involved pilgrimages to this area by Tarahumari and Huichol holy men.

Chemical Properties: Peyote contains nine alkaloids in its mature stage: Anhaline, Anhalamine, Mescaline, Anhalonidine, Anhalonine, Lophophorine, Pellotine, Anhalinine and Anhalidine. The young plant *A. williamsii*, contains only Pellotine (LaBarre, 1938:138).

Physiological Effects: Quoting from A. Rouhier's *Monographie*, pp. 227-32, LaBarre (1938:139) lists the physiological effects of the alkaloid constituents both individually and as a composite group in peyote.

Mescaline: slowing of pulse, slight headache, sensation of heaviness in the limbs lasting one to several hours; heavier doses, feeling of discomfort and fullness of stomach (even when injected intravenously) in addition to the above symptoms; still heavier doses, accentuation of symptoms and appearance of color-visions.

Peyotline: [Pellotine] in about an hour reduces the pulse approximately one-quarter the normal number of beats; two hours after ingestion, heaviness of eyelids, sensation of fatigue, aversion to all physical or mental effort; has no marked analgesic action but is a fairly good sedative and has a very appreciable hypnotic and anodyne action.

Anhaline: exercises a paralyzing effect on the central nervous system.

Anbalamine: this has not been adequately studied physiologically. Nor have *Anhalinine* and *Anbalidine*.

Anbalonidine: only slight sleepiness and dull sensation in head; pulse not affected.

Anbalonine: produces no sensible effect, except perhaps a slight sleepiness.

Lophophorine: the most toxic, has no narcotic action; a quarter-hour after ingestion an accentuated sickening feeling in the back of the head, with hotness and blushing of face, slight pulse diminuation; symptoms disappear after 40 minutes.

Peyote thus affects the central nervous system, Mescaline acting on the brain and Lophophora on the spinal cord (Rouhier in LaBarre, 1938: 140).

The composite, or "pan-peyotl" effects may be divided into two general stages (W. E. Dixon in LaBarre, 1938:140): the *preliminary* stage and the stage of *intoxication*. In the preliminary stage the individual feels excitement, exhilaration, and diminished kinesthetic sensations which make the performance of tasks involving effort hardly noticeable. The face is flushed, the pupils of the eyes are dilated, and the individual feels the urge to be very talkative. In the intoxication stage there is an inclination to lie down, although the individual may not feel sleepy (I experienced this in the Potawatomi meeting I attended); the pupils remain dilated and react "sluggishly" to light changes. Movements, including walking, are un-coordinated; there is a tremor in the hands; the reflexes in the body are much increased, although the sensations of pain and touch are dulled; a twitching develops in the muscles, particularly in the face, accompanied by a feeling that the lips, tongue, and entire face are swollen. There is a tendency for the individual to over-estimate time, "possibly as a result of the rapid flow of ideas and the inability to fix the attention. Perception of space is also modified, on one occasion giving the impression that the ground sloped away in all directions" (ibid.). Perception may be delayed, and familiar faces may not be recognized for what seems like a long period of time. There may be a feeling of dual existence, the feeling that the individual is preceiving himself from outside, as another person. When the eyes are closed, there is a play of brilliant colors and other "visions," usually in motion, which "can be seen with either eye, precisely the same; hence the condition must be central" (ibid.). There is also the phenomenon of *synesthesia*, during which the individual responds to stimuli in other

than the accustomed sensory way—Havelock Ellis, for example, reported that he could “taste” colors under the influence of Mescaline (*ibid.*).

Visual phenomena, indeed, are perhaps the most conspicuous effects of peyote eating. The colors red and yellow, usually with reference to birds and feathers, are common in both Mexican and Plains peyote symbolism. The widespread Plains belief that peyote makes one see better may derive from pupil-dilation; white observers have reported acuter vision in peyote intoxication from this cause. Indians frequently manifest a ‘Photophobia’ even in the mild morning sunlight after meetings, and many younger men affect colored glasses at this time (LaBarre, 1938:20).

There are also auditory hallucinations characterized by a perceived hollowness and far-away quality of one’s own voice. No matter how much I strained to be heard during my brief statement at the Potawatomi peyote meeting, it seemed that my voice was almost inaudible.

The alkaloids in peyote also increase salivation in the individual, which may account for its properties as a thirst-quencher in the various origin myths; but it is also a diuretic, and this coupled with the increased salivation often causes thirst to re-appear during peyote intoxication.

Harrington (Documents on Peyote, 1937) notes the use of the term “intoxication” may be misleading when applied to peyote:

It is unfortunate that the English language has no alternative word for *intoxication*, because it has gradually come to connote alcoholic-intoxication. Let me point out that peyote-intoxication is very unlike that induced by alcohol, opium, or hashish. . . . Peyote should be classed with tobacco as far as its ‘harmfulness’ is concerned. . . . Investigators have shown that the alkaloids of the plant, to which is [sic] attributable the intoxicating properties, pass out in the urine the next day.

We will see that peyote has been widely used by Indian groups as a cure for various diseases, mental and physical. Regarding the scientific opinion of the therapeutic value of peyote, LaBarre says, “On the whole, . . . the therapeutic possibilities of *Lophophora* seem unimpressive” (1938:147).

Defendants of peyotism among Indians argue frequently that peyote serves as a “cure” for the desire for alcohol. LaBarre (1938:21) notes in this connection:

We are convinced . . . that peyote has no effect whatsoever in the curbing of an appetite for liquor. . . . Natives are perfectly sincere in their belief that the antagonism of peyote and alcohol is physiological (even in the face of conspicuous contrary evidence), and Plains Indians are annoyed and hurt at the wide-

spread association of drinking and peyote-eating through the confusion of the term 'mescal.' Yet the stubborn ethnographic fact remains that in Mexico peyote is commonly drunk *with* tesvino or mescal.

In informant interviews held some time after the Potawatomi peyote meeting which I attended, it was learned that following the meal after the all-night meeting some participants went to a nearby town and became intoxicated.

Shonle (1925:70) states that the green mature peyote acts more as a stimulant than a hallucinogen; Petrullo (1934:5) and LaBarre (1938: 82) disagree, noting that the effects of the dried peyote are less marked than those produced by the green buttons. Bernard (n.d.:578) notes that the green button is preferred to the dried ones when the former is available.

Slotkin (1956:51) has noted that the effects of peyote experienced under "laboratory" conditions may be quite different from those experienced by Indians during a peyote ceremony in a tipi; but the effects noted above by Davis under laboratory conditions seem to have general applicability in most "field" situations described in the literature. It is important to mention another, related, point however: the effects of peyote are different for each individual taking it, and the "state of mind" of the individual before he takes peyote, as well as his specific social environment at the time and the tradition of "patterned visions" in his group, all tend to have an influence on the effects experienced. In Slotkin's words, "... Evidently the responses vary with the social conditions under which the stimuli are perceived" (ibid.).

To summarize the effects of peyote in terms of the material to follow we again turn to LaBarre's study (1938:22):

[There occurs] the *exhilarating* first effect of the drug (in the allaying of hunger and thirst on the march, to give courage in war, and strength in dancing and racing) and the second stage [called "intoxication" above] of *depression* and *visions* ('running amok,' witchcraft suspicion, psychic fear-states, euphoria and feeling of brotherhood, partial anaesthesia, the 'suffering to learn something' characteristic of the Plains vision quest, synaesthesias, auditory hallucinations, and 'catching songs,' visual hallucinations, and 'learning' of paint and bed-designs, symbolical birds and feathers, etc.).

III. Diffusion of Peyotism

Slotkin (1956:28) distinguishes what may be called three "stages" in the spread of peyote: "The Old Peyote Complex," the "Religion-like Rite," and "The Peyote Religion." The sequence is generally in accord

with the rest of the literature on the subject and will be followed here; but we quibble with his terminology, because it appears that the use of peyote has been largely restricted to various types of religious activities from its earliest known appearance. We therefore will use some of LaBarre's terminology (1938) and discuss "Early Mexican Rites," "Transitional Rites," and "Recent Plains-type Rites." We will describe in some detail the early Mexican and transitional rites in this section, reserving extended discussion of the Plains-type rites for a later analysis.

Early Mexican Rites: The earliest account of the use of peyote is that of Sahagun in 1560, in which he recorded its presence among the Chichimeca of Mexico (LaBarre, 1938:10). There is, however, some evidence to indicate that the use of peyote is much older: "The distinguished botanist Schultes believes, on the basis of information recorded by Sahagun, that *Lophophora williamsii* has been used as a religious sacrament since 300 B.C., hence has been an item of economic botany for over two thousand years" (LaBarre, 1960:47). LaBarre notes the necessity for caution in drawing conclusion from old reports, however (ibid). On June 29, 1620, the Inquisitor of New Spain in Mexico City issued an edict, which stated in part (Stewart, 1961:6):

In as much as the use of the herb or root called peyote has been introduced into these Provinces for the purpose of detecting thefts, of divining other happenings, and of fortelling future events, it is an act of superstition condemned as opposed to the purity and integrity of our Holy Catholic Faith.

Because the plant is native to northeast Mexico and southern Texas, authors in general feel that this area may have been the center of diffusion to the south, west, and north in the early period (LaBarre 1938:110; Petrullo, 1934:19; Shonle, 1925:54). LaBarre cites a diffusion theory proposed by Ralph Beals which supports such an idea:

If, indeed, as Beals with great plausibility argues, peyote is historically associated with shamanism, then it may have been involved in a late-reinvigoration of shamanistic elements, at the expense of the priestly-sacerdotal elements of an older, impoverished culture stratum (1938:109).

The "older, impoverished stratum" referred to seems to be that which may have diffused from the high civilizations to the south. At any rate, the evidence at present does not allow more than postulations on the subject.

The tribes just to the west of this area, the Huichol and Tarahumari, have a form of ritual involving peyote that is considerably older than peyotism in the Plains. An account of the Huichol use of peyote is

given by Lumholtz in his work *Unknown Mexico* (1903) from which LaBarre takes the following description of what he feels to be characteristic of the early Mexican rites in the area (LaBarre, 1938:30 ff.).

The peyote is used in a first-fruits ceremony held among the Huichol in January. Early in the previous October a group of holy men leave the settlement on a quest for peyote after undergoing purification rituals. The "quest party" consists of from 8 to 12 individuals. They carry in their packs a number of "sacred hour-glass shaped gourds" and a supply of tobacco. After passing a geographical point in their journey (Puerta de Cerda) they place sacred arrows on the ground pointed in the four cardinal directions and build a fire. "Tobacco belongs to the personified fire; after much praying the leader touches the tobacco-ball with his plumes and wraps small portions in corn husks . . . and each man puts one in a special tobacco-gourd tied to his quiver." The tobacco bundles then become the "prisoner" of "grandfather fire" until they are burned four months later. At this time during their journey the holy men make public confessions of their sins, a rite duplicated at approximately the same time by their women back in camp. The Huichol quest for peyote is equated with a deer-hunting expedition. When the peyote is located, another ritual is performed in which arrows are shot over the first plant ("deer") found to insure that more plants will be found. The party then gathers the peyote, eats a portion of it and returns to camp. At the subsequent January first-fruits ceremony the ritual fire is again kindled: "The temple fire place . . . is a circular clay basin in the center with a slightly raised rim; the poker is the 'arrow' of the God of Fire." The holy men who went on the quest then sing of their journey to hikuli (peyote) country, and

. . . about Great-grandfather Deer-Trail, the Morning Star and all the other gods who, long ago, went out to seek hikuli. The next morning all wash their faces, heads and hands in water from the hikuli-country, and salute the rising sun with a bowl of burning incense, sprinkling water to the four corners of the world with a flower and praying for life and for luck in hunting deer.

During the ceremony a ritual meal is eaten which consists of boneless meat, parched or potted corn in sugar water, and fruit. The rites are under the leadership of a shaman. They involve all-night dancing to the music of a wooden rasp played by the shaman. "Properly speaking . . . Mexican peyotism is a tribal affair, centering around the shaman, on whose shoulders rests the whole tribal welfare as involved in abundant corn harvests, successful deer-hunting, and success in war (which he may prognosticate)" (LaBarre, 1938:37).

No attempt has been made to give the Huichol ceremony exhaustive coverage here; attention has been directed to those elements of it which seem closely related to the later ceremonial pattern emerging to the north. These similarities will become clearer when we discuss the Plains rite, but for now we may echo LaBarre's caution in assuming that ritual similarities necessarily mean direct contact and continuity. LaBarre notes that there is no relationship between the Mexican use of incense and the sage used in the Plains rite; that the cornhusk cigarette is used in a slightly different context in the Mexican ritual than in the Plains; and that the gourd rattle exists widely in the area with no special association with peyotism. A staff is occasionally used by the shaman in the Mexican rite, but it is also used in other, non-peyote rituals. The musical rasp is not used in Plains ritual, and the use of the drum is not typical of Mexican rites. Parched corn, on the other hand, *is* definitely associated with both the Mexican and Plains peyote rites (LaBarre, 1938:37).

From this generalized area of northeast Mexico the peyote rites apparently spread northward to the Mescaleros in the 1870s (LaBarre, 1938:40; Petrullo, 1934:19; Shonle, 1925:54; Slotkin, 1956:34).

The Transitional Rite. Peyote rituals in the Mescalero Apache group were ostensibly conducted for the doctoring of sick persons (LaBarre, 1938:40; Opler, 1936:149), although occasionally they were held to discover the locations of lost articles or to prognosticate the future. The position of the shamman had been a particularly powerful one in pre-peyote times among the Mescalero and the introduction of peyote could not have been successful without being adapted to this earlier pattern. The shaman retained a measure of his old power, and "he had to be approached humbly and his consent obtained before the ceremony could transpire" (Opler, 1936:151). But when individual Apache were under the influence of peyote in meetings, they were not so easily awed by the traditional displays of shamanistic power. Since the traditional Mescalero quest for this power was an individual one, often received in the form of visions, individuals were able to acquire it more easily following the introduction of peyote. What the peyote ceremonies then became "was a gathering of shamans under the control and guidance of the peyote chief" (Opler, 1938:151). Opler continues (1938:152-3):

No matter how uniformly the native accounts repeat the formula that these were curing rites, the descriptions themselves reveal that in practice the attention was diverted to an intense shamanistic display by one individual after another. . . . To bring together a group of shamans, many of them proud and boastful of their powers, all of them rivals, some suspected by others of

witchcraft, and to have them lift their inhibitions by the consumption of peyote, is to invite disaster, or at least a stirring evening. . . . It might be said that the Mescalero obliquely recognized the proper office of peyote in making possible and heightening supernatural experiences for all, but they were determined that these experiences should be compressed into the shamanistic crucible.

To summarize LaBarre's description (1938:40 ff.): when a ceremony was to be held, the participants would bathe at noon on the appointed day. They would enter a Plains-type tipi at nightfall. The individual designated to act as "fireman" built a crescent-shaped altar fireplace beforehand, the horns of the crescent pointing to the east. The door of the tipi was also oriented to the east. Upon entering, the leader of the ceremony sat immediately west of the fire, facing the door. Before him was placed a large, talismanic peyote button on a piece of buckskin or an eagle feather. The leader held a gourd rattle and an incised wooden staff; the staff was a protection against witchcraft, and he never relinquished it, although he did pass the gourd to the drummer in exchange for the drum. The fire was kept going all night by the fireman, and once inside the tipi, participants were allowed to leave only for brief periods. Two eagle feathers were placed on either side of the doorway, one of which was to be taken out by the participant when he left the ceremony briefly; the feather was to be replaced immediately upon the re-entry.

The leader ate the peyote first, then administered it to novices using two eagle feathers as a spoon. The peyote was then passed around the tent to the other participants, and the leader prayed. The participants next made a ritual smoke sometimes using a pipe instead of the usual self-made cigarettes. Then, beginning on the southeast quadrant of the circle of participants, the drum was passed. The leader or his assistant shook the gourd and the drum was played while each male sang four songs; the leader sang most of the songs. Throughout the rite he was constantly watching for the workings of rival shamans. According to LaBarre, one of the favorite tricks of the leader's rivals was to induce vomiting in his assistants (drummer or fireman, or both). Participants who experienced terrifying visions under the influence of the peyote were restrained from running out of the tent by the other people present; an attempt was made to learn the nature of the individual's fears and to alleviate them, for if he were to leave the tent some disaster would surely befall him outside (Opler, 1936:163).

There was a "mild bias" against women in Mescalero peyotism; they could not, for example, hold the position of leader of a peyote rite.

There was also a notable lack of Christian elements or paraphernalia in the ritual, a point significant for comparison later on (Opler, 1936:144). A point of contention has arisen between Opler and Omer Stewart: in his work on Washo-Paiute peyotism (1944) Stewart notes that Christian elements in the peyote ritual were early and basic in the peyote rite. In 1936 Opler noted that among the Mescalero "the ascendancy of Christian symbology was the result of a reinterpretation or *secondary movement*, and by the time this movement gained force, Mescalero peyote was rapidly losing ground and was soon to be virtually abandoned" (emphasis mine; Opler, 1936:165). LaBarre, acting the role of the referee, notes in his criticism of Stewart's thesis that "historical evidence from other tribes would appear to support Opler concerning the secondary nature of Christian influences on peyotism in general" (1960:52). The primary reason for the decline of peyotism among the Mescalero, Opler (1936: 419) believes, lay in the nature of interpersonal relationships among the peyotists:

. . . Since peyote leadership and the conduct of peyote rites were open to any who claimed a supernatural experience with the plant, since, in other words, an individualistic, shamanistic premise underlay the utilization of peyote for religious purposes, centralized leadership and definite organization could not be achieved.

In his discussion of Mescalero peyotism, Opler notes that "the formal pattern could easily be accepted by the Mescalero without concession or loss, especially since they proceeded at once to interpret the inner meaning in their own terms" (1936:164-65). This process of re-interpretation and integration is well known in anthropology, and it is a fundamental principle applied by students of peyotism in seeking causes for diffusion of the ceremonies.

Somewhere between the Mexican tribes and the Mescalero the dancing during ceremonies was lost (Slotkin, 1956:34); Mescalero peyotism emphasized "singing, prayer, and quiet contemplation," although Slotkin notes that there is some record of dancing during Plains peyote rites among the Southern Arapaho, Kiowa, and Kiowa Apache; and more recently among the Comanche and Kiowa (ibid:110).

In summarizing his discussion of Mescalero peyotism, LaBarre (1938:41) notes:

Mescalero peyotism, therefore, is truly transitional between the Mexican all-inclusive rite of *tribal* cure and the individualistic Plains *societal* ceremony: no equilibrium was permanently reached between the two, and Opler adduces abundant evidence of the *rival* nature of peyotism among competing shamans.

From the intensely rivalistic Mescalero the peyote ritual spread to the Kiowa and Comanche in the 1870s, and within those groups developed the peyote ritual here called the "Plains-type," which has served as a basis for the peyote ceremonies presently so widespread in the United States and Canada.

The Plains-type Ritual. LaBarre notes that peyote ceremonies may have been conducted among the Comanche as early as 1873 (1938:113). Certainly by 1880 peyotism had arrived in both the Kiowa and Comanche groups, bearing obvious similarities to the Mescalero rite described above. But LaBarre (ibid:111) again cautions against hasty conclusions regarding the source of Kiowa peyotism:

The introduction of peyote was not exclusively the doing of one tribe, any more in the case of the Kiowa than of other groups. Tribal contacts have been multiple since the cessation of inter-tribal warfare, and one is not at all inclined to discount the vague information from Kiowas that they know of peyote [from other, now extinct, tribal groups].

Mooney described a Kiowa peyote meeting held in 1891, and his description coupled with subsequent observations of other ceremonies by other anthropologists led to the postulation of the Kiowa-Comanche area as a center of diffusion of the Plains ritual. Slotkin (1956:28) characterizes the Plains rite in general terms: "This form of Peyotism consists of a voluntary association whose rite is one of singing, prayer, and quiet contemplation, centered on Peyote both as a symbol of the spirits being worshipped and as a sacrament." Keeping in mind Slotkin's terminology presented at the beginning of this section, and what was mentioned a moment ago about the re-interpretation and integration of alien culture elements, we may quote him at length (1956:34):

[In the southern plains the Peyote rite] was transformed until compatible with the southern Plains culture pattern; around the rite was organized a Plains type voluntary association, and the form given a nationalistic content: this is the Peyote Religion. Nationalism implies that the religion was invented either late in the vanishing frontier period (*ca.* 1870-*ca.* 1885) or during the post-frontier period (from *ca.* 1885); of course, we know it took place before 1891 [the date of Mooney's study].

On this basis I would hazard a guess that the fully developed Peyote Religion was invented about 1885 [see LaBarre's dates above] by Comanche or Kiowa living at the Kiowa, Comanche and Wichita Agency in what is now Oklahoma.

Whether invented by them or not, the Kiowa and Comanche rites by 1891 had acquired considerably more ritual, paraphernalia, doctrine,

and organization than the (earlier?) Mescalero ceremony. The orientation of the Plains rites was different from that of the Mescaleros: Plains rites were held to celebrate birthdays and to pray for successful childbirth, as well as for other reasons, including effecting cures. "Present too is the possibility of instruction and power through a peyote vision; in the Plains this is a primary motive, with doctoring second" (LaBarre, 1938:43). Plains peyote meetings are characteristically "vowed" for one of these purposes as was common in the Sun Dance (*ibid.*). Among the ritual accretions in the Plains rite of 1891 were some elements of Christianity. The dispute over the age of these elements has been mentioned; whatever their antiquity, LaBarre feels that "such Christian elements as were added had a largely propagandist function" in an attempt by Indian groups to shelter peyotism from destruction by the whites (1938:43). We will let this description of Plains peyotism suffice for the moment in the interest of promoting clarity. We are concerned with the subject of diffusion of peyotism in this section, and a detailed account of the Plains rite and some of its variants will be presented in the next section.

Shonle (1925:56) notes an interesting problem that has occupied the efforts of almost every student of peyotism in the past: during 400 years of Indian-white contact prior to 1890 only five or six Indian tribes north of the Rio Grande received peyotism; yet since that time it has spread over the Plains and Basin areas of the United States and into Canada. What factors have contributed to this rapid spread?

Factors in the Diffusion of Peyote

1. *Adaptation to Vicissitudes of Culture Contact:* We may consider this factor first in view of the apparent chronological correspondence between the demise of the Ghost Dance movement and the rapid spread of peyotism. Shonle (1925:57) feels that the spread of the Ghost Dance, and the friendly and widespread intertribal relationships which resulted, acted to create channels of communication along which the peyote religion could spread. Life on the reservations "broke up the competitive ranking of the tribes and realigned them as common participants in a new manner of living toward which they had little inclination" (*ibid.*). Reservation life would thus be a factor, to Shonle's thinking, in the spread of both the Ghost Dance and peyotism. Bernard Barber (1941:673) accepts Shonle's ideas and applies them to more recent theory: "Nash has shown . . . The Ghost Dance of 1870 was adopted in different degrees, its acceptance being directly correlated with what he calls the degree of 'deprivation,' i.e., the amount of cultural disorganization." Barber applies this theory to the understanding of the spread of peyotism. Following the disappearance of the Ghost Dance, he

postulates, the Plains tribes were left with a religious need due to "deprivation," which was fulfilled by the peyote rituals:

Peyote, like the Ghost Dance, transcended tribal boundaries. It took advantage of the new sympathetic attitudes among the tribal units, attitudes stemming from the destruction of the old tribal animosities by the reservation system. Peyote is spoken of as 'The Indian Religion.' . . . The Ghost Dance and the Peyote cult, then, may in part be understood as alternative responses to a similar socio-cultural constellation. As such a response, the Peyote cult performs certain important adaptive functions.

The theory discussed by Shonle and in part by Barber was originally proposed by Mooney.

Slotkin (1956:35) feels that the theory has some value, but notes that it has not been clearly demonstrated that the dates of the decline of the Ghost Dance and the diffusion of peyotism are the same. This is due, in part, to the fact that there was sometimes considerable lag between the time it arrived and the time its presence was first reported on a given reservation. Slotkin (*ibid.*) feels that one of the reasons for its acceptance was that peyotism provided "adequate adjustment to the external and internal environmental conditions confronting the Indians" as well as "an effective transition for Indians between themselves and whites . . . [it was] a program of accommodation." That is, peyotism "substituted a value system based upon an ethic adopted from white mores, but compatible with the Indian culture pattern" (*ibid.* :41). Subordination to white culture is suppressed in the ethic of the peyote religion, and communion with spirits lifts the individual from the mundane life; he is promised a better life in the hereafter. Finally, Slotkin feels, the peyote religion gave a new structural context for cooperative effort, replacing older structures shattered by contact with whites: "The religion is nationalistic. It is a religion for all Indians. Its nativistic character permits its adherents to take pride in an Indian trait complex which they believe equal or superior to that of whites." And, paradoxically, the white elements in its structure made it possible for white-oriented marginal individuals to participate (Slotkin, 1956:41). Where Slotkin uses "accommodation," LaBarre (1938; 1960:634) uses "compatibility;" but the two are in essential agreement as to the importance of this characteristic of peyotism which contributes to its popularity.

Both Underhill and Thompson note the recent spread of peyotism on the Navaho reservation in response to increasing tension within the Navaho social system: Underhill (1957:136) writes that "the areas where it is spreading most are those under present stress, like the Navaho reservation." Thompson (1951:40) reports that

In the last decade the Native American Church (Peyote Cult) has spread rapidly among the Navaho, unchecked by the existence of a tribal ordinance making the possession or use of peyote . . . a prison offense. In general, spread of the Native American Church signifies increased resistance to white influences and white government.

LaBarre (1960:49) reports that there are between five and six thousand participants in peyotism in the Shiprock area of Navaho country, representing 35% of the population of that region.

2. *Curing of Illness:* It has already been noted that the apparent efficacy in the curing of illness was a major factor in Peyote's popularity. Slotkin (1956:35) notes this, along with LaBarre (1938:52) and Petrullo (1934:23). LaBarre reports that Kiowa doctors are especially effective, presumably because they have access to the "pure" tradition. Petrullo uses caution in noting that the diffusion of peyotism cannot be explained in terms of its curing properties alone, but that it performs other valuable religious functions as well. A Prairie Potawatomi woman informant told the present writer that peyote could be used "just like aspirin;" she showed me a small bottle of ground peyote she kept in her handbag.

LaBarre notes that peyote can be effective in "curing" mental disorders (1938:88), and among the Kiowa it is used as a veritable panacea: "uses are recommended for tooth-ache, hemorrhages, head-ache, consumption, fever, breast pains, skin disease, hiccough, rheumatism, childbirth, diabetes, colds and pulmonary diseases in general" (ibid. :27).

In a later publication (1946:633-34), however, he states that the curative power of peyote, as far as the Plains Indians are concerned, can hardly be separated from its vision-producing properties:

In the Plains, 'medicine power' for curing is supernatural in origin (the vision), not pharmaceutical (specifics). In any case, if peyote did not cause visions, would new adherents be so ready to believe that it cures (that it has 'medicine power')? *Of course* people take peyote mainly to cure various ills—*because* a vision-producing plant obviously has medicine power.

If LaBarre seems overly emphatic in the above statement, it is because he is once again writing in criticism of a statement made in Stewart's *Washo-Northern Paiute Peyotism* (1944) to the effect that the therapeutic properties (perceived) in peyote were of more importance in explaining the diffusion of peyotism than its hallucinogenic properties. In this report I have chosen to separate the two properties into two factors affecting diffusion because, in spite of what LaBarre states regard-

ing the Indian conception of "medicine power," I feel that among the Potawatomi at least, the hallucinogenic and therapeutic qualities are distinct considerations.

Radin is among those who consider the curing properties of peyote as one of the key factors in its wide acceptance:

. . . I hardly believe that any amount of preaching of its direct effects, such as the hyper-stimulation induced, the glorious visions, and the feeling of relaxation following, would ever have induced prominent members of the medicine bands to [use peyote]. For that reason, it is highly significant that all the older members of the peyote speak of the diseases of which it cured them. Along this line lay unquestionably its appeal for the first converts (Quoted in Shonle, 1925:73, from "Peyote Cult of the Winnebago," *Journal of Religious Psychology* 7:12, 1914).

3. *Visions, the Old Vision Quest, and Other Traditional Culture Patterns:* Shonle (1925:70) is among those writers who feel that the hallucinatory properties of peyote were primary causes for its spread. LaBarre, as noted above, is another. One of the reasons for the importance of the hallucinatory effects of peyote to Plains groups, however vital in stimulating diffusion, is that these effects are apparently much like those experienced during the aboriginal Plains "Vision Quest." The aboriginal pattern was characterized by an individual leaving his home camp to wander in the wilderness, fasting and seeking the vision which would give him personal power. But Petrullo (1934:22) notes that there is nothing in the literature to indicate that the individual taking peyote seeks the granting of individual power; he therefore rejects Shonle's thesis by noting that "functionally, there is no similarity" between the traditional quest and the modern peyotism. Bernard Barber (1941:675) states that "the vision is an important element in the culture to which Peyote was assimilated, and, as such, exerted its influence, but that this cannot explain the particular occasion of the widespread diffusion of peyote."

LaBarre (1938:96) seems to take Shonle's side when he notes that ". . . suffering is counted even a positive virtue among people who had the 'vision quest' in the old days. A crippled Indian at Miami told me that 'to get power from peyote man must suffer to it.'" LaBarre notes elsewhere that during the Caddo peyote services there is no break for water, a real ordeal in a ceremony lasting from ten to twelve hours. Slotkin (1956:35) states that the peyote religion contains elements much like those in the vision quest of the Plains groups, but in an atmosphere of social interaction required for successful personal adjustment. Mac-

Gregor offers the same opinion about the acceptance of peyotism by the Sioux (1946:100).

Another, related, reason offered for the rapid diffusion of peyote is that it contained elements in addition to the vision quest pattern which the Plains tribes would find familiar and would therefore more readily accept. Slotkin (1956:33), for example, states that "the ritual paraphernalia used in the Peyote rite are similar in form, techniques of manufacture, and decoration, to older Plains artifacts." Stewart (1941: 307), in a brief communication regarding Opler's study of Ute peyotism, again places himself outside the circle of majority opinion; his statement has some important points, and is worth quoting at length:

Another point that will bear further attention is Opler's conclusion based on the similarities between the aboriginal ceremonials and the peyote ceremony. He interprets peyotism at Towaoc 'as a type of revivalistic movement . . . which crystallizes a number of ancient Ute conceptions and welds them together into a societal organization.' My informants said the peyote cult was introduced from the outside (Opler says from the northern Ute), and they make repeated pilgrimages to Utah and Oklahoma to receive instruction and inspiration for keeping the ritual and theology correct and to obtain peyote. They never talked of peyotism as a rebirth and a reworking of ancient ceremonies. Inasmuch as all observable features of Southern Ute peyotism were present in the cult among those from whom the Southern Ute received it, there is some hazard in assuming that certain practices or attitudes were 'easily transferred' from a native ceremony. Nor is it safe to stress only similarities that might exist between the introduced and the indigenous ceremonies and to assume that those similarities facilitated the acceptance of the new ritual.

His final sentence, I feel, is a valid caution to those who would carry the "cultural similarities" notion to the extreme.

4. *Proselytization and Profit:* This factor has been emphasized by Stewart in his study of Washo and Northern Paiute peyotism (1944), and noted by others. A specific will be given later, but here we note that it involved the travel of individuals from one tribe to another for the purpose of spreading the peyote religion (or a variant of it). Some of these "missionaries" charged a fee for their services. Stewart asks (1944:94), "What is, then, the reason for diffusion [of peyotism]? In the case of the Washo-Paiute, the individual, at times with economic motives, looms as a determining element." With regard to the importance of this factor, LaBarre (1946:635) has stated: ". . . Why confine attention to the motives of the proselytizers? Why not extend the

franchise of being psychologically motivated equally to the new cult's adherents and opponents too? The nature and current status of the culture, and the individual's relationship to it, may then not seem so unimportant." Without assigning a deterministic importance to this factor, we note that the individual missionaries *have* had a significant role in the diffusion of peyotism. This will become apparent in subsequent discussion.

5. *Pre-Peyote Mescal (Red Bean) Cult*: The efficacy of this factor is still being determined, largely through the efforts of Howard (e.g. 1957). He feels that there is some evidence to indicate that the mescal rite preceded the peyote rite into the Plains area, creating channels of communication *and* ritual precedents which the peyote later followed. LaBarre (1957:710) states that the theory of a pre-peyote mescal rite which contained many of the features of Plains peyotism, spreading from south to north, "is an excellent one." The theory is made more attractive by the fact that mescal beans have been found in association with archaeological materials of a Basketmaker horizon in the Southwest (ibid.:711).

6. *A Limiting Factor—the Nature of the Pre-peyote Religious System*: LaBarre (1938:40) notes that in the diffusion of peyote those groups which already had a complex religious system (e.g. the Pueblo) were massively resistant to its penetration. "On the other hand, peyotism entered the shamanistic Southwest (the Mescalero) and one Pueblo, Taos, where the kachina cult was weak, and once it reached the individualistic vision-valuing Plains, it fairly ran riot." The factor is an interesting one, and could pose some interesting problems in an analysis of the persistence of the peyote ritual along with the complex Dream Dance, or Drum Religion among the Kansas Potawatomi.

7. *A Limiting Factor—Cultural Conservatism*: A well-known characteristic of 20th Century Indian reservation communities is the existence of a conservative element within their structure. LaBarre (1938:112) states that among the Kiowa the peyote religion was resisted by the leaders of an older, rival religious group, the Ten Medicine Bundles. Radin (1920:431) notes the following condition on the Nebraska Winnebago reservation:

The drift toward the peyote cult about this time, 1907, was very great in Nebraska and the conservatives were frightened at the inroads the new faith was making even among the members of their most conservative and popular ceremony, the Medicine Dance. Every newcomer was immediately warned against the degrading effects of eating the peyote. The peyote people, on

the contrary, carried on no open campaign but resorted to the far more insidious and effective method of winning new people to their cult by treating them with kindness and consideration.

The same alarm on the part of the conservatives was apparently present on the Kansas Kickapoo reservation at the time peyote was starting to make inroads; LaBarre (1938:116) quotes the following appeal (sic.):

'We the undersigned members of the Kickapoo Tribe of Indians in Kansas most earnestly petition you [who?] to help us keep out of the pellote, or mescal, from our people. We realize that it is bad for us Indians to indulge in that stuff. It makes them indolent, keeps them from working on their farms, and taking care of their stock. It makes men and women neglect their families. We think it will be a great calamity for our people to begin to use the stuff. . . . We must urgently petition you that immediate action must be taken before the stuff gets hold of our people.'

LaBarre's diffusion chart (figure 1) traces the main lines of dissemination as determined at the time of his 1938 study. I have found no additional evidence in more recent sources which calls for its substantial alteration; but Landes' Potawatomi informants told her that peyotism arrived on the Kansas Potawatomi Reservation in about 1910 (Landes, 1963:594).

The time has passed in American anthropology when studies of diffusion dominate research efforts. The somewhat lengthy treatment of the subject in this section reflects to some extent the proportion of the earlier works devoted to it. But LaBarre (1960) and others are still apparently concerned with diffusion, if not its exact routes, at least the causal factors involved. And what of these causal factors? We agree with Spindler (in LaBarre, 1960:57) when he states, with reference to the Menomini,

Menomini peyotism started with an historical accident, got underway because a few individuals were in a ready state, and finally became firmly established not from any single cause but from a combination of factors. One of these factors, for example, was a contemporary change in traditional culture which relates closely to psychology: persons possessing powers to combat witchcraft were dying out, such that other persons who were in fear of sorcery turned instead to the peyote cult for protection.

In other words, the importance of each of these factors (and some others) has been demonstrated by one or more authors, and in making generalizations we may note the importance of *all* of them. It is, however, necessary to keep in mind that the diffusion of peyotism from this

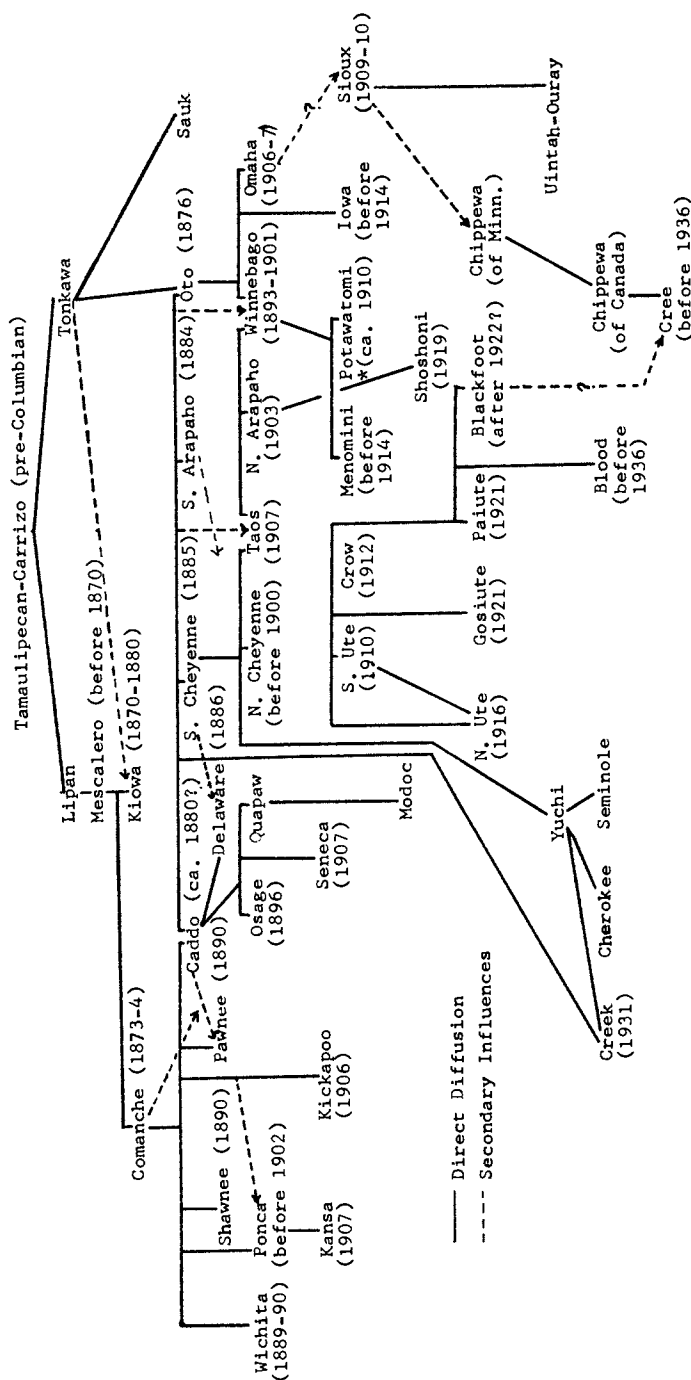


Figure 1. The diffusion of Peyote, based on a table in La Barre (1938:122). * The year of arrival of peyotism on the Kansas Potawatomi Reservation according to Landes' informants (Landes, 1963:594). La Barre's dates for this group were 1908-14.

tribe to that is greatly affected by factors which may be unique in a given situation. Obviously, to use the Navaho as an example, the "universality" of the vision quest theory has limitations. The point is simply that all factors are not of equal relevance in explaining the individual cases of diffusion of peyotism. Arguments between scholars in professional journals over the *primacy* of this or that factor demand a cultural context for support—an example which fits their level of generalization. To determine general factors operative in peyote diffusion, *and* to assign them a relative position of cross-cultural importance, requires much more than the example of one or two Basin *or* Plains groups for support.

To summarize, and at the same time to present a prelude to subsequent discussion, we conclude this section with a statement by LaBarre (1938:77):

If a generalization might be made about the influence of the three tribes most important in the diffusion of Plains peyotism—the Kiowa, the Comanche and the Caddo (who because of their southerly position first received the new religion—we might call the Kiowa the original standardizers and teachers, who have departed only in the most minute ways from earlier forms; the Comanche the proselytizers and missionaries of the new religion; and Caddo the innovators.

IV. Plains Peyotism and its Variants

In this section we will discuss: 1) material culture, 2) leadership roles, 3) music, 4) origin myths, 5) doctrine and ethics, 6) the ritual, and 7) some ritual variants in Plains "type" peyotism.

Material Culture

1. *The tipi*: Most Plains-type peyote meetings have been held in tipis since the time of the transitional Mescalero rites. Occasionally, when a sick person is unable to move to a tipi, a curing ceremony is held in a house. Among the Osage, Quapaw, Omaha, Northern Winnebago, and some Basin groups permanent "churches" have been constructed; and the Taos hold meetings in a member's house during inclement weather (LaBarre, 1938:61). Thus the tipi as a ceremonial shelter is common, but not "ritually required." The Pawnee paint the tipi as they did during the Ghost Dance movement (*ibid.*). The poles of the tipi have some significance and require ritual attention: the 12 tipi poles among the Arapaho-Winnebago symbolize "the Earth" (*ibid.*); Spindler (in LaBarre, 1960:49) states that the poles of the Menomini tipi represent "Jesus and his disciples." Among the Comanche, MacAllester (1949:19) found that "neither the tipi cover nor the poles are allowed to lie on the ground. When not in use, the latter are stacked on a

special rack." When erected for a meeting the tipi door faces the east, toward the rising sun.

2. *The Crescent Altar:* The crescent-shaped or "moon" altar is another trait found in transitional peyote ceremonies which has carried over into the Plains rite. When a splinter group forms within the Plains-type peyotism, variation in the form of the altar is usually chosen as the manifestation of the schism by the innovators. LaBarre (1938:74) states:

Peyote altars range in complexity from the simple war-shield of a Comanche war-party leader on which the peyote was laid, to the elaborate permanent symbolic concrete altars in the Big Moon round-house churches. All the Plains variants are built on the standard crescent altar, grooved from tip to tip by the 'peyote road' which devotees must follow to a knowledge of peyote. Interpretations of the moon symbolism are almost as numerous as individual users; for, given the physiological effects of peyote and the acceptance in Plains culture of the individual vision 'authority,' standardized meetings are not to be expected.

Some illustrations of altar variations are included (see figures 2 and 3). LaBarre has mentioned some of the characteristics of the altar, but a few comments should be added. At the middle of the crescent a peyote button is commonly placed in a flattened area of the 'peyote road.'" The altar, if made of earth or sand, is commonly constructed by the fireman, and sand altars are destroyed following the meetings.

Symbolic interpretations of the crescent altar vary considerably. LaBarre (1938:45) notes that in the Kiowa ritual the peyote road "symbolizes man's path from birth (southern tip) to the crest of maturity and knowledge (at the place of the peyote) and thence downward again to the ground through old age to death (northern tip)." The crescent mound represents the "mountain range of the origin story where . . . 'Peyote Woman' first discovered the plant." (We will describe one of these origin myths later.) In other ceremonies, often called the "Big Moon" variant of the type rite, the crescent is representative of the hair of Jesus, or of his crown of thorns (Petrullo, 1934:107). When considered with two piles of ashes near the fire and the heart designs, the altar represents the head of Jesus (ashes being the eyes) or his body (ashes representing lungs, stacked wood on the fire representing ribs). Some adherents feel that the altar, ashes, and fire represent the head of John Wilson, innovator of the "Big Moon" altar and ceremony; we will mention his activities later. Petrullo (1934:95 ff.) has described these and other variations among the Delaware; the diagrams included in this report give some notion of the many varieties of altar designs. We note

in passing that when referring to variants of peyote ritual, the Plains Indians refer to the altar, or moon, of each as its identifying label (e.g. "Big Moon," "Enoch Moon," etc. among the Delaware).

3. *Ritual Fire and Ashes:* Except when conducted in a house, a ritual fire is an integral part of the altar complex in any Plains-type ceremony. The wood used varies according to local supply, but generally the kinds of wood which do not sputter or throw sparks, and which leave ashes of a fairly regular composition, are preferred. The Potawatomi use Red Elm. Building of the fire and its maintenance is the responsibility of the fireman. The number of pieces used varies, but invariably each piece of wood is laid across the tip of the one below it

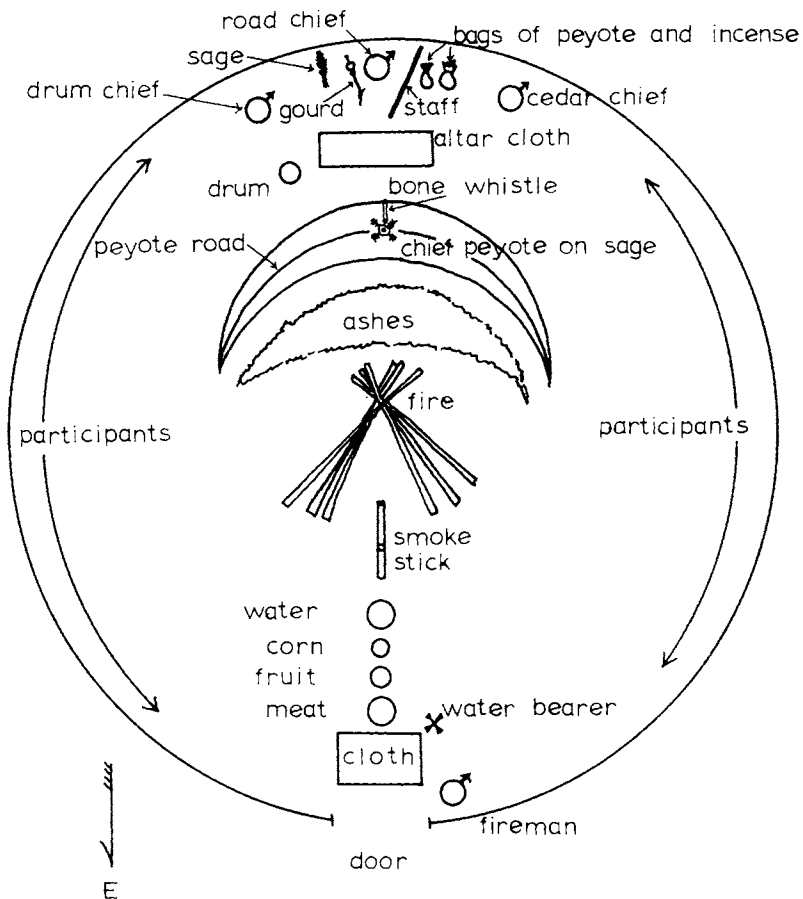


Figure 2. Location of officers, altar form, and paraphernalia in a typical Plains-type peyote meeting. Based on La Barre (1938:44).

so as to form a right angle, the vertex of which is pointed toward the center of the crescent. The net effect resembles the corner of an old stacked-log fence when completed. The fire is kindled at the vertex. LaBarre (1938:77) notes that "the Shawnee say the first four sticks represent tipi poles. The ritual number of peyotism, seven, appears in the number of sticks prescribed for the Northern Cheyenne and Taos." The Caddo use twelve sticks which represent the ribs of Jesus.

The ashes of the fire are characteristically spread into the shape of another, smaller crescent within the larger altar crescent. Variations occur among the Delaware in which the ashes are separated into two piles representing the eyes or lungs of Jesus. Also, the ashes may be artistically shaped into the design of a bird in flight. In the Potawatomi

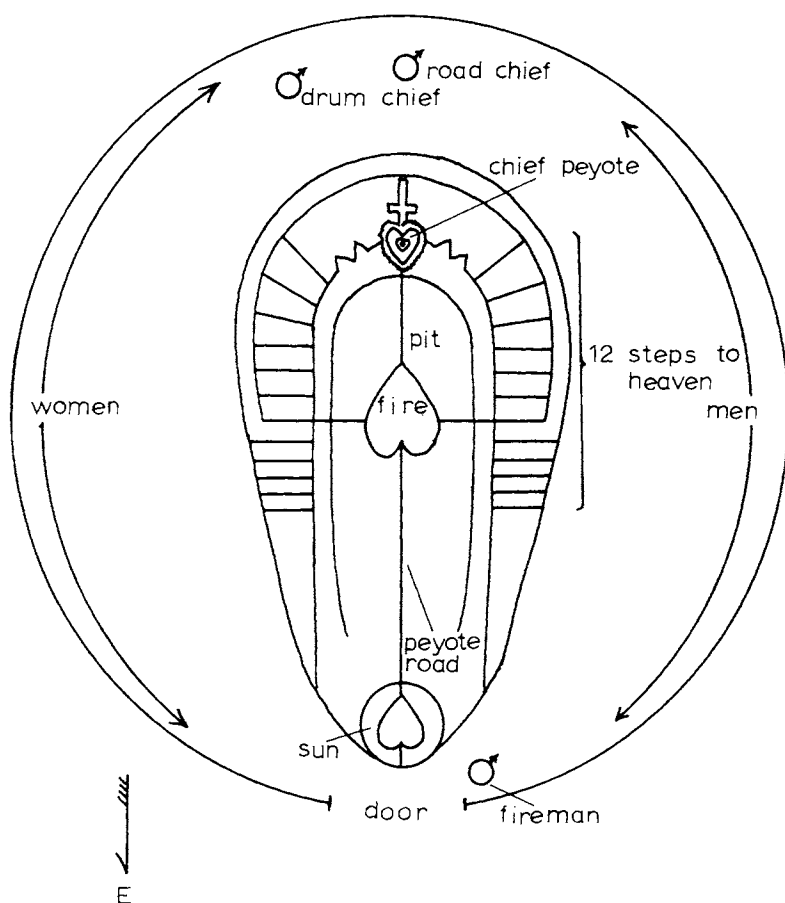


Figure 3. A "Big Moon" variant altar form. Based on Petrullo (1934:Plate 3).

ceremony I attended this was done very skillfully by the fireman. LaBarre (1938:78) notes that the ash crescent remains "nearly universal in the Plains."

Among the Delaware variants, the fire is sometimes referred to as the "dripping blood" of Jesus (Petrullo, 1934:106). The fires are often kindled with flint and steel (*ibid.*:101). In the Potawatomi ceremony, the tipi fire was lighted with live coals from a cook fire which had earlier been kindled with flint and steel by the leader. During the ceremony, the leader said (in effect), "I knew this ceremony was going to go O.K., because I only needed to strike that flint and steel once to get the fire going."

4. *The Fire Stick or Cigarette Lighter*: A piece of wood is commonly placed near the fire, in line with the vertex of the stacked wood and the center of the altar; it is placed close enough to the fire to keep its tip glowing for use as a lighter of the ritual cigarettes smoked during the ceremony. La Barre (1938:77) notes that the fire sticks used by the Shawnee and the Kickapoo are elaborately carved, as is the one often used in Potawatomi ceremonies. The Caddo refer to the fire stick as the "heart" of Jesus, in keeping with the altar configuration of ribs, lungs, and crown of thorns. The fire stick of the Potawatomi bears a bas-relief carving of the head of Jesus and a water-bird motif. During the Potawatomi ceremony the participants were not allowed to step *over* the fire stick—it had to be moved to the side by the fireman before persons could pass.

5. *Water Drum*: LaBarre (1938:66) notes that the water drum, or kettle drum, probably came from Mexico (although the water drum is used in Central Algonkian rites of some antiquity). It has already been mentioned that the Huichol did not use a drum in their ceremonies. The early transitional rites of the Lipan included the use of a bow "struck with a stick in place of the later one-sided tambourine drum" (*ibid.*). The drum used in the Plains rite is usually a cast-iron kettle about 10 or 12 inches in diameter at the rim. The kettle is filled with one or two inches of water, into which live coals may be dropped. A piece of tanned buckskin is placed over the top and stretched with an elaborate lashing, using seven small stones placed under the buckskin on the sides of the kettle as lugs. When completed, the lashing criss-crosses on the bottom of the kettle in the shape of a star. The Potawatomi refer to it as "the drum without a knot," because the head is lashed to the kettle without tying a knot. The lashing material employed by them is thin clothesline rope. The drumstick may be embellished with a tassel on

the butt end; the Potawatomi sample is plain, and about 12 inches long.

During the ceremony the kettle is frequently tipped by the drummers to moisten the head. Occasionally an individual may blow on the rim of the kettle to force more water into the drum head; he often controls the tone by pressing on the head with the thumb of the hand holding the drum. LaBarre (1938:8) reports that the Caddo do not allow blowing on the drum head, and the Ponca do not allow the tone of the drum to be regulated by the thumb: "'peyote makes the sound, not the hand.'" MacAllester (1949:26) notes that the drum head among the Comanche is usually made of canvas or rubber from a tire inner-tube, although I fail to see how these impermeable substances could be as effective in producing a resonant tone as the more common buckskin head.

LaBarre (1938:45) reports that the Kiowa drum represents the thunder, the water in the kettle the rain, and the live coals the lightning. The seven stones used as anchor points represent the seven days of the week (or the ritual number seven), and the star-shape of the lashings on the bottom of the drum represents the morning star.

6. *Gourd Rattles*: The rattle is employed by the singer during the ceremony. The gourd commonly used in the making of the rattles (*Lagenaria* spp.) is two or three inches in diameter, with a constriction at the neck. Among the Potawatomi the gourds are gathered, cleaned out, boiled, and then rubbed with one of several vegetable dyes, usually walnut. The tip of the handle protrudes through the gourd and commonly is decorated with a short horsehair tassel. The handle itself is usually decorated with beadwork. The gourd may be incised with designs or quotations from the Scriptures.

7. *Staff*: A wooden staff has apparently been a part of the ceremonial paraphernalia since the early stages of development of Plains peyotism. Its importance in the Mescalero rite has already been mentioned. It is usually a component of the leader's ceremonial paraphernalia in the Plains rite. It is passed around the circle of participants and held at arm's length by the singers, with its tip resting on the ground. It is about three feet long.

LaBarre (1938:67) reports that, as with the altar forms, "differences in the staff have even come to symbolize a schism in the Winnebago church: that used by Rave was decorated, as elsewhere in the Plains, but Clay used a simple undecorated staff, lacking even feathers, calling attention to the fact that Moses' staff was undecorated."

A variety of meanings have been assigned to the staff (LaBarre, 1938:67):

The Delaware call the leader's staff 'arrow,' and so do the Osage, Quapaw, and Oto; the Ponca, on the other hand, call it a 'bow.' The Kiowa suggest that a bow was formerly used, but the term . . . means 'brace-to hold-stick.' . . . Reinterpretations of the meaning of the staff are common. A Wichita called it the 'staff of life.' The Iowa staff represents the staff of the Savior, while the Winnebago variously interpret as a shepherd's crook and the rod with which Moses smote the rock.

8. *Feathers:* Individual eagle feathers and feather fans are almost universal in the Plains rite. The fans are made of feathers from any one of several varieties of birds; among the Potawatomi pheasant-feather fans are numerous. It has been noted by Stewart (1961:38) that fans of young people are to be made of feathers of swift-flying birds; women's fans are characteristically made of dark feathers. Eagle feather fans are much desired by the men, but usually only the leaders have them. The quill-ends of the feathers are often beaded and joined together with buckskin.

Among the Kickapoo and Delaware the fans usually consist of 12 feathers; the Kickapoo state that these represent the 12 months of the year (LaBarre, 1938:70). A single eagle feather is used as a wand by the leader to sprinkle drops of water on the altar and paraphernalia. The Mescalero use of the eagle feathers has already been mentioned.

9. *Dress of the Participants:* Dress for males attending meetings usually consists of a sheet or blanket draped over the shoulders, with street clothes underneath. Women frequently wear a shawl over street clothing. Men may wear a "peyote necktie" made out of a strip of blanket and decorated with beadwork. Leaders in Kiowa ceremonies may wear an otter-skin hat; neckerchiefs and turbans are fairly common (LaBarre, 1938:62). In the Potawatomi ceremony two male participants wore red wool sashes. The leader draped a red and blue blanket over his shoulders at intervals in the ceremony.

10. *Eagle-bone Whistle:* A bone whistle made of the wing bone of an eagle is used to call for water and prayer during the ceremonies. It is usually about six inches long, and has only one pitch. It is placed close to, or upon, the altar; its exact position may vary according to individual leaders (LaBarre, 1938:45; Stewart, 1961:29).

11. *Spear-point:* A spear-point of flint is sometimes included in the ritual paraphernalia of the Kiowa-Comanche rites (LaBarre, 1960:

49). Although not common to Plains ritual, it is believed that the spear-point is used in blood-letting during doctoring services.

Ritual Flora

The most important of these, of course, is peyote. It is obtained from its native habitat by Oklahoma and Texas tribes through a "miniature quest" in which brief prayers are offered before the buttons are harvested (LaBarre, 1938:43). Tribes in areas more distant from peyote's natural habitat may request shipments through the mail, or may make long trips to procure a large supply. Occasionally peyotists from Oklahoma visiting tribes to the north will take a supply with them to give or sell. This happens quite frequently on the Kansas Potawatomi reservation, along with the ordering of shipments by mail. When I asked about the possible legal entanglements peyote mail-order houses might encounter, one of the Potawatomi peyote leaders showed me a printed card, which he said must accompany all requests for shipments to insure that the requesting party intends to use peyote for religious services. There is only one card available to him, and it is returned with the shipment of peyote. In 1960, LaBarre reports that peyote buttons sold for ten or eleven dollars per thousand in Texas (1960:47).

During the meeting peyote is commonly consumed in three forms: the entire button may be chewed (after the fuzz in the center is removed with the fingernail); buttons may be ground into a coarse powder; or they may be soaked in water to make tea. The minimum number of whole buttons consumed is four, but the upper limits of consumption are not definitely known. LaBarre (1938:64) reports that "several persons claim to have eaten 75 or more, but the average is nearer a third or fourth of this"—there is a tendency among many tribes to boast about the number of buttons consumed. The strength of peyote tea varies according to the peyote to water ratio used. LaBarre (*ibid.*:66) notes that on one occasion 24 buttons made 15 cups of tea; another time 30 buttons made only two quarts. The individual sponsoring the ceremony normally furnishes some of the peyote, and members frequently bring their own supply.

The talisman peyote, or "Father Peyote," or "Chief Peyote" placed on the altar is usually a large specimen, and may be handed down through a series of several leaders. When a Chief Peyote button is cut in its habitat a notch is normally made on it which serves to orient its position on the altar (LaBarre, 1938:47). Among the Winnebago it is common to place two peyote buttons on the altar, one "male" and one "female." The Lipan "sometimes put buttons in a circle around the fire pit, somewhat like the Comanche who placed them in the sage

crescent west of the fire [another altar variation]" (LaBarre, 1938:72). Among some groups it is customary to make a small cross of pollen on the Chief Peyote, or to decorate it with white paint (Stewart, 1961:29).

The symbolism involved in peyote is extremely variable. We may mention a few of the more common features here, using the statements of Slotkin (1956:44 ff.). First, Peyote is an incarnation of power of the type referred to in the literature as *mana*. By taking peyote the individual incorporates this power to cure, to discover the "right way," and so forth. Second, peyote is usually regarded as a member of a "syncretistic pantheon," i.e., it may be equated with Jesus or the Holy Ghost; and it is almost everywhere regarded as a holy sacrament, sometimes equated with the bread and wine of the Christians. LaBarre (1938:72) reports that the Shawnee regard peyote as a messenger between humans and God—a symbolic role more frequently assigned to birds in Plains peyotism.

The use of sage and incense in meetings is almost universal. It was used aboriginally in sweat houses, and seems to be an example of persistence in the Plains-type rite. Among the Taos Pueblos, according to Parsons (in LaBarre, 1938:79) sage is used as what may be termed "a deodorizer:" "'to keep the smell of it on us so we won't feel weak or dizzy.'" In the Potawatomi ceremony I was told that sage was being passed to "purify" members before they took peyote. Some groups sit on sage twigs or cedar boughs during meetings, and the Comanche "secondary" altar of sage was mentioned above.

The smoke produced by throwing cedar shavings or berries on the fire is also regarded as a purifier. Participants commonly go through the motions of capturing the smoke and rubbing it on their bodies, and in many ceremonies a person must be "incensed" each time he re-enters the tipi (Stewart, 1961:38).

Offices in Plains Peyotism

1. *Road Chief, or Leader:* The leader is the most important individual in the ceremony, for it is up to him to insure that the ritual sequence and other rules are followed. LaBarre (1938:63) quotes Kroeber's description of the Arapaho leader as being typical of the role played by the leader in other Plains groups:

"The leader of each ceremony is sole director of it. He may . . . base [his ceremony] partly on visions during previous ceremonies. In other cases, he follows ceremonies that he has participated in, changing or adding details to suit his personal ideas. No two ceremonies conducted by different individuals are therefore exactly alike; but the general course of all is quite similar." (From *The Arapaho*, p. 400).

Petrullo (1934) feels that the leader among the Delaware acts primarily as a figurehead, but this less influential role is not substantiated in the rest of the literature, and he himself notes the pervasive role of individuals like John Wilson.

Slotkin (1956:73) summarizes three ways in which an individual may become a leader: first, he may be selected because of his unusual knowledge of the ways of the religion; second, he may receive a vision which reveals to him an alternate way of conducting the ritual, and if his personality traits permit, his "new way" is accepted by the membership; or third, an individual may become a "student" of an influential leader, learning the leader's ways and thereby earning the right to perpetuate the particular ritual form. Slotkin states that this third method is the most common.

Often individual leaders, particularly the best known ones, are doctors also. Two peyote leaders on the Potawatomi reservation both have some renown as curers.

2. *The Fireman:* Next to the leader, the fireman is probably the busiest person in the ceremony. His role was integrated into the transitional rites and has continued to the present. The popularity of the fireman with the Potawatomi peyotists is to some extent determined by his artistry in manipulating the ashes of the altar. Normally in Plains ceremonies there is only one fireman, but LaBarre (1938:64) states that in the "Big Moon" ceremonies of the Quapaw there are three firemen, whose duties include the feather-fanning of all participants re-entering the tent. In addition, there is "'one good man'" at each arm of the altar-crucifix cross-piece. The fireman may call upon members of the congregation to help him out when he has too many duties to perform at one time, as was the case in the Potawatomi ceremony I attended; but the manipulation of the ashes was performed by the Potawatomi fireman only—he would not delegate this job to others.

3. *The Drummer-Assistant:* The drummer usually sits on the right of the leader during the ceremony and drums for him during his songs. He assembles the water drum for the rite. In some cases (e.g. the Caddo) the drummer drums for all the individual singers, but usually the drum is passed around the ring of male participants, each one drumming for the man on his left.

4. *The Cedar Man:* This individual is commonly seated to the left of the leader, and is responsible for throwing the cedar shavings on the ashes as incense. Among the Comanche, MacAllester (1949:25)

reports that the cedar man role may be given to the drummer-assistant as an "additional duty." There was no cedar man in the Potawatomi ceremony I attended.

5. *The Dawn Woman or Water Woman:* Among the Delaware, as among most other tribes, this office is regarded as "a great honor, and the woman who brings in the water is highly respected not only by those who worship Peyote, but all other persons are required and asked to hold the same respect for her" (Petrullo, 1934:58). She is charged with bringing water into the ceremony when called upon by the leader. Almost always she is a relative of the leader. To perform her functions she must not be menstruating, thus there is a tendency to choose women for this office who have passed the menopause (MacAllester, 1949:25). In some groups she need not sit through the entire ceremony, but may appear in the tipi for the first time when she brings in the water. In one Potawatomi peyotist group the elderly wife of the leader normally performed this function, but at the ceremony I attended the leader designated his middle-aged daughter as Dawn Woman. In her audible prayer she acknowledged the honor bestowed upon her, and expressed the hope that she could do "a good job." She sat immediately to the left of the leader during the meeting.

LaBarre (1938:64) feels that in the early stages of the Plains rite development there were only the leader, the drummer, and the fireman; the cedar man was apparently a later addition. The close association of the early rites with the masculine warfare pattern indicates that the Dawn Woman is probably also a relatively recent addition.

There is a tendency among the Algonkian peoples to equate the leader, drummer, and cedar man with the Father, Son and Holy Ghost respectively. LaBarre notes this among the Winnebago (1938:64, based on Radin's writings): "... the leader gives the drummer his staff even as God delegated authority to Jesus."

Barber (1941) wonders whether peyote leaders were composed of members of the pre-peyote elite. LaBarre (1960:51) states: "The answer would perhaps be negative for Taos and other fringe areas, but affirmative for the Plains, again indicating the significance of prior culture in the differential spread."

Music in Peyotism

MacAllester (1949) has collected evidence which indicates that the early peyote songs, far from being a hodge-podge of disassociated musical outpourings, had some definable sequence and tended to cluster around a series of themes. One of his informants told him (ibid.:32):

'It seems that in the old days the songs were sung in a sort of story system. Sometimes we call the first song the leading song, the others work with the first and complete the thought. It seems each song in itself brings out a thought and a different thought sort of makes that thought stronger.'

In most of the Plains rites an individual sings four songs and passes the paraphernalia to the man on his left. MacAllester states that in his survey of 73 Comanche song texts, a surprisingly high proportion of songs about the Dawn are included (29/73); another recurrent theme deals with animals (16/73), 7 of them referring to the Eagle. Some of the songs contain specific advice for action on the part of the officers (e.g. bringing in the water), and advice to the participants to "be alert" during the drowsy periods late in the ceremony. There are four "set" or standardized songs: the Opening Song, the Midnight Water Call, the Dawn Song, and the Quitting Song; these are sung in all peyote meetings. Songs are frequently learned in peyote visions, but more often are learned from other individuals.

In contrast to the (older?) song patterning noted above, MacAllester states that there is considerable variability in (recent?) songs because of a lack of "rules" regarding the text theme: almost any song may be used. He cites the case of one white anthropologist who, when asked to sing during a meeting, sang "Onward Christian Soldiers" with the apparent approbation of the rest of the participants (1949:83).

In attempting to trace the origin of the peyote song patterns, MacAllester (*ibid.*:85) states:

There seems to be a strong influence in the melodic structure from the usual Plains patterns and from the Ghost Dance. And in numerous features such as vocal style, tempo, introductory and concluding formulae, accompanying instruments of a certain kind, and the restriction of note values the influence seems to be from the Basin, from the southwest, or even west of the southwest.

He notes, however, that the evidence to support such a claim is inconclusive.

Petrullo (1934:153) notes some difference in song styles between the earlier and more recent songs in Delaware ceremonies:

The earlier songs, sung by the older men, are considerably more impressive . . . The song is begun in a high falsetto, and the same phrase is repeated over and over again, each time lowering the pitch of the voice until the singer is in a baritone. The effort is made to start as high as possible and to end as low as possible.

LaBarre (1938:13) states that among the Plains groups, especially the Kiowa, it is popularly believed that the "Peyote Woman" (see origin myth below) sings along with the singer if she is pleased with the song. A similar belief exists among the Shawnee, Kickapoo, Lipan, and Wichita.

Examples of the texts of peyote songs are provided by MacAllester; we excerpt this text of a Winnebago song originally recorded by Frances Densmore:

How do we know, how do we know Jesus?
 We think about him wherever we are.
 God said it in the beginning, 'Let there be light.'
 He meant it for you.

We may add that for the white listener untrained in the local language and the peyote musical style, the words seem largely unintelligible. Even songs with English texts undergo an accretion of extra syllables and "Indianized" pronunciation.

Peyote Origin Myths

We will only summarize one of the many myths concerning the origin of peyote and peyotism. In general they seem to cluster around two main themes: a lost warrior has fallen from fatigue, wounds, or exposure and is revived by peyote; or, a woman searches for a lost child, collapses, and is revived by peyote ("Peyote Woman"). Petrullo has offered some Delaware origin myths (1934:33 ff.), an example of which we will summarize here.

About 105 years ago the Comanche were at war with some Mexican Indians. The tide of battle turned against the Comanche, and they were forced to flee their camp. In the camp was a sick old woman who was unable to flee with the others. The people left her, along with a small boy to fetch and carry for her until both could be taken by the Mexican Indians; the Comanche knew the two would be cared for. During the night the boy ran away, trying to catch up with his people. The old woman awakened, missed him, and started on a trek to find him. She was soon overcome and fell to the ground in a faint. An unknown Indian appeared in front of her dressed in the garb of a chief. He told her not to fear for the little boy because he was safe; but he told the woman that unless she followed his instructions she would soon die. He told her to look for a herb in the spot where he was standing after he disappeared. He told her to eat it and as many others like it as she could find in the general area. By so doing, she would be instructed in the ways of the religion of the Great Spirit. He then disappeared and she awakened. She found the herb, ate it and as many others as

she could hold, and received thereby instruction from the Great Spirit in the ways of a new religion, including the form of the altar, the four set songs, and other ritual rules to be followed.

Note the fact that the Delaware myth concerns the Comanche as the recipients of the "new way." This seems to be a fairly common characteristic of peyote origin myths; i.e., recipient tribes do not seem overly anxious to glorify their own role in the origin and spread of peyotism.

The Peyote Religion: Doctrine and Ethics

Slotkin (1956:67) has noted that peyotism, like other religions, has doctrinal, ethical, and ritual components. The doctrinal and ethical aspects of the religion will be discussed first.

The *doctrine* of peyotism, according to Slotkin, "consists in a belief in the existence of power, spirits, and incarnations of power" (1956: 69). The "power" we have already discussed in terms of the anthropological concept of *mana*. Some of the spirits of the religion are those of Christianity: included are the Father, Son and Holy Ghost of the Christian Trinity, and angels. The Devil is only infrequently included in the pantheon, and the concept of Hell is not strongly developed "in spite of the fact that many tribes traditionally believed in a cosmic dualism and evil spirits" (ibid.). Indian spirits include the water bird or "water turkey" (*Anhinga anhinga*, sometimes equated with the Christian Dove), the spirit of the peyote, and other, local spirits which Slotkin terms "survivals."

The incarnations of power are all elements of the peyote ceremony. As noted above, *peyote* is the prime incarnation. *Water* is another: "Water is needed by all living things, and therefore all water is sacred;" and the *foods* ritually consumed during the ceremony are another: "They represent the important categories of foods man needs for life" (Slotkin, 1956:71).

The *ethics* of the religion are likewise closely tied to those of Christianity. The core of the ethical standards of the peyote religion is included in a set of principles collectively called "The Peyote Road" by Slotkin (1956:71). The principles are:

- (a) Brotherly love. Members should be honest, truthful, friendly, and helpful to one another. This is conceived as a spelling out of the Golden Rule (*Matthew*, 7.12; *Luke*, 6.31).
- (b) Care of family. Married people should not engage in extra-marital affairs, and should cherish and care for one another, and their children. Money should be spent on the family as a whole, rather than selfishly.

- (c) Self-reliance. Members should work steadily and reliably at their jobs, and earn their own living.
- (d) Avoidance of alcohol. There is a maxim, 'Peyote and alcohol don't mix.'

The way to ethical enlightenment is through peyote: it teaches the individual what he "should or should not become, either by ethical revelation in a vision, or by sensitizing his conscience. This is summed up in the maxim, 'Peyote enlightens your heart and mind'" (ibid.). As a religious ethic, Slotkin notes, the Peyote Road combines "traditional ritual ideals and lower class rural White mores" (ibid.:44). Peyote reveals its road to the individual and helps him to travel it; those who successfully follow it will go to Heaven, but the fate of those who do not remains unclear because, Slotkin notes, Hell is seldom mentioned (ibid.).

LaBarre (1938:96) notes that the road may have its rough spots: "Vomiting of peyote is a punishment for one's sins, but it cleanses the body of its impurities in the process and purifies the blood." This idea was repeated to me during a break in the Potawatomi peyote service I attended—vomiting "cleans you out, gets rid of all that sin inside you." Since I was most anxious to make a favorable impression my sins remained inside me—but with difficulty.

As mentioned earlier, Stewart feels that the Christian elements in the peyote religion are quite old; LaBarre (1946:633) feels, however, that "it is hard to see [these Christian elements] . . . as more than window-dressing for a proselytizing cult; considering some of the tribes' historical exposure to Christianity, it is surprising its influence is not greater." Spindler (1955:84) concurs with LaBarre on this point.

The Plains "Type" Ritual

The ritual here described is "essentially Kiowa," taken from LaBarre (1938) and Slotkin (1956), who took their descriptions in part from Mooney's "The Mescal Plant and Ceremony" (1896); and also from Stewart's description of Ute peyote rites (1961). The ritual sequence will be presented as a series of numbered events in their approximate chronological sequence.

1. The sponsor of the meeting invites the members to attend. He is usually prepared to bear the expense, but may ask for subsequent donations from the members.

2. All members bathe before going to the meeting. Kiowa peyotists may take a sweat bath.

3. The Road-Chief designated for the ceremony supervises the erection of the tipi and the construction of the crescent altar. Among

the Kiowa the womenfolk of the sponsor do the work of erecting the tipi. Among the Potawatomi the wood for the altar fire is laid into position by the Fireman after the altar is constructed, and he is usually present to help with other preparations. The drum is assembled just before the meeting that night.

4. Sometime after dark, members line up outside the tipi entrance. The Road Chief is first, then the Drummer, the Cedar Man, men, women, children, and last, the Fireman. The Chief delivers a short prayer.

5. The participants enter the tipi led by the Chief, walking to the left of the altar fire to their seats. The Chief sits on the west side, facing the door. The Drummer is on his right, Cedar Man on his left. The Fireman is seated on the north side of the entrance. Women may be seated behind the men, or may sit beside them.

6. The Chief removes his ritual paraphernalia from his "peyote box" (gourd rattle, leader's staff, eagle feather fan, sage sprigs, tobacco, corn-husk cigarette wrappings) and places it on an altar cloth. He passes a buckskin bag of cedar shavings to the Cedar Man. He then places the Chief Peyote on two crossed sprigs of sage in the center of the crescent, orienting it according to its incised notch, and leans the eagle-bone whistle on the altar immediately below the peyote (see figure 3).

7. The Chief begins the meeting by telling the participants the special reason for calling them together, or by offering a prayer. He then passes a pouch of tobacco and corn-husk wrappings to his left. The "makings" travel around the circle, each participant making his own cigarette for the ritual smoke.

8. The Fireman picks up the fire-stick and hands it to the person across the entrance to his left; or he may take it to the Leader first. After lighting his cigarette, each person takes four puffs, exhaling the smoke toward the altar and gesturing toward the Chief Peyote with the cigarette. The Fireman replaces the firestick when all cigarettes have been lighted.

9. While smoking, the Leader prays aloud. Among the Ute the other participants pray silently, but among the Potawatomi all pray audibly, with frequent gestures toward Chief Peyote with the cigarettes.

10. When all praying has ceased the Leader rises, moves clockwise around the altar, and places his cigarette butt at the altar's convex base. The other participants, beginning on the south side of the entrance, follow him in single file. In the Potawatomi ceremony the Fireman and

another member collected the cigarette butts and placed them at the tips of the crescent.

11. The Leader passes a sage bundle to the participants, beginning with the person on his left. Each person takes a bit of the sage, chews it, and spits into the palm of his hands; he rubs the palms together and then rubs his head, arms and legs. "This procedure is to add to the purification of the body started by the bath that preceded the meeting" (Stewart, 1961:35).

12. The peyote is then passed clockwise around the tipi starting with the Leader. If it is in button form, each person takes four buttons; if brewed as tea, each drinks one cup. The peyote is consumed as rapidly as possible. The button is chewed, spit into the hands, rolled into a ball, offered toward the Chief Peyote, then swallowed. "Everyone sits as still as possible until all have finished eating the medicine, because the partaking of the divine plant during meetings is a sacred procedure and supposed to be accompanied by a silent prayer" (ibid.:36).

13. When all have consumed the peyote the Leader ties sprigs of sage to the top of his staff while the Cedar Man sprinkles cedar shavings into the ashes. The Leader then passes his staff, fan, rattle, and bone whistle through the cedar smoke four times. The Drummer does the same with his drum. (This was omitted in the Potawatomi ceremony).

14. Then the Leader assumes a kneeling position, holding the rattle in one hand and the staff at arm's length in the other; and, accompanied by the drummer, sings four standardized "Opening Songs."

15. The Leader passes the staff and rattle to the drummer and takes the drum, being careful to see that when the staff passes the drum it goes between the drum and the altar.

The obsessive, involuntional quality of ritualism is nowhere better illustrated than in the minutiae of these rules for passing. We have particularized for the Kiowa the standard modes of passing paraphernalia, but even experienced 'peyote boys' are in need of instruction concerning the 'way' of an unfamiliar leader when they visit other tribes (LaBarre, 1938:79-80).

16. When the Drummer has finished his four songs, the drum and staff proceed clockwise around the tipi, the drum always preceding the staff. Each male participant sings four songs, then serves as drummer for the man on his left. The singing continues until about midnight.

17. At midnight, on the call of the Leader, the drum and staff are passed to him and his Drummer. Cedar is sprinkled on the ashes. The Fireman sweeps the cigarette butts into the fire and sweeps the altar area.

The Leader then sings the standardized "Midnight Water Call," and the Fireman exits. The Leader sings a second song, then blows four blasts on the eagle bone whistle. The Fireman enters with a pail of water, and kneels with it just inside the entrance. The Leader sings two more songs, then places his paraphernalia on the altar cloth immediately west of the Chief Peyote. The Cedar Man again sprinkles cedar on the fire, while the ritual cigarette makings are passed to the Fireman. The Fireman lights his cigarette and offers a prayer, after which the cigarette is passed to the Leader, then the Drummer, then the Cedar Man, each of whom offers a brief prayer. (Note that the path of the cigarette from the Fireman to the other officers forms a cross.) Then the Fireman splashes a little water on the ground in front of the fire, rises, and circles clockwise around the fire with the water. The first person offered water is the one seated immediately south of the tipi entrance, and the pail is passed clockwise around the circle of participants from there. All participants drink, occasionally spraying drops of water on their hands and rubbing it into their bodies. When the water gets to the Leader he dips an eagle feather into the bucket and sprinkles drops on the altar, the fire, and the Fireman. When the water returns to the Fireman he exits with it. When he returns the Leader leaves, the paraphernalia are taken up, and the singing resumes.

18. While outside the Leader prays and blows the eagle-bone whistle once to each of the cardinal directions.

'The four whistles at midnight by the leader outside the tipi are to notify all things in all directions that they were having a meeting there at the center of the cross . . . calling the great power to be with us while we're drinking so that it could hear our prayers and bless us (sic)' (LaBarre, 1938:51).

The Leader re-enters and "cleanses" himself with cedar smoke created by the Cedar Man.

19. The singing following the midnight water service is characteristically more intense and varied as the peyote begins to take its full effect. Members are also free to use feather fans and rattles of their own, which could not be done until now. The Leader's staff, however, is still the only one used.

20. The individual members may ask for the makings of a ritual cigarette in order to offer a prayer during the singing. Members may also use their own supplies of peyote, or ask the Leader to pass the supply provided by the sponsor. Following individual prayers the cedar shavings are thrown on the fire and the members go through the motions of capturing and absorbing some of the smoke into their bodies. No one may

pass between the fire and an individual eating peyote or smoking, and the drum and staff may not be passed to one who is eating or smoking. "Intense emotional display during these personal prayers is not uncommon, both men and women often weeping copiously" (Stewart, 1961: 40). We may also note here that the Caddo do not drink water at midnight, believing that this represents the hour of Christ's crucifixion by the white men (LaBarre, 1938:51).

21. During the early morning the Fireman replenishes the fire and arranges the ashes into various designs.

22. At dawn the Leader again calls for the paraphernalia and the Fireman sweeps the altar area. The Cedar Man sprinkles incense on the fire. The Leader sings the third standardized song, the "Dawn Water Call." He then blows four blasts on the whistle. The Dawn Woman comes into the tipi with the water pail and sits in the same position as the Fireman did at midnight. The Leader sings three more songs, then places the paraphernalia to the west of the altar. The Cedar Man sprinkles more incense on the fire and offers a prayer. The Dawn Woman draws the smoke over her and the water, and is passed the ritual cigarette makings. She smokes and prays, then the cigarette is passed to the Leader, the Drummer, and the Cedar Man. A bit of the water is splashed on the ground and the Dawn Woman passes the pail to the person on her left. When the water gets to him, the Leader again dips an Eagle feather into the water and sprinkles the altar, paraphernalia, and the Dawn Woman. When the water pail returns to the Dawn Woman she rises, makes a clockwise circuit of the fire, and exits.

23. "Doctoring is best done at this time; the Leader may do this, or he may ask an older man to fan the patient with consecrated feathers from the altar cloth" (LaBarre, 1938:52). LaBarre (*ibid.*) then describes a Kiowa doctoring process:

. . . Belo [the doctor] chewed four peyote and gave them to Ernest [the patient, suffering from tuberculosis], fanning him with feathers and cedar incense; then he made a cross in front of the patient with a glowing coal, and putting it in his mouth, blew all over the face and chest of the sick young man, who unbuttoned his shirt for the purpose. Next Belo fanned or batted him with his feathers, the patient holding up his palms to absorb the medicine virtue. Finally he took a mouthful of water and blew it on Ernest's head, praying and beseeching in the name of Jesus Christ for him to get well. Peyote gave Belo the power to doctor thus and not be burned by the coal.

The nature of the doctoring ritual varies, of course, according to the condition of the patient and the curing practices of the doctor.

24. The Dawn Woman re-enters the tipi with ritual food soon after she leaves with the water (if there has been no doctoring service). Each type of food is in an individual container, and is placed in line with the fire and Chief Peyote on the entrance-side of the fire. The order of food in the line is invariable: the water is placed closest to the fire, followed by parched corn, fruit, and meat.

25. When the food is in place the Leader sings three songs, then the fourth of the standard songs, the "Closing Song." The individual participants put away their own paraphernalia, and the Leader places his on the ground west of the altar. He then offers a long prayer.

26. The Leader begins to put away his equipment while the Drummer disassembles the drum. The drum is commonly passed around the tipi after the head is removed, each participant drinking a bit of water from it. (In the Potawatomi ceremony only the Drummer drank a swallow of the drum water, and poured the remainder along the "Peyote Road" of the altar after the Chief Peyote had been removed.) The Leader meanwhile carefully replaces his equipment in its box. The drum and the Leader's peyote box are then removed by the Fireman, who makes a clockwise circuit of the altar when he returns.

27. The Leader designates someone to offer a prayer.

28. The food is then passed clockwise by the Fireman, beginning with the water and following the order of the food line. When all have eaten, the food containers are arranged in the reverse order (with the water closest to the door). The Fireman then exits with the containers, followed by the Leader, the Drummer, the Cedar Man, and the participants.

29. The women go to help with the preparation of the noon meal while the men recline in the immediate area and talk of their experiences during the ceremony, among other things, for the remainder of the morning.

30. All partake of the noon meal.

Petrullo (1934:147) has noted a common theme among peyote rites: the striving for "purity:"

This means that the paraphernalia used are to be free of all European traits, and must approximate as closely as possible the ancient 'natural' objects. The shrine is made of the natural earth, the drum is the natural water drum of tradition, the fans are wings of the eagle, itself a pure bird, or of the turkey; the meeting should be held in the tipi, not a frame house; the fire should be started with flint and steel, or better with the fire drill; the worshippers must sit on the ground strewn with sage grass; the cigarettes . . . must be made in the meeting, using corn

husk instead of paper for the covering; only water may be drunk; and the food eaten in the morning must be pure, such as hominy, beef replacing buffalo, candy, but no salt must be used, and the midday dinner must likewise be pure.

In the next section we will see how this purity concept has been revised in the various ceremonial deviations.

Before discussing the variations, however, it is well to quote LaBarre (1938:43) regarding the relative persistence of the Plains-type ritual just described: "Aside from the John Wilson, John Rave, and Church of the First-born variants, the basic Plains ceremony is remarkably homogeneous in various tribes."

Some Variations on the Plains Ritual Theme.

From time to time in the report thus far we have had opportunity to mention variations in Plains peyote rituals. Now we will summarize some of the major variations by presenting them in terms of the individual largely responsible for their introduction.

John Wilson: One of the most pervasive variations in Plains peyotism was introduced by John "Moon-head" Wilson. He was a Delaware-Caddo who had been involved with the Ghost Dance of 1890 (LaBarre, 1938:151). He often went into trances, during which he "saw" the cures for various illnesses, and gained quite a reputation as a doctor. Following the break-down of the Ghost Dance he became acquainted with peyote and went into seclusion in an uninhabited section of Oklahoma to eat "the medicine" and ponder the significance of his visions. While under the influence of peyote he received the design for an altar which was different from the Kiowa type. His moon altar was much larger, and contained more Christian elements than that of the Kiowa. His early altars were made of sand and he held meetings in a tipi; but later in his career he changed to cement altars and conducted ceremonies in a house, usually with an entrance on the west instead of the east (Petrullo, 1934:69). In ceremonies of the Wilson "type" 1) a drum made from a crock jar is substituted for the cast-iron kettle drum; 2) only the leader can make the initial prayer-smoke, and all subsequent ritual cigarettes can be smoked in only one of four places: the leader's place; at the north or south ends of the cross; and the fireman's place; 3) the leader takes the first puff on all ritual cigarettes; 4) each individual re-entering the house must be fanned and "incensed" by one of three firemen; 5) in some "Big Moon" ceremonies the drummer carries the drum around to each singer instead of passing it to his left; 6) "Big Moon" ceremonies last until noon; 7) an

emphasis is placed on Christian elements in the ritual (e.g. a crucifix on the altar beside the Chief Peyote); and 8) an oil lamp is kept lit in the ceremonial shelter "so that there will be light as God commanded . . ." (Petrullo, 1934:148). LaBarre notes that the Wilson rite and its derivatives were influenced primarily by Catholicism (e.g. the heart motifs and the crucifix on the altar).

After establishing his "Big Moon" rite among the Delaware, Wilson began a proselytizing journey which took him to the Osage (LaBarre states they were his most important converts), Seneca, Quapaw, and Caddo (LaBarre, 1938:70, 151). He customarily charged a fee for conducting a service, and "in connection with Peyote meetings, Wilson ran a sweat-lodge before the meeting for anyone who was sick. He charged a fee for this also" (Petrullo, 1934:44). With the emphasis on Christian elements in the "Big Moon" rite and his "non-religious" capitalistic tendencies, Wilson soon encountered conservative opposition to his variant. Among the "Counter-revolutionaries" was an individual named Elk-hair, who advocated a return to the traditional Kiowa altar and ritual and a de-emphasis of the Christian element in the Wilson rite. Elk-hair's ritual became known as the "Little Moon" among the Delaware (Petrullo, 1934:30).

Jonathan "Jack" Koshiway: Koshiway was a Sauk-and-Fox Indian who had had considerable contact with white Protestantism, particularly that of the Mormons. He felt that there were definite parallels between peyotism and Christianity, and embarked on an effort to integrate the two (LaBarre, 1938:166). After adopting some of the ideology of the Russellite sect (Jehovah's Witnesses) into his own projected plans, he incorporated the "First-born Church of Christ" on December 8, 1914 in Red Rock, Oklahoma. The charter bore 410 signatures in addition to his own (ibid.). The primary changes the Koshiway variant wrought on the basic Kiowa rite were: 1) like Wilson, an increased emphasis on Christian elements; and 2) included in this emphasis, the Mormon and Russellite doctrine of prohibition of smoking. This meant that the entire ritual smoking segment was eliminated from the First-born Church of Christ (LaBarre, 1938:166). Koshiway became in effect a preacher, performing marriages, funerals, and occasionally doctoring the sick. The Bible was made a conspicuous element in the ritual (ibid.).

Koshiway met with a group of other prominent peyotists in Cheyenne, Oklahoma in 1918, to decide upon defensive measures to be used in meeting a growing white sentiment against the use of peyote. He showed the others his First-born Church of Christ charter, offering it as possible means of defense. The other members of the group apparently

liked his idea of incorporation but felt that the title of his organization bore too close a resemblance to a "white man's church." They chose instead the name of "The Native American Church" and proceeded with the incorporation. Interestingly, Koshiway re-instituted the ritual smoking of cigarettes in his church following this meeting (LaBarre, 1938:169); it is also believed that James Mooney, the anthropologist who first documented the Kiowa ritual, was at this meeting and urged the group to incorporate.

During its popularity as a variant of the Plains ritual, the First-born Church influenced the Oto primarily, from whence it spread through other "missionaries" to the Omaha, Iowa, and Winnebago (LaBarre, 1938:162). A branch of the First-born church was still functioning in 1955 (Slotkin, 1956:62).

John Rave: Rave was a Nebraska Winnebago who used peyote for the first time in Oklahoma (Shonle, 1925:68). While there, he came under the influence of both the Koshiway and the Wilson rites through his contact with the Oto and Quapaw (LaBarre, 1938:165). When he returned to the Winnebago he introduced the peyote to his family members first, then gradually to other members of the tribe. Whether or not he brought back the distinctly Christian flavor of the Oklahoma variants with him is in dispute: Shonle (1925:68) says he did not; LaBarre (1938:165) feels he did. At any rate, the "Rave rite" as it has come to be known among the Winnebago contains a heavy emphasis on Christian ritual elements; e.g. the Chief Peyote is placed on an open Bible, and passages from the Bible are read during the ceremony (LaBarre, 1938:73). His movement subsequently influenced the Fox, Menomini, Ojibwa, and Dakota (Radin, 1920:437).

Jesse Clay: Clay was also a Nebraska Winnebago. His rituals were held in the "old way," i.e. without the emphasis on white man's religion; but his rites did not include the ritual smoking (LaBarre, 1938:78). He used a plain staff rather than a decorated one like Rave's, and the schism which this simple variation symbolized has already been mentioned. According to Densmore (1941:80), members of the Clay group are not affiliated with the Native American Church. LaBarre (1938:166) notes that the Rave group is losing followers to the Clay group, "and there are frequent expostulations against the mixing of the native religion with the White." This statement may be somewhat out-dated in view of the apparent popularity of the Native American Church at present; but it does indicate the general lines along which other schisms in peyote groups may be divided.

The recent trend appears to be toward the stabilization of the Kiowa rite as a basis for rituals, with a more-or-less standardized amount of identification with Christianity. This has been fostered in part, I feel, by the increased amount of communication among the members of the Native American Church, along with the more obvious fact that in being called a *church* most peyote groups have acknowledged the integration, however superficial, of traditional with Christian elements. Quoting Slotkin (1956:72):

There are intertribal and intratribal variants of the Peyote rite, but from the point of view of the Native American Church of the United States these are inconsequential. As Allen Dale (Omaha) once said, 'All fireplaces i.e. altar variants are man made.' The different 'fireplaces' are the equivalent of White Protestant denominations. But one point all Peyotists agree on and emphasize: irrespective of variants, the Peyote rite is an Indian form of worship.

V. Development of the Native American Church

In his 1956 work, Slotkin states that the Native American Church was originally chartered as a political defense against the attempted eradication of peyotism by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (1956:57). We noted above that the organization was founded as a result of a meeting held in 1918 in Oklahoma; but earlier political defenses of this kind had been erected by some Indian groups. The First-born Church of Christ is an example, and Slotkin notes that "by 1906 there existed a loose intertribal Peyotist association, spread from Oklahoma in the south to Nebraska in the north, called the 'Mescal Bean Eaters'" (1956:57). In 1909 the "Mescal Bean Eaters" changed its name to the "Union Church," in what Slotkin feels to have been an effort to deflect the white attention which the more esoteric name would surely attract.

Articles of incorporation were filed in Oklahoma on October 10, 1918 for a "religious and benevolent association" known as the Native American Church, but this action did not halt the growing pressure to eliminate peyotism. In response to increasing opposition the leaders of the Native American Church felt it advisable to form a national corporation, and in 1934 the articles of incorporation were amended to include out-of-state branches. More positive steps in this direction were taken in 1944, when the articles were amended to show that the organization was national in scope, and the title then became "The Native American Church of the United States." The first national conference was held in 1945.

Then, in 1946 the factional nemesis appeared in the church organization. Slotkin (1956:62) reports:

At the end of 1946 a split arose in Oklahoma between the proponents of the national organization and those interested solely in state matters. The state group obtained the 1918 charter, which they amended in 1949 back to the original name of 'Native American Church.' . . . The national group changed to 'The Native American Church of North America' in 1955.

Stewart (1961:11) notes that "parallel peyotist organizations were incorporated in many states, but recognized their unity with the Native American Church of Oklahoma or of North America. . . . The Native American Church of Canada was incorporated in Saskatchewan, November 3, 1954, and is the most recent addition of which I have knowledge."

The national organization holds yearly meetings to plan political strategy, elect officers, and renew acquaintances. Its membership in 1960 totalled 225,000 (Stewart, 1961:21). The Oklahoma branch has not cut itself off from contact with the larger organization, and the two have recently combined forces in an attempt to defeat threatening anti-peyote legislation presently in Congressional committee.

VI. White Resistance and Further Indian Reaction

Beginning about the year 1915, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, cooperating with various missionary groups, exerted itself to procure the suppression of peyote. These exertions resulted in the enactment of various prohibitive laws by states, and in the inclusion by Congress, in the Interior Department Appropriation bill, of language which, in effect, authorized suppressive action by the Bureau of Indian Affairs against peyote. (Charles West, Acting Secretary of Interior, in a letter to the Chairman, Committee on Indian Affairs, U. S. Senate, 18 May 1937).

The statement above is a shorthand history of the attempt by elements of white American culture to eradicate the use of peyote among the Indians. We note parenthetically that some of the Indians themselves were anxious to halt its usage (e.g. the Kickapoo appeal quoted earlier).

Slotkin (1956:50) states that justification used by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in its moves to block peyote usage was that peyotism was a rapidly-spreading nativistic movement which "obviously reinforced traditional culture or offered strong competition to White Christianity," and was therefore slowing the pace of Indian de-culturation. The alarm at the growth of peyotism had apparently been spread by the white missionaries with whom it was in direct competition (Stewart, 1961:7). The first anti-peyote law was passed in Oklahoma in 1899, but it was repealed in 1908. Not until 1918 was a massive effort launched to have the use of peyote made a federal offense. A bill to this effect was proposed then by Senator W. H. Thompson of Kansas and Represent-

ative H. G. Gandy of South Dakota, and was defeated (*ibid.*:12). Although numerous attempts (the latest one still pending) have been made to introduce prohibitive legislation on peyote at the federal level, none has been successful. Stewart has recently expressed the opinion that the latest anti-peyote legislation in Congress will also fail, due in part to the massive human rights lobby fighting it (personal communication, November, 1964). State laws prohibiting the use of peyote were less difficult to pass, although enforcing them has since led to extended periods of litigation.

Incorporation was an act designed to defend peyotism against *political* attack, as we have seen. But the peyotists also took defensive action in the *religious* realm. Slotkin (1956:65) states that most peyotists have come to regard their religion as another branch of Christianity. They worship the same God as the whites; they all belong to a church; they offer prayers to God; and they partake of a holy sacrament: "Peyote's ritual use as a sacrament is offered by Peyotists as perhaps the strongest defense against its prohibition" (*ibid.*). Slotkin quotes, with parenthetical additions, the Biblical phrase most frequently used by the peyotists in their religious defense (1956:66):

'Him that is weak in faith [i.e., the Indian who does not know God] receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak [i.e., the Indian vis-a-vis the White], eateth herbs [i.e., Peyote]. Let not him that eateth [Peyote] despise him that eateth not [i.e., the non-Peyotist Christian]: and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him [i.e., the Peyotist] (Romans, 14:1-3).

Slotkin continues:

Such quoting of the Bible infuriates White anti-Peyotists in general and missionaries in particular. Its effectiveness lies in the fact this Indian use of the Bible is identical with that of White fundamentalists—relying upon the King James translation, and quoting both in and out of context—so that if one denies the validity of this way of citing scripture by Indians, he is also denying the validity of such citation by the White fundamentalists from whom they adopted it.

VII. Peyotism and Personality "Types"

The focus of some of the recent studies of the interrelationships of peyote and the individual has been upon the formulation of a cluster of "types" of "basic personalities" of peyote users. So far, most of the really comprehensive studies are non-cross-cultural in scope (G. Spindler, 1955; L. Spindler, 1962). To me this is one of the most intriguing

aspects of the study of peyotism, and it is hoped that efforts similar to those made by the Spindlers in the Menomini will be duplicated in other groups.

Slotkin, who, before his untimely death, was himself an officer in the Native American Church and by his own statement a "quasi-Menomini" (1956:64), provides a general introduction to our brief consideration of the work of the Spindlers: he notes (1956:76) that because the taking of peyote involves a quest for knowledge, "one of the personality types attracted to Peyotism is the intellectually curious, sensitive, and introspective individual. These people learn to identify each other, and soon develop warm feelings of comradeship."

Spindler (1955:145) notes that the tendency to introversion is present in many Menomini male peyotists, along with several other personality characteristics:

Evidence from the conversion statements of members indicates that the individual comes to the cult torn by the conflict of cultures, interpreted by him as a personal conflict. He is searching for a means of self-maintenance, for relief from self-doubt. Once he becomes a member, however, his concern over self is not diminished; it is, rather, given sanction in symbolically supported rumination and introverted concentration upon the relation to grace, power, and salvation which are so vital a part of the cult's esoteric emphasis. This seems to be manifest in the procedure in meetings, the search for the power with which peyote is vested as a sacrament by the 'Holy Spirit,' the declarations of worthlessness and feelings of being 'filled with sin,' the pleas for salvation, the search for psychic and physical cures, and the content of visions.

The "declarations of worthlessness" noted by Spindler have also been observed among other groups (Petrullo, 1934:147): "In the speeches of the road-chief in the meetings, in the prayers, in the tales of conversion and other lores, the Delaware appears meek and humble, conscious of his insufficiency. He is a 'poor boy' who needs help and guidance from Peyote, the compassionate, the pitiful."

Louise Spindler in her study of Menomini women notes that there are two basic types of women attracted to the peyote cult (1962:64). One, the more "typical" of the two, ". . . Is essentially a transitional woman who has never experienced any group identification and who uses her cult membership as a means of escape from conflict. Her value system represents a mixture of Menomini and White middle class values . . ." The other type of woman "finds security in the Peyote cult." She has managed to internalize Menomini values without serious conflict. She uses the Peyote Cult meetings as a medium for religious

expression in a group atmosphere, an experience which for "a variety of reasons" she is unable to enjoy in the other religious groups of the Menomini. Spindler reports that the former, "typical" type "... takes peyote several times a week and often sinks into a state of complete withdrawal while taking it. Her life history reveals long-standing tendencies to withdraw from human interaction" (1962:67). She summarizes her findings regarding the women in the peyote cult by noting that as a group they demonstrated a "considerable increase" in emotional expressiveness compared to the other groups analysed.

In comparing the personality differences between the male and female members of the Menomini peyotist group she states (in LaBarre, 1960:57):

The Menomini women peyotists show striking differences from the men. The men represent an introspective, almost schizoid personality type. On the other hand, the women are outward-oriented and not very introspective. Furthermore, their Rorschach responses suggest that they have greater control over their emotions than do the peyote men, and that they are less tense.

Among the Navaho, Kluckhohn and Leighton (1962:169) note that, particularly during the recent past, the "insecurities, deprivations, and frustrations" of contact with white culture have led to a "marginal" condition much like that described by the Spindlers; the individual Navaho responses in some cases seem to be similar to the Menomini:

It is . . . true that religious practices constitute, in part, an escape mechanism from pressing realities. This seems to be particularly true of the non-Navaho peyote cult, which is gaining adherents especially in the northern portions of the Reservations, where supplies of the drug are obtained from the Ute.

VIII. Conclusion

In this report we have discussed peyote and peyotism by presenting salient points in the major works on the subject. An attempt has been made to be comprehensive in coverage, although some aspects of peyotism received less attention than they perhaps deserved. Also, at times a "trait list" style of narrative has been necessary to present the greatest amount of information in a limited number of words.

The works of Landes (1963) and Spindler (1955) have suggested a direction of research which future studies of Indian peyotism might profitably follow: the exploration of the relationships existing in a given reservation community between the relatively recent peyote religion and other, more traditional religious institutions. In both the Prairie Potawatomi studied by Landes and the Menomini studied by Spindler,

individuals who are members of a peyotist organization are often also members of other religious institutions, such as the Central Algonkian Dream Dance or "Bundle" organizations—in spite of the fact that there is some friction between the peyotists and these other religious groupings. Is this overlap in membership accompanied by inter-religious tension a characteristic only of Central Algonkian Indian groups, or is it a more widespread feature of modern American Indian religious life? How is this type of religious participation related to other features of "reservation culture," i.e., what is the functional significance of such religious behavior in those small communities in which it is found? Further research is needed for answers to these and other related questions.

LaBarre's 1938 study seems to be the single most comprehensive work on the subject of peyotism, as indicated by my frequent citations of his material. Time and again I found that other, more theoretical, works borrowed heavily from his publication. For a thorough analysis of the Native American Church organization, J. S. Slotkin's 1956 work is excellent. The combined bibliographies of LaBarre (1938), Slotkin (1956), and LaBarre (1960) list almost every publication of any significance ever published on the subject.

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