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Minden jog fenntartva!

INTRODUCTION.

1. The ceremony of dsilyídje qaçàl, or mountain chant—literally, chant towards (a place) within the mountains—is one of a large number practiced by the shamans, or medicine men, of the Navajo tribe. I have selected it as the first of those to be described, because I have witnessed it the most frequently, because it is the most interesting to the Caucasian spectator, and because it is the best known to the whites who visit and reside in and around the Navajo country. Its chief interest to the stranger lies in the various public performances of the last night. Like other great rites of the shamans, it has its secret ceremonies of many days' duration in the medicine lodge; but, unlike the others, it ends with a varied show in the open air, which all are invited to witness. Another ceremony which I have attended, and which the whites usually call the "Yaỳbichy Dance" (Yèbitcai), has a final public exhibition which occupies the whole night, but it is unvaried. Few Europeans can be found who have remained awake later than midnight to watch it. Such is not the case with the rite now to be described. Here the white man is rarely the first to leave at dawn.

2. The appropriateness of the name dsilyídje or tsilgitce—towards (a place) within the mountains—will be better understood from the myth than from any brief description. "Dsilyi'" may well allude to mountains in general or to the Carrizo Mountains in particular, to the place in the mountains (paragraphs 9 and 38) where the originator of these ceremonies (whom I often find it convenient to call "prophet") dwelt, or to the name of the prophet (par. 41), or to all these combined. Qaçàl signifies a sacred song or a collection of sacred songs. From the many English synonyms for song I have selected the word chant to translate qaçàl. In its usual signification hymnody may be its more exact equivalent, but it is a less convenient term than chant. The shaman, or medicine man, who is master of ceremonies, is known as qaçàli or chanter—el cantador, the Mexicans call him. In order to keep in mind his relationship to similar functionaries in other tribes I shall, from time to time, allude to him as the priest, the shaman, or the medicine man, following the example of other authors. To all ceremonies of a character similar to this the term qa??l is applicable. It would seem from this that the Navajo regard the song as the chief part of the ceremony, but since the Americans, as a rule, regard all Indian ceremonies as merely dances and call them dances, I will, out of deference to a national prejudice, frequently refer to the ceremony as a dance.

3. Sometimes the collective rites and amusements of the last night are spoken of as ilnasjíngo qaçàl, or chant in the dark circle of branches, from *il*, branches of a tree; *nas*, surrounding, encircling; *jin*, dark; and *go*, in. The name alludes to the great fence of piñon branches, erected after sunset on the last night, to receive the guests and performers. I shall often refer to this inclosure as the corral. Some white men call the rites I describe the "corral dance," but more usually they call them the "hoshkàwn dance," from one of the minor performances of the last night, the hackàn-inçá', or act of the *Yucca baccata*, a rite or drama which seems to particularly excite the Caucasian interest. To such minor acts the terms inçá' and alìli are applied; these may be translated dance, show, act, or exhibition.

4. The purposes of the ceremony are various. Its ostensible reason for existence is to cure disease; but it is made the occasion for invoking the unseen powers in behalf of the people at large for various purposes, particularly for good crops and abundant rains. It would appear that it is also designed to perpetuate their religious symbolism. Some of the shows of the last night are undoubtedly intended to be dramatic and entertaining as well as religious, while the merely social element of the whole affair is obvious. It is an occasion when the people gather to have a jolly time. The patient pays the expenses and, probably in addition to the favor and help of the gods and the praise of the priesthood, hopes to obtain social distinction for his liberality.

5. This, like other great rites of the Navajo, is of nine days' duration. Some of these rites may take place in the summer; but the great majority of them, including this dsilyídje qaçàl, may be celebrated only in the winter, in the season when the thunder is silent and the rattlesnakes are hibernating. Were they to tell of their chief gods or relate their myths of the ancient days at any other time, death from lightning or snake-bite would, they believe, be their early fate.

6. While in New Mexico I sometimes employed a very liberal minded Navajo, named Juan, as a guide and informant. He had spent many years among Americans, Mormons, and Mexicans, and was, I imagined, almost perfectly emancipated from his "early bias." He spoke both English and Spanish fairly. On one occasion, during the month of August, in the height of the rainy season, I had him in my study conversing with him. In an unguarded moment, on his part, I led him into a discussion about the gods of his people, and neither of us had noticed a heavy storm coming over the crest of the Zuñi Mountains, close by. We were just talking of Estsánatlehi, the goddess of the west, when the house was shaken by a terrific peal of thunder. He rose at once, pale and evidently agitated, and, whispering hoarsely, ?Wait till Christmas; they are angry,? he hurried away. I have seen many such evidences of the deep influence of this superstition on them.

7. When the man (or the woman) who gives the entertainment concludes he is sick and that he can afford to call a shaman, it is not the latter who decides what particular rites are best suited to cure the malady. It is the patient and his friends who determine this. Then they send for a man who is known to be skilled in performing the desired rites, and it is his province merely to do the work required of him.

8. Before beginning to describe the ceremonies it will be well to relate the myth accounting for their origin.

MYTH OF THE ORIGIN OF DSILYÍDJE QAÇÀL.

9. Many years ago, in the neighborhood of Dsilyi'-qojòni, in the Carrizo Mountains, dwelt a family of six: the father, the mother, two sons, and two daughters. They did not live all the time in one locality, but moved from place to place in the neighborhood. The young men hunted rabbits and wood rats, for it was on such small animals that they all subsisted. The girls spent their time gathering various wild edible seeds.

10. After a time they went to a place called Tse'-biçàï (the Wings of the Rock or Winged Rock), which lies to the east of the Carrizo Mountains, on a plain. When they first encamped there was no water in the vicinity and the elder brother went out to see if he could find some. He observed from the camp a little sandy hillock, covered with some vegetation, and he determined to see what sort of plants grew there. Arrived there, he noticed a spot where the ground was moist. He got his digging stick and proceeded to make a hole in the ground. He had not dug long when the water suddenly burst forth in great abundance and soon filled the excavation he had made. He hastened back to the camp and announced his success. When they left the Carrizo Mountains it was their intention to go to ¢epéntsa, the La Plata Mountains, to hunt for food, and their halt at Tse'-biçàï was designed to be temporary only; but, now that they had found abundance of water, the elder brother counseled them not to hasten on, but to remain where they were for a while. The spring he developed still exists and is known to the Navajo as Çobinàkis, or the One-Eyed Water.

11. The spring was some distance from the camp, and they had but one wicker water bottle; so the woman, to lighten her labor, proposed that they should move their goods to the vicinity of the spring, as it was her task to draw the water. But the old man counseled that they should remain where they were, as materials for building were close at hand and it was his duty to erect the hut. They argued long about it; but at length the woman prevailed, and they carried all their property down close to the spring. The elder son suggested that it would be well to dig into the soft sandy soil, in order to have a good shelter; so the old man selected a sandy hillock, overgrown with grease-wood, and excavated it near one edge, digging straight down, so as to have a wall on one side.

12. They had a stone ax-head, with a groove in it. Around this they bent a flexible twig of oak and tied it with the fibers of the yucca, and thus they made a handle. The first day after the spring was found the young men went out and chopped all day, and in the evening brought home four poles, and while they were gone the old man dug in the hillock. The next day the young men chopped all day, and at night returned with four more poles, while their father continued his digging. They worked thus for four days, and the lodge was finished. They made mats of hay to lie on and a mat of the same material to hang in the doorway. They made mats of fine cedar bark with which to cover themselves in bed, for in those days the Navajo did not weave blankets such as they make now. The soles of their moccasins were made of hay and the uppers of yucca fibers. The young men were obliged to go hunting every day; it was only with great labor they could keep the house supplied with meat; for, as has been said, they lived mostly on small animals, such as could be caught in fall traps. These traps they set at night near the burrows, and they slept close to the traps when the latter were set far from home. They hunted thus for four days after the house was finished, while their sisters scoured all the country round in search of seeds.

13. With all their work they found it hard to make a living in this place. The land was barren; even rats and prairie dogs were scarce, and the seed bearing plants were few. At the end of the fourth day they held a consultation, and the old man said they would do better to move on to the San Juan River, where food was more abundant, and they could trap and gather seeds as they traveled. They determined to leave, and next morning broke camp. They journeyed on till they reached the banks of the San Juan. Here they found abundance of tciltcin (fruit of *Rhus aromatica*) and of grass seeds, and they encamped beside the river at night.

14. Next day they traveled up the stream to a place called Tse'çqàka, and here again they halted for the night. This place is noted for its deposits of native salt. The travelers cut some out from under a great rock and filled with it their bags, made out of the skins of the squirrels and other small animals which they had captured. Thence they followed up the river to Tse'¢ezá' (Rock Sticking Up), and thence to Çisyà-qojòni (Beautiful Under the Cottonwoods), where they remained a day and killed two rabbits. These they skinned, disemboweled, crushed between two stones, bones and all, so that nothing might be lost, put them into an earthen pot to boil, and when they were sufficiently cooked they added some powdered seeds to make a thick soup; of all this they made a hearty meal. The Navajo then had neither horses nor asses; they could not carry stone metates when they traveled, as they do now; they ground their seeds with such stones as they could find anywhere. The old man advised that they should cross the river at this point and he directed his sons to go to the river and look for a ford. After a time they returned and related that they had found a place where the stream was mostly knee deep, and where, in the deepest part, it did not come above their hips, and they thought all would be able to cross there. The father named the hour of bihil??higi (when it gets warm, i.e., about 10 a.m.), on the morrow, as the time they should ford the San Juan; so next morning at the appointed time they crossed. They traveled up the north bank until they came to a small affluent whose source was in ¢epéntsa. Here they left the main river and followed the branch until night approached, when they made camp.

15. They moved on next day and came close to ¢epéntsa, to a soil covered with tracks of deer and of other great animals of the chase. Here they encamped, and on the following morning the young men set out by different ways in the direction of the mountain to hunt; but at night they returned empty handed. Thus they hunted four days unsuccessfully. Every day while his sons were gone the old

man busied himself cutting down saplings with his stone ax and building a house, and the daughters gathered seeds, which constituted the only food of the family. As the saplings were abundant and close to the camp, the old man built his house fast, and had it finished at nightfall on the fourth day, when his sons returned from their fruitless labors. They entered the lodge and sat down. They were weary and hungry and their bodies were badly torn by the thorns and thick copse of the mountains. Their father spoke not a word to them as they entered; he did not even look at them; he seemed to be lost in deep contemplation; so the young men said nothing, and all were silent. At length the old man looked up and broke the silence, saying, “Aqalàni cactcini!” (Welcome, my children.) “Again you have returned to the lodge without food. What does it avail that you go out every day to hunt when you bring home nothing? You kill nothing because you know nothing. If you had knowledge you would be successful. I pity you.” The young men made no reply, but lay down and went to sleep.

16. At dawn the old man woke them and said: “Go out, my children, and build a sweat-house, and make a fire to heat stones for the bath, and build the sweat-house only as I will tell you. Make the frame of four different kinds of wood. Put kaç (juniper) in the east, tse‘isçázi (mountain mahogany) in the south, ¢estsìn̲ (piñon) in the west, and awètsal (cliff rose) in the north; join them together at the top and cover them with any shrubs you choose. Get two small forked sticks, the length of the forearm, to pass the hot stones into the sweat-house, and one long stick to poke the stones out of the fire, and let all these sticks be such as have their bark abraded by the antlers of the deer. Take of all the plants on which the deer most like to browse and spread them on the floor of the sweat-house, that we may sit on them.? So they built the lodge as he directed, and lit the fire and heated the stones. While they were transferring the hot stones from the fire to the lodge the old man brought out the mats which they used for bedding, and when all the stones had been put in he hung the mats, one on top of another, over the doorway. This done the three men went into the sudatory and sat down to sweat, uttering not a word. When they had perspired sufficiently they came out and sat down in silence until they were again ready to submit themselves to the heat. In this way they sweated themselves four times, keeping all the time a perfect silence, until they emerged for the last time, when the old man directed his daughters to dig some soap root and make a lather. In this he bade his sons wash their hair and the entire surface of their bodies well. When they were thoroughly cleansed, he sent them out to set twelve stone fall traps, a task which occupied all the rest of the day. For each trap they buried a flat stone with its upper side on a level with the surface of the ground; on this they sprinkled a little earth, so that the rat would suspect nothing; over this they placed another flat stone, leaning at an angle and supported by a slender stick, to which were attached berries of the aromatic sumac as a bait. That night the young men sat up very late talking with their father, and did not lie down to sleep until after midnight, when, as their father directed, they lay side by side with their heads to the east.

17. The elder brother arose early, stirred the embers and made a fire, and soon the younger awoke. As they sat by the fire warming themselves, the elder one said: “Younger brother, I had a dream in the night; I dreamt I killed a buck deer.” And the younger replied: “Elder brother, I, too, had such a dream, but that which I killed was a doe.” The old man heard their words and rose, saying, “It is well, my children; go out and try again.” They went out to visit their traps. The first one they came to had fallen; they lifted the stone and found under it the body of a rat. So each one in turn, as they visited it was found to have fallen, killing in its fall some small animal; and they returned to the lodge with twelve little creatures for their food. Then the old man told them to take their bows and arrows and hunt for deer. “Hunt,” said he, “to the east, the west, and the north, if you will, but do not pass to the south of the lodge.” With these instructions they set out, each one in a different direction. The elder brother had not traveled far when he saw a herd of deer and shot one of the number. He skinned it, cut it up, took the backbone, hide, and tallow, and hung the rest in a tree. As he drew near the house, he saw his younger brother approaching from a different direction with the hide and meat of a doe. When they entered the hut, the old man asked which of the two deer was shot first. The elder brother answered: “I think mine was, for I killed it early this morning, soon after I left the house.” ?Well,? said the father, ?this skin of the first slain is mine; go and stretch it and dry it for me with care.? After this they went out hunting every day for twelve days, but fortune seemed to have deserted them; they killed no more game; and at the end of that time their supply of meat was exhausted. Then the old man said: ?It always takes four trials before you succeed. Go out once more, and if you kill a deer do not dress it, but leave it as it is.?

18. On the following day they left the lodge together and did not take separate trails. Soon they killed a deer, and the younger brother said: “What shall we now do with it, since our father has told us not to skin it and not to cut it up?” The elder brother said: “I know not. Return to the lodge and ask our father what we must do.” Then the younger brother returned to his father and the latter instructed him thus: “Cut the skin around the neck; then carefully take the skin from the head, so as to remove the horns, ears, and all other parts, without tearing the skin anywhere. Leave such an amount of flesh with the nose and lips that they will not shrivel and lose their shape when they dry. Then take the skin from the body, which skin will again be mine. One of you must take out the pluck and carry that in the hide to me; the other will bring the skin of the head and the meat. Let him who bears the pluck come in advance, and stop not till he comes directly to me, and he must hand it to me and to no one else.” The younger brother went back and told all this to the elder. They dressed the deer as they were bidden; the younger put the pluck in the skin and went in advance, and the elder followed with the venison and the skin of the head. When they reached the hogán, the father said: “Where is the atcai?” (pluck) and the younger said: “It is in the skin.” “Take it out,” said the old man, “and hang it on yonder mountain mahogany.” The young man did as he was bidden. The father advanced with his bow and arrow and handed them to the elder brother, who placed the arrow on the string and held the bow. The old man put his hands on top of those of his son and together they drew the bow. The former took careful aim at the pluck and let the arrow fly. It struck the object and penetrated both heart and lungs so far that the point protruded on the opposite side. Then the old man told his son to seize the arrow by the point and draw it completely through, which was done. Next he made his son stand close to the pluck, looking towards it, and while his son was in this position he blew on him in the direction of the pluck. “Now,” said the father, “whenever you want to kill a buck, even if there is neither track nor sign of deer in sight, you have only to shoot into the tse‘isçázi (mountain mahogany, *Cercocarpus parvifolius*) and you will find a dead deer where your arrow strikes; while if you wish to kill a female deer you will shoot your arrow into the awètsal (cliff rose, *Cowania mexicana*) and you will find a doe there.” When all this was done they prepared the skin of the head, under the old man’s directions. To keep the skin of the neck open they put into it a wooden hoop. They sewed up the mouth, left the eyeholes open, stuffed the skin with hay, and hung it in a tree to dry, where it would not get smoky or dusty. They cut places in the neck through which the hunter might see. The skin of the doe which the

younger brother had killed some time before, and which had been tanned in the mean time, they painted red and gray, to make it look like the skin of an antelope. They prepared two short sticks, about the length of the forearm; these were to enable the hunter to move with ease and hold his head at the proper height when he crept in disguise on the deer. During the next four days no work was done, except that the elder brother practiced in imitating the walk of the deer.

19. From the camp where these things happened they moved to a place called Tse'-lakàï-iá' (White Standing Rock). Before they went to hunt or gather seeds, the old man desired that they should all help to build the hogán (hut); so all went to work together, men and women, and the hogán was completed, inside and outside, in four days.

20. The morning following the completion of the hogán, the father sent the young men out again, directing them, as before, not to go to the south. They went off together, and soon espied a herd of deer. The elder brother put on the deer mask and began to imitate the motions of the animal, asking his younger brother what he thought of the mimicry. When the latter gave his approval, the elder brother said, "Steal round to the other side of the herd and when they see you they will come in my direction." He waited, and when he saw that his brother had got to the other side of the herd, he selected a big fat buck as his special object, and began to move towards him, walking and pawing the ground like a deer, and rubbing his antlers against the trees. Soon the buck began to approach the hunter, but the latter kept his head constantly turned toward the deer the better to maintain his disguise. Presently the buck came quite close to the Indian, when the latter sped his arrow and brought the quarry down. They carried the meat home and the old man demanded that the meat and skin should all be his in payment for his advice. This was the third time he had advised them and the third time he had received a gift for his service. He directed that the meat should be cut into pieces and hung in the trees to dry, and that the skin should be stretched and dried for his bed.

21. Next day the elder brother desired the younger to stay at home, saying that he would like to hunt alone. As usual, the old man warned him against the south, and directed him to hunt in the country north of the hogán. He set out, accordingly, to the north; but he returned at night without any game. Again on the following morning he set out alone, and this time went to the west, as his father had directed. He hunted all day without success, until near sunset, when it was time for him to return. Then he remembered what his father had told him of the shrubs that would always have deer for his arrow. Looking around he saw a cliff rose, into which he shot his dart, and at the same instant he observed a deer falling in the shrub. He ran to the spot and found a dead doe. When he had skinned and dressed it, he could discover no high tree at hand that he might hang it on to keep it safe from the wolves, so he laid the meat on the top of the cliff rose, spread the skin over it, stuck an arrow upright on the top of it, and went home. On his way he often said to himself, ?Why does my father bid me never to go to the south?? He pondered much on the subject, and before he reached the hut he had determined to satisfy his curiosity and to go to the south on the first good opportunity. When he got home he told where he had laid the meat, and, fearing that the crows or coyotes might get at it, he begged his brother to hasten and bring it in. When the meat came he asked that a piece might be broiled for his lunch on the hunt next day. All that night the thought of his father?s prohibition continued to haunt his mind and would not be dismissed.

22. On the morrow, when he went forth on his hunt, his father gave him the usual injunctions, saying: "Hunt in any direction from the lodge that you will; but go not to the south." He departed as if he were going to the east; but when he got out of sight from the hogán he turned round to the south and pursued his way in that direction. He went on until he came to the San Juan River, and he forded it at a place a little above Beautiful Under the Cottonwoods, where they had crossed it before. He went on to a place called Tyèl-saka¢ (Erect Cat-Tail Rushes) and thence to a place called Dsiskí¢ (Clay Hill). Here he laid his deer skin mask and his weapons on the ground and climbed the hill to observe the surrounding country for game. But instead of looking south in the direction in which he was going he looked to the north, the country in which dwelt his people. Before him were the beautiful peaks of ¢epéntsa, with their forested slopes. The clouds hung over the mountain, the showers of rain fell down its sides, and all the country looked beautiful. And he said to the land, "Aqalàni!" (greeting), and a feeling of loneliness and homesickness came over him, and he wept and sang this song:

That flowing water! That flowing water!
My mind wanders across it.
That broad water! That flowing water!
My mind wanders across it.
That old age water! That flowing water!
My mind wanders across it.

23. The gods heard his song and they were about to gratify his wishes. He was destined to return to ¢epéntsa, but not in the manner he most desired. Had he gazed to the south when he ascended the hill, instead of to the north, it might have been otherwise.

24. He wiped away his tears and went down to the place where he had laid his mask and arms at the foot of the hill. He put on his buckskin coat and was just putting on his mask, but had not quite drawn it down over his head, when he heard a noise to the south and, looking around, he saw a great crowd on horseback riding towards him. To see better he drew off his mask, and then observed that they were dividing into two lines as they advanced; a moment later he was surrounded. The horsemen were of the tribe of Ute, a people whose language he did not understand. One young man rode up close to the Navajo, aimed an arrow at the breast of the latter and drew it to the head; but just as he was about to release it an old man began to address the party in a loud voice and the young warrior lowered his arrow and relaxed his bow. Then the speaker dismounted, approached the captive, and seized him by the arm. For a long time there was much loud talking and discussion among the Ute. Now one would harangue the party and then another would make a speech, but after a while the dispute ceased and the old man motioned to the Navajo to move on. They made him trot while they followed him on horseback in a semicircle, so that they could guard him and watch his movements. Soon they came to Ty?l-saka?; shortly afterward they crossed the San Juan. That night they camped near ¢epéntsa, where they watched him closely all night and gave him nothing to eat. They bound his feet firmly together, tied his hands behind his back, and threw an untanned buckskin over

him before they lay down to sleep.