

THE CHARACTER AND HISTORY OF THE SOUTHERN UTE PEYOTE RITE

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VERY little is known about the usage of peyote in Southern Ute society. Published statements which allude to Ute peyotism at all usually do so only in the most casual and perfunctory manner. The few scattered references now available vary from brief mention of the rite among the Ute¹ to random doubts that it ever existed in a Ute setting. Even in our most recent and thorough survey on the general subject of peyote, Weston La Barre apparently determines the inception of this type of ceremonial among the Southern Ute largely by inference. On the one hand, La Barre offers a chronological outline of the diffusion of peyotism in which the rite is introduced among the Northern and Southern Ute from Cheyenne sources;² elsewhere in the same paper it is stated that the Northern Ute received the ceremony from the Sioux.³ Since some doubt exists regarding the incidence of peyote among the Southern Ute in point of time, and since both Cheyenne and Sioux are credited with its introduction into the Ute scene, the present paper will relate, largely in terms of informants' accounts, when peyotism was introduced among the Southern Ute, how the cult took hold at the two agency-centers, Ignacio and Towaoc, and what the psychological appeal of peyote ritual was for the three bands of the Southern Ute who adopted it.⁴

¹ Ruth Shonle, *Peyote: The Giver of Visions* (American Anthropologist, Vol. 27, 1925), p. 53. The Ute are mentioned as marking the western limit of the cult in 1919, when, according to Shonle's data, over 50% of the Ute used peyote.

² Weston La Barre, *The Peyote Cult* (Yale University Publications in Anthropology, no. 19, Yale University Press, 1938), p. 122. La Barre traces the spread of peyotism from Kiowan sources to the Southern Cheyenne (1885) and hence to the Northern Cheyenne (before 1900); according to the outline, the Northern Cheyenne were responsible, ostensibly, for the introduction of peyotism among the Southern Ute in 1910 and among the Northern Ute in 1916; the Sioux possibly received the rite in 1909-1910 and passed it down to the Uintah-Ouray. (The latter are Northern Ute, of course.)

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 120: "A Sioux introduced peyote to the Uintah and Ouray Agency. The Ute around Fort Duchesne have used peyote 'on the sly' since before 1916; the cult was vigorous around Randlette, Utah, by the spring of 1916." Then, writing more generally of the Great Basin, La Barre continues: "Little is known of these groups but possibly Cheyenne teaching is responsible; Southern Ute visited Oklahoma peyote groups as early as 1910 according to information of Dr Parsons."

⁴ The data for this paper are a part of material gathered in researches among the Southern Ute Indians of Colorado on two field-trips in 1936 and 1937. This research was made possible by Columbia University with additional aid from the Social Science Research Council. Special thanks are due Dr Ruth Benedict and Dr Ralph Linton who saw the need for such inquiry and encouraged an earlier interest of the author in Ute ethnology.

My first visit to native camps around the Ute Mountain sub-agency in Towaoc, Colorado, left no doubt that a peyote cult flourished there at the western end of the Consolidated (or Southern) Ute Reservation. In nearly every tent were displayed peyote gourd rattles of Kiowa type, canes, and peyote drumsticks in great abundance. I was looking for K—— B——, the only available Towaoc Ute who spoke English fluently, and the first time I saw my future interpreter, he too was under the spell of peyote. "I had begun to ache in my limbs," he said, "so I took peyote tea my sister brewed for me. I sang all night and prayed to get well." K—— went on, after a generous recital of peyote songs,⁵ to extol the vitality as well as the virtue of the peyote cult at Towaoc. At their last meeting, the cult had cured a visiting Navajo of paralysis in both legs:

He came to my camp. I said we would try to cure him with peyote. "If it works,—good! If not, you can go to someone else." On Saturday, the peyote-eaters had a meeting. We sang for the Navajo. Then at twelve o'clock, midnight, that Navajo stretched his legs and said, "Fifty dollars on my black horse." We had fixed him so that he could walk.

His sister E—— confirmed this story and proudly exhibited a large peyote plant she was growing in a flowerpot. "I water it once a week," she told me, "so that it will be a chief peyote someday." The following Saturday there was a peyote meeting for K——, who had already suffered four serious breakdowns from tuberculosis.

That first meeting with K—— lasted all day and netted a full and vivid account of the peyote cult among the western, or Weminutc, band of the Southern Ute, now located at Towaoc. In a sudden burst of generosity, K—— gave me one of the many drumsticks he had been using:

Take this. It is yours now. Peyote will give you our straight Indian way. Peyote will give you good brains. That is what the old peyote doctors tell us in the peyote meetings and what I tell you now. It is the peyote way to think straight and help people. When you eat it, you think of nothing but good. You think how to help all people.

John Peehart taught it to us, coming down here from the Northern Ute country. L—— and B——, our strongest peyote leaders picked it up from the Northern Ute, too. That was around 1931. Now it is our Indian meeting where we pray to god in the Indian way. We have our meeting here nearly every Saturday night . . .

Sam Loganberry, a Sioux, also brought in peyote. His other name was Cactus Pete. That was earlier, around 1916, but Cactus Pete never got peyote started here.

⁵ Many of the songs I had heard earlier as peyote songs on the Mescalero Reservation. Heyowiniho, John Wilson's famous song, among them.

His way was crooked and he did tricks with peyote not in the straight Indian way. Not, he, but John Peehart, was our first teacher. We never took it from him.

There is nothing crooked the way we hold our meeting. You eat it and then you see things. You see all over the world. You see what is going to happen. You see ahead into the future. L—— and B—— are shamans. (The informant called them by the native term, *phó'rat*, or shaman.) They can help people, too, in the peyote meetings. We can cure sickness with it in the Indian way.

When Cactus Pete lost out here, he went over to Ignacio and got peyote started there. Our way is more like the Indian church where we help people and cure the sick.

In much the same way, K—— told me, the Towaoc Ute argued the case for peyote with the Protestant missionary and the visiting Catholic priest.

That peyote encountered no native opposition anywhere at Towaoc was attested by the Indian policeman who described its inception in the following words:

Four or five years ago, we people used to have trouble with whiskey. Peyote was just getting a foothold then. Now we have peyote and it helps the people go straight. They have it here on a Saturday night to cure the sick and make them well again. Some white people will tell you that it makes the Indian crazy, but we don't think so. Here we all eat it. Sometimes I take ten or twenty buttons myself, but still I drive the truck and work just the same. We never crave it. We just take it in a good way. Most of us have been eating peyote for about five years and it doesn't affect us. We started up peyote here about 1931 when the Northern Ute showed us how to use it.

Subsequent field-work at Towaoc indicated that these attitudes toward peyote were universal. There the leading shamans had joined forces in a peyote cult with curative, prophetic and moral functions. The primary purpose of the cult was to combat illness, but secondary functions included looking ahead into the future, inducing dreams and visions of power, the prohibition against alcohol at any time, and the assumption of curing power by all adherents in the meetings devoted to curing. Here the natural potency of the plant, peyote, was translated into supernatural power to be shared in varying degrees by all members who worked in and through the cult. Perhaps the most striking fact for the fieldworker was the ease with which one could obtain data on peyote and actually observe cult activities at Towaoc. Coming as I had from the eastern, or Ignacio, agency of the Southern Ute, I was prepared to find the cult struggling at Towaoc in the sub-rosa light of illegality. Instead one found the older, and from the native point of view, more respected and colorful members of the Weminutec band exerting a profound moral influence through mechanisms set up in the cult for preaching the virtues of native supernaturalism and native sentiments.

It must not be assumed, however, that peyote ritual, single-handed, had wrought the miracle of a total cultural rebirth at Towaoc. Indeed, there has never been a cultural rebirth at Towaoc in the sense of reviving an aboriginally functioning culture. By 1931, as we have seen, the modern community staunchly supported the peyote movement; but it was a modern community already poised in the direction of cultural reaction by a long and bitter experience in reservation history that had no equal at the Ignacio, or eastern, agency of Southern Ute lands. The Towaoc Indian had long been ripe for escape from an intolerable social environment and thoroughly experienced in the defense of his cultural heritage. Peyote was, indeed, thoroughly integrated at Towaoc in contrast to the situation found at Ignacio, but it was integrated because of a total cultural setting favorable to its wholehearted adoption. The current value of the ceremonial in strengthening social solidarity through religious mechanisms, in combining and compounding feeling against missionary influence, and in forming a solid defense of native sentiments had made peyote at Towaoc, despite its recent introduction, the center of a powerful movement of cultural reaction.⁶

The Ignacio attitude toward peyote, despite the fact of acceptance there over a decade earlier, lacked the same intensity and widespread appeal that the cult enjoyed at Towaoc. In the first place, it required two field-trips to obtain a full and satisfying account of peyote among the two eastern bands, the Mowatsi and Kapota, located in and around Ignacio. Nor was there the same unanimity of favorable feeling toward peyotism at Ignacio as was noted at Towaoc. Indeed, the typical and prejudicial account was the following told by a firm opponent of the cult:

There is quite a group of peyote-eating men and women over at Towaoc. Here (at Ignacio) they are only about twenty people who bother with peyote at all. They used to pay about \$400 for a sack of two hundred buttons. That's the way the Northern Ute at Whiterocks went broke; they were well-fixed in cattle, but they just didn't care; their peyote group lost everything they had with that medicine.

⁶ The author has been asked many times whether Towaoc presents the picture of a "functioning culture," *i.e.*, functioning in the aboriginal sense. The answer is, of course, that any culture possessing vitality is more or less functionally integrated whether in contact with neighboring cultures or in isolation. However, the question really involves, not the fact of functioning, but its quality or direction. The aboriginal society cannot function unaltered at Towaoc in the reservation setting. For one thing, the older economic way of life has been destroyed at Towaoc and the half-way stop between individualistic white farming and herding, and the primitive hunting band economy of the Weminutc has never been actually provided in terms acceptable to the native mind. Agency supervision is viewed as unwelcome interference in native affairs. In view of his unstable position, economic and social, the Towaoc native is looking backward, seeking an escape into a past which is actually unobtainable. Peyote offers such an escape and one in which the whole community can share.

They stay up all night and act like drunks. They do anything they want to girls then. They throw up, sick. We went to B—— C——'s once when they were having a meeting and the girls were acting as if drunk. E—— C—— is our best *pó'rat* (shaman) and he doesn't like peyote. He never ate it because he's got power inside himself. It could hurt him more than an ordinary man. The Indian doctor has something inside,—his power,—and if this were sickened by peyote, it would kill the shaman in anger. It's like a tiny human with legs and all. Then he'd get sick, because of this power.

They had trouble getting it started here. B—— C—— and N—— helped them start peyote. T—— B—— and his family began to use it . . . My father and J—— B—— were dead set against it. Cactus Pete, a Sioux Indian had brought it in from Oklahoma. The reason it never got started here in a big way was because that button cost 50¢ or more. Then when someone announced a meeting each member had to bring about \$5.00 worth of groceries for himself and his family. Those groceries,—canned corn, canned peaches and apricots, figs and fruit and beef,—cost a lot of money.

Peyote-eaters say they aren't supposed to drink wine or whiskey. They say these drinks can kill them, but the others come right back and say that peyote makes you blind. It started here about the time the World War started. I heard the Ku Klux Klan was sweeping over the country then, too. At Towaoc, peyote started only a few years back. It's a kind of religious meeting,—an Indian church.

There was a Mexican church in Ignacio with a pastor named Ricos. The peyote group tried to connect up with him. They wanted to use it there in the church just the same way as they have it at their own meetings, but Ricos turned it down.

Some of us don't like it because it costs so much and some are afraid of what might happen if they took it. If they force young girls to join peyote and they eat it, then they want more. What if that girl's husband didn't belong? Why, they might fight over it and she would leave him. Or she would find another young man at the meeting. That happened to a young fellow who lives north of my camp. It breaks up the home.

The *pó'rat* and the peyote crowd form factions against each other. A good shaman could look right through another doctor, they say. He'd see the power another doctor had inside. In peyote meetings they could fight back and forth in this way. That is why the peyote members died off quicker than the *pó'rat* at Ignacio. They were always fighting because the peyote members claimed they could see right through you.

Maybe they use peyote mixed with bone and flesh for love-medicine over at Towaoc. I'm not sure of this, but I know they mash peyote into lemon extract to make a drink, a kind of Nehi pop that gets you drunk; any way, the peyote group just cures those who are members here. I have heard of it used against rheumatism and tuberculosis. At Towaoc, almost all of them use it. Today I don't think they use it so much at Ignacio because it's illegal to send in the mail.

A similar attitude was expressed by another informant:

They used to have peyote here, but most of the Ignacio Ute didn't like it. B—— C—— and Isaac C—— and N—— were the Ignacio Utes who helped most in getting it started. Isaac's brother, E—— C——, is our best doctor and he didn't think peyote was such a good thing. He told Isaac and the others that he didn't believe in peyote. That was back in 1917 when it got started here by Cactus Pete bringing the ceremony to Ignacio. But Isaac wouldn't stop. He led the peyote crowd until the government stepped in and almost stopped it in 1920.

They sat around eating a lot of those buttons. I never tried it because I didn't believe in it. Isaac didn't like it when the government stepped in, so N—— took over the leadership. This peyote used to grow south of the Apache and down into the northern part of old Mexico. Once the ceremony was started here by that Sioux Indian, they got peyote from the Uintah and Ouray Utes or from Oklahoma. Sometimes Mexicans would bring the peyote in; there was one Mexican who used to carry the buttons in a strap inside his shirt. Most of us claimed it was just a business for money—selling those buttons. Even E—— C—— warned that it was just for money; he didn't like to see his younger brother mixed up with those things.

They used the same kind of ceremony as the Oklahoma Indians had; they sang the same songs. The *pö'rat* didn't like to see it. They ate a lot of buttons and sang in there. There were regular meetings. Once a group of us went over one morning to see what they were doing after they had been going at it all night. When we got there, we found the women just lying around filled with that stuff. We all began to talk against it. That's why most of the Ignacio Ute feel it is just for money.

When they had peyote here before 1920, some tried to eat it just to see what it was like. It cost a lot to belong, but a few of the Indian doctors tried it anyway because they were interested in those things. After they tried it, they said they knew it was bad; some said they saw the devil in there. They ate some peyote and then they saw the devil standing up in the middle of the tipi with horns and a tail and everything. That's another reason why the *pö'rat* don't like peyote. E—— C—— is still against peyote, but Isaac, his brother, is still in it.

Further field-work indicated that such critical attitudes toward peyote at Ignacio, while not universal, are at least expressions of majority opinion. In sharp contrast to the thorough integration of peyote ritual at Towaoc, with its drive toward social solidarity, its mechanisms for infusing new life into the old culture, and its wholehearted attempt at social unity on the religious level, is the vigorous opposition to peyote at Ignacio. At Towaoc, as long as the supply of peyote lasts, it serves to strengthen beliefs in the efficacy of native curing and in the worth of the aboriginal view of life. At Ignacio, on the other hand, peyotism has the dubious distinction of being the one catalytic agent in the culture capable of causing a ferment and a factionalism which reaches down deep into family lines.

This difference in the relative appeal of peyote is symbolic also of a more general difference between Towaoc and Ignacio in the emotional hold of

aboriginal customs. At Towaoc, not only does the peyote cult thrive, but also in contrast to Ignacio, much of the older ceremonialism is still extant. The split between the Weminutc band of the Southern Ute, now located at Towaoc, and the Mowatsi and Kapota bands, now at Ignacio, is a cultural dichotomy obvious to anyone who visits the modern reservation. The naive observer usually phrases this difference in terms of the "backward, unprogressive nature" of the Towaoc Ute, an explanation which scarcely does justice to the former unity of culture among all three bands of the Southern Ute or to the unfortunate history of Towaoc and the difficult obstacles standing in the way of progress there. Actually the split in the modern reservation dates back to a time when excellent farm lands were taken from the Weminutc, who were then settled in the arid region around Towaoc, their present location. The unsavory manner in which this transfer was effected and the subsequent economic impoverishment of the Towaoc group is somewhat beyond the scope of this paper;⁷ it must suffice to state that the occasion for this split in the modern reservation was the allotment negotiations of 1895, at which time the Weminutc band withdrew to the country now known as the Ute Mountain reservation with headquarters at Towaoc. There, the hostility to whites has grown in isolation on an unallotted reserve thoroughly unsuited for farming. As a result, the Southern Ute of Ignacio have for forty years lived on individual farms adjacent to whites, while the Ute Mountain Utes of Towaoc have remained a wandering people, following the seasonal growth of pasturage with their sheep, their tents and horses. On a closed reservation thirteen miles from the nearest town, the Towaoc people have had little contact with whites; they accumulate little of material value; they regard agency supervision as the needless intrusion of whites in Indian affairs. In habits and ideas, the Ute of Towaoc are still closer to primitive norms than are their tribesmen of Ignacio.

The minority opinion on peyote at Ignacio is likewise interesting. Here we see a small group similar in purpose to the peyote group of Towaoc, but one which struggles for recognition in the face of organized opposition on the part of agency officials and leading shamans. Even the appeal of peyote ritual is somewhat different for the score of followers at Ignacio. One cult member there began his account of peyote as follows:

Peyote is the Indians' church. It is a kind of worship for good health and good living. They have it much stronger at Towaoc and the preacher there doesn't like it. He came here to tell the Ignacio people that he thought it was a bad thing. I

⁷ The subject is dealt with in an essay by Marvin K. Opler, *Southern Ute of Colorado in Acculturation in Seven American Indian Tribes*, Ralph Linton, editor (New York, Appleton-Century Co., 1940), pp. 181-183.

happened to be around, so I asked him, "What do you mean a bad thing? Does it hurt your church? Well, then, let them have it. It's their church."

The peyote church cures people at their meetings. Peyote won't make you drunk; those who take up peyote stop drinking liquor. They give up bad ways. Nor is it for money as they say around here. A sick person doesn't have to give money for being cured to the peyote leader. If he feels that way about it, he can just thank the peyote leader for the ceremony.

We had it here once.⁸ They had a church about the same way as the Oklahoma Indians. They prayed to Jesus in the Indian way. In 1917, a Sioux brought us peyote and later they got buttons from Oklahoma and from the Northern Ute. Today the government tries to stop it. Floyd (the government farm agent) caught two drums and some peyote at B——'s. Sam Loganberry was the one who brought it first.

That Sam Loganberry was responsible for the introduction of the cult in 1917 was affirmed by all Ignacio informants approached on the question. A prominent cult member, describing the incidence of peyote at Ignacio, gave the following information:

Peyote started here in 1917 and had been going for about three years when I joined. It started later at Towaoc, in 1931 . . . This peyote was introduced early in Oklahoma, but as you see the Ute have not had it a long time. Sam Loganberry, or Cactus Pete, was the first one to bring peyote to Ignacio. They started a regular group like a church.

They started to bring in peyote on a train, but now a boy would be sent out to bring it in. After the meeting, they take up a collection to buy peyote. Northern Utes come through from Texas with a load of peyote and they buy it.

Here the ceremony used to go on for one night only. They never had it on successive nights. If a person was real sick, they sent some boys to his camp to sing. The best peyote men went there to sing night after night, but this wasn't a regular meeting. Peyote was used for curing. They prayed to nature before giving peyote to a sick person.

The peyote ritual, once adopted, differed very little in detail at Towaoc and Ignacio. At Towaoc, to be sure, the Ute look upon the ceremony as peculiar to Indian modes of thinking. At Ignacio, the church-like aspects are stressed in the native mind and there is even some reference to Christianity in songs and prayers. In the case of the latter, the cane, passed clockwise as each cult member sings curative songs, is representative of the cane of Christ when "He walked on this earth," while the twelve feathers attached to this cane represent his twelve disciples. Nevertheless, these features are familiar adjuncts of the shaman used in former curing ceremonies, and Christ may

⁸ At Ignacio, peyote cult members usually refer to the cult in the past tense. In addition, they often refuse to identify themselves with the cult, a thing unheard of at Towaoc.

be interpreted as the Great Healer who used power always to "do good." With these differences in affect between Towaoc and Ignacio well in mind, we may describe the actual ceremonial as a unit. The Ignacio version of the rite adds Christian symbols at convenient points, whereas the Towaoc version excludes them. Turning now to the description of the peyote ceremony, and taking as our model the more Christianized version found at Ignacio, we find the following picture.⁹

They call all the peyote members and tell them to meet in a certain place. When one of the peyote members is called by a sick person, he tells the leader of the group about it. Sometimes there is more than one prominent leader of the group. The leader is the one who calls the meeting. Then they all meet at a certain place in the evening.

They used to build a big tipi, bigger than an ordinary tent. They took four tipi poles to start with, raised them, and then added four more. There were two more poles for the smoke hole, one on each side, to catch the wind from either direction. At Towaoc, they use still larger tipis with sixteen poles. The door faced east.

One man was assigned to watch the door; he was called the doorman. He saw to it that each person took off his shoes and hat before entering. Today they hold meetings at Ignacio inside a house and at Towaoc sometimes in a large corral. The doorman is always there to tell the people how to enter. Even when they meet in a house, the members sit in a circle and visitors have to sit away from the circle until they learn how to act.

They have a drum in there a foot across the top, covered with buckskin and containing water. It is the Kiowa type of peyote drum, made of metal. The leader carries a painted stick such as a shaman might carry, but with twelve feathers tied to it at the top. All of the peyote members might have gourd rattles like the Kiowas use to help in the singing. The leader also carries a sackful of peyote buttons with him.

There is always one big button, bigger than the rest, which they never eat. This is the chief peyote button and the leader must keep it. They say this button does strange things although it is kept in a safe place. The leader locks it up, but still it may disappear when he looks for it; some other time when he isn't looking for it, it reappears in the same place.

The start the meeting about eight o'clock in the evening. The leader, the one who calls the meeting, tells them to line up behind him. He carries his cane or painted stick and his gourd rattle. A second man, called the drummer, comes behind him carrying the big iron drum. The rest line up behind those two in single file. Before they go into the tent, the leader prays. He tells the people what the ceremony is for. He prays for all the people there and even those outside the meeting. Through

⁹ This description is a composite picture of peyote ritual as presented in the accounts of some twenty Towaoc and Ignacio informants. By cancelling out the Christian elements in the following account, the rite can be seen in the Towaoc version.

the words of the leader all the members are praying to nature, to god, and to Jesus. The sick are brought to the meeting and they are prayed for in this way. Peyote can be used on sick people or even on sick horses.

After the first prayer, they file into the tipi which faces east toward the rising sun. This is so the sick person can rise up at the same time the sun rises for the world. Then they file in, each one brushing against the left side of the door as they face it. Once inside, they must go around the inside of the tent in a clockwise direction. The leader stops in the circuit of the tent at the west point opposite the doorway. The others pass in front of the leader as he faces them and take their places in a semi-circle. If there are women and wives at the meeting, they must sit before the doorway inside the tent facing the leader. No one is allowed to pass behind the peyote leader.

Before they go in, the leading peyote members make a quarter-moon or crescent moon in the center of the tipi from a wet dough of clay and put it on the floor of the tipi in the center. The horns of that moon face the east and the ground around it is smoothed and swept with eagle-tail feather wands. This is the sign for the sky. No person may step on that moon or over it. Before anything can start in the tipi, the big button called chief peyote must be placed on the moon with a certain prayer. Through this prayer, they ask that good works be done at the meeting.

After they file in, the sick person is brought in and placed between the crescent-shaped mound and the doorway. Now everyone is there and the leader tells them what must be done to stop that sickness. "Don't think anything bad, or have a bad wish. Remember our Lord God who was on this earth. Beat the drum politely. Sing your strongest songs." These are the instructions. Before the leader passes out the peyote, he prays again, this time to the chief peyote on the mound. He says that the peyote was given to us by Jesus Christ when he was on this earth and that it will command us "toward the Light." He says these words from his place west of the moon symbol. He says the cane he is holding is like the cane of Christ when He was on this earth. The twelve feathers tied together into a wand and attached to the top of the cane are the disciples of Christ when He was on this earth. After the prayers, the leader can pass the peyote. He is the only one who can pass out the buttons he has in his sack.

The buttons are passed one at a time, passed out clockwise in the circle even across the doorway. The first time they are passed down finally to the man on the right side of the leader until that man has four. The drummer is always on the leader's right. The women are served in turn with the peyote. Last of all, after everyone else has been served in turn in the circle going clockwise, the leader takes four buttons for himself. Then he tells the people to eat it all and not to leave anything. "If you leave any peyote, you are going to leave that sick person's illness with him. You will leave it behind. But if you eat it all, you are going to run the sickness out." They also give a sick person, and sometimes even a sick horse, a little of that peyote. If a person was too sick to chew, they grind it up or boil it into a gravy. The peyote leader could feed the sick person now, or appoint someone else to do it.

All those with power smoke and pray while the sick person is being fed. After this, the peyote leader takes his place and sings the Leader Song or Opening Song. He just sings this one song while the drummer who sits to his right drums for him as he sings. Then the drum is passed clockwise to the leader who hands his cane over to the drummer. Neither the cane or the drumstick are allowed to touch the ground when they are passed around. Now the drummer sings four songs while the peyote leader drums for him. Then the man on the left of the peyote leader sings four songs while the leader drums for him also. Then the drum, the cane and the feathers are passed around clockwise and each one sings four songs in turn. If a newcomer is there someone might sing for him. Women could sing if they weren't too bashful. The man on the right of the singer each time holds the drum and drums for the man on his left.

The singer each time holds the gourd rattle in his hand and shakes it in time to the music. The cane is held in the left hand of the singer while the rattle is held in the right. They do not hand the cane or rattle to a sick person. But every other person can have a chance as his turn comes to sing with the cane in the left hand and the rattle in the right. The man to the right of each singer is drummer for him, so that the drum follows the cane and gourd rattle in the clockwise circuit.

If a person doesn't want to sing in turn, he may just hold the feather-stick and pray. Finally the drum comes back to the leader and then the leader may pass out more buttons. This time, some may not want more. They can be skipped. Next they pass the drum around as before and sing again. They eat peyote and sing alternately, going around clockwise each time. The music for peyote is mostly from other tribes. The peyote members learn new songs all the time. They sing and eat in this way until midnight.

At midnight, the leader sings four Water Songs. On the first song a girl goes out to get a pail of water. On the third song she is outside again. On the fourth song she comes in with the bucket. The girl puts that water east of the moon, at the mouth of the moon. Then she kneels down and bows with her hands folded in the Christian attitude of prayer. At the end of the fourth song, the girl must pray for the water. When she is finished praying, she takes the first drink. The leader is holding the rattle, cane and feathers all this time. Then the bucket is passed to the man on the left of the leader. He drinks and passes the bucket clockwise. And so on, until the bucket comes back to the chief man who drinks last. Then the girl throws out the rest of the water. The young girl sent to fetch the water is always a virgin. At Ignacio, since a young girl could be waylaid and molested by irreligious boys, a boy is sent to bring the water, while the girl chosen stands at the door.

Up to this time, no person has been allowed to leave the meeting without the permission of the peyote leader. Now the leader appoints two men to stand guard while the women go out in a body to urinate. One man stands on each side to guard them, facing away, so that no one will abuse them. Then the men may go out to urinate. Last of all, the leader and the drummer may go out, too. They all leave their places and return to them going around in a clockwise direction inside the tipi. The chief peyote man asks the sick person if he wishes to go out. If a man, they

appoint two boys to take him out; if a woman, two women are appointed to take her outside and two boys stand guard. They stop at midnight for the water ceremony and the rest.

When all have returned again, they sit down and rest for a short time. The older members may talk about peyote to the younger people at this time. Then the leader asks each person if he wants more peyote. This time each person tells just how much he wants and it is passed out going around clockwise. This time the peyote leader goes around the circle and gives each person as much as he wants; he passes each portion out on the eagle-tail feather wand he is carrying. If the sick person desires more, the leader gives it to him; only the leader can feed the sick person the second time because he knows how much to give. They can all ask the sick person how he feels and pray for him. If he feels good, they say they are glad to hear it. After this, the leader calls upon some person with curing power to pray over the sick person. It is now after twelve o'clock. Then he calls on three other men with power to pray for the sick person. The first two appointed are selected from the right side of the leader; the second two are chosen from his left side. Then the leader hands his feathers, cane and rattle to the man next to him on his left side. This man sings a curing song while the drummer on the right of the leader does the drumming. The leader doesn't drum then; instead he stands up and says a prayer in a low voice, while the man on his left goes ahead and sings four curing songs. This prayer may be for curing, for seeing into the future, for finding something which has been lost, or for good luck and good living.

Then the drum is passed to the man who just sang, while the cane, feathers and rattle are passed on to the man on his left. Then they go around the circle in this way, each one singing four songs in turn until about four o'clock in the morning. It is just before sunrise. It is at this time, while they are singing that power to cure may come to a person. It is like a dream and power may come.

The cane, feathers and rattle finally come back to the leader. Just before sunrise he tells all the people to sit up straight, and then he sings only one song, the Closing Song. After he has sung, he hands the cane to the drummer, first removing the feather wand at the top of the stick. With that eagle-tail wand he fans the man on his left side, fanning him from head to foot down to the ground as in sundance or round-dance to rid him of all evil spirits. He does this to every person in the tipi, going around in a clockwise circle. Then when everyone else has been fanned, he fans the sick person just as they do in a curing ceremony. Last of all, he fans himself, standing in his place at the west point. Then he fans the moon on the top of the earthen mound and fans out toward the door, toward the east. Then he comes back to place and announces that this meeting is over. He appoints two men to trace the moon on a white cloth which they do by lifting the moon on the cloth. No paint is used on the moon so that no marks will be left on that cloth. These two men throw out the clay moon to the east. This is done to help the sick person out of the tipi.

They appoint two or three women to cook breakfast and two boys to cut wood for them. When the food is made, they bring some to the sick person first. Usually it is corn, fruit and beef,—to give strength. Before the sick person eats, the peyote

leader prays that the food may give strength. Then the others go out to the table. Before the rest eat, the leader again prays for the food and prays that they shall always have enough. (At Ignacio, cult members pray before all meals in the Christian manner.)

Before anyone eats, the peyote leader must pray for the health and well-being of all those present. Perhaps someone has put up the money for this meeting; they pray for him too, and thank him there. The one who pays sometimes appoints the peyote leader or else he leads the meeting himself. Usually all the peyote members help by donating whatever they can spare. A rich man might donate \$5.00 for peyote; a poor man would give about 50¢. They give whatever they can, using peyote in a polite way, not as a drug.

Since the peyote-eaters believe in God, they cannot drink liquor at any time. They may smoke, but if they smoke at a peyote meeting, they must pray before doing it. Large meetings must be held four nights apart, never on successive nights. The groceries for the morning feast are brought by everyone; all bring as much as they can and share in the breakfast.

If a person is cured by peyote, it is up to him whether he wants to give anything to the peyote leader. The peyote leader could ask him about it, but he doesn't have to give anything. It is just the same as when Christ was on earth, curing the blind and lame people. If a poor person is sick and wants help, the peyote leader "would have no pocket to put presents in," as they say. He would take nothing. A poor person can go over to help the peyote leader with his farm or his sheep, later, or bring him a load of wood. The others who helped in the ceremony never ask for anything.

At Ignacio, the peyote members sometimes have what is called a "wake." In the ceremony, they sing for a dead relative of some member. When the leader is through praying, someone sings the song, not mentioning the person's name. They know who is meant and the others cry at this song to show respect. Or if someone has died recently, they stop to pray for this person and then sing his song or her song. This is a wake. When children sing this kind of song around camp, an older person who knows the rules will ask them to stop. Children shouldn't pick up these songs, nor should they be sung outside the meeting.

It is not necessary at this time to dwell upon the close correspondence between this rite and the Plains type of societal peyotism from which it certainly derives.¹⁰ Less obvious, perhaps, are the circumstances underlying the marked difference in integration of Ute peyotism at Towaoc and at Ignacio. Here we have a ceremony similar in detail in each of two Southern Ute settings and one which is enacted in an almost identical manner. Yet the psychological appeal of peyote in each case is almost diametrically opposite. The remainder of this paper will be devoted, therefore, to a considera-

¹⁰ Cf., La Barre, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-53; pp. 54-56.

tion of the cultural differential between Towaoc and Ignacio as regards peyote and the affective appeal of the cult among those who support it.¹¹

Peyotism, at Towaoc, can easily be interpreted as a type of revivalistic movement. The pooling of shamanistic powers is not something unprecedented in Ute religion. Formerly, the Round Dance, or *mawö'qwiñani*, was used to combat the spread of illness; it was danced by the participants moving sideways in a large circle around the shamans who stood in the center. The shamans took turns singing and fanning the people as they passed by with eagle-tail feather wands. Each dancer was fanned from head to foot to drive out the evil and the participants were called upon to join in the singing. Between songs, the shamans prayed; their fanning was designed to stave off illness, to insure health and vigor for all present. With the introduction of peyote, the ideology of the Round Dance was easily transferred to the newer ceremonial. The co-operation of the shamans, the clockwise circuit which dominates the ritual, the use of eagle-tail feather wands, the shamanistic cane, the ritualistic fanning, the prayers to an animistic world of nature—all these features strongly suggest the older ceremonial. Even the use of peyote is reminiscent of the use of specifics in Ute curing rites. The clay moon represents an old and potent source of supernatural power. And, finally, the eastward orientation of the tipi so that the patient may rise with the sun is nothing more than an older conception rooted in fertility magic at all times associated with the sun as the source of vigor and life. In short, the peyote cult easily crystallizes a number of ancient Ute conceptions and welds them together into a societal organization.

At Towaoc, peyote easily fits into the category of customary curing rituals which exalt the power of shamanistic cures and successfully opposes 'Indian religion' to white doctrine. The defense mechanism of the cult is obvious and it is this aspect of the institution which informants dwell upon most affectionately. At Towaoc, the ritual becomes the bulwark of faith in things Indian and the retreat where white interference cannot follow. Because of its late introduction, one would naturally expect to find more of the common Christian elements of peyote ceremonials than is actually the case. In the native mind, however, peyote is regarded as the institutionalized answer to the peremptory insistence of missionary influence. While the emphasis upon societal organization is accepted at Towaoc, any leanings toward Christianity are excluded. At Towaoc, as we have seen, peyote ritual serves the function of closing the door on a modern American environment. There, with the main stress placed on native sentiments rather than on

¹¹ For a fuller historical treatment of the subject of cultural differences between Towaoc and Ignacio, see Opler, *op. cit.* pp. 119-206.

Christianity, the Towaoc Ute is free to elaborate on an aboriginal mode of curing and an aboriginal view of life.

The difference in emphasis upon peyote at Ignacio is too instructive a lesson in cultural integration to go unnoticed. It remains to be seen why peyote ritual, although decidedly older in the Ignacio scene, nevertheless fails miserably in finding a firm root there. If we expand our discussion to include not only the relative weight of the aboriginal pattern, but also the relative nature of white contact, then the cultural differential between Towaoc and Ignacio emerges in greater clarity. In the first place, the Ignacio Ute are subject, by constitution, to the state laws of Colorado. Peyote is illegal, therefore, and ritual paraphernalia have occasionally been discovered and confiscated. The peyote followers have encountered difficulties in attempts to lease a town church and thereby obtain a semblance of legality. A native farming population, already acculturated in terms of an individualistic, competitive economy, has objected to the donation of expensive groceries required of peyote cult members while the cost of the drug itself is considered unwise expenditure. Most important, perhaps, is the fact that in 1917, when peyote was first introduced at Ignacio, farming was already in progress there and the appeal of old custom was, in each instance, considerably weakened. Even today, peyote is still seeking a foothold at Ignacio, while the same rite thrives at Towaoc as part of a movement of cultural regeneration.

More than that, the peyote cult of Ignacio represents a belated movement in the direction of Christianity. It is a joint venture led by less conservative elements. As such, peyote encounters the active resistance of shamans who view the breakdown of old patterns at Ignacio with considerable alarm and who regard the government hospital and the peyote cult, equally, as unwelcome infringements upon their curative duties. The shamans of Ignacio do not shrink from attacking the growing appeal of hospitalization or the disquieting disregard of an independent younger generation. Nor can they afford to lessen the attack upon peyote. Instead, as we have seen, stories are circulated by the faction behind the shaman to the effect that peyote brings blindness and that cult activities destroy the virtue of women. It is apparent from the foregoing that the aboriginal pattern was more in evidence in the Towaoc of 1930, when peyote first took root there, than it was even in the Ignacio of 1917.

In the Towaoc of today, the peyote cult is still in full vogue as the curb of epidemics and the restorer of health and well-being. Moreover, the shaman of Towaoc is still able to hold, unchallenged, the position of arbiter in all matters of a religious or curative nature. There the nature of white contact

has in the past been an unending record of pain and discouragement with none of the interludes of material success in white farming or white modes of living that so distinguish the recent history of Ignacio. There, also, the strength of the aboriginal pattern, tried and tested by the burdensome weight of white contact, has not only sustained the society, but has inclined it in the direction of cultural reaction. Under the violent pressure of white contact, shamanism has emerged with renewed vigor in the peyote cult. In isolation, in poverty, in disillusionment at white contact, the native of Towaoc has interpreted curing to be more than ever before the concern not merely of individuals and families, but of band and society. Not only has peyote furnished the instruments for an effective mobilization of tribal energies, at Towaoc, but it has closed the ranks in a once highly individualistic culture and provided common interests and responsibilities in an equally individualistic religion. That peyote will continue to be a potent vitalizing force at Towaoc until the acculturation process is raised to a better level, there is not the slightest doubt.

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