



Issue Number 6

Spring Ceremonies

One warm sunny day after lunch, everyone in grandpa's household was resting, grandpa lying against the wall on a sheepskin, father sitting by the door repairing his torn moccasin, mother and Malo lazily clearing up the noonday dishes. The children were out playing. Now and then there was a little idle talk, but each person was mostly wrapped up in his own thoughts.

Grandpa saw himself making a windbreaker in his field, thinking that in a couple of days the job would be done. Visions of big melons and corn, which he hoped would be ready in time for the Niman Katchina ceremonial in summer, were already there in his thoughts. "If it rains..."

Father was thinking of all the things to be done in the kiva and hoping that they would get finished, the wedding robes and sashes which he and the men were weaving for almost five days. If his prediction is right, they should be finished in a couple of days. The bride will go back to her house about that time. He will then look over his fields to see if anything has to be done before planting time. "It won't be long before my oldest son finds someone to wed, if he hasn't already," the thought gives him a shiver as he imagines one night hearing someone's mother announcing her daughter from the doorway.

Mother was thinking of too many things. She and a group of women are weaving baskets, but she must let that go for a while for she heard that there would be another wedding. She must get the corn grinding done to help out her relations, so they will help when her own older daughter gets married, which won't be very long. Growing up

comes mighty fast! She also thinks of her younger ones, and the meals for tonight and the next morning. She has heard that a woman's work never ends.

Suddenly there was a commotion and yelling outside. Father and grandpa look toward each other and nod knowingly about the secret they have kept to themselves. "Grandpa! Father! Mother!" the children yell bursting through the door, "Katchinas with long yucca whips are coming into the village," cried the older child. "Are they coming to whip us?" asked the smaller one. "No, they come as friends," father replies calmly. "They might have remembered you as good boys and brought you gifts," added Grandpa, "better run over to the plaza where you can be seen."

Yes, today is the day of challenge, a test whether we are in shape, and have the strength to out-distance these katchinas in a race of a hundred yards or more. Those who are sure of their ability to run may challenge them, because these katchinas are in shape and ready for this event. In the first round they are allowed to use their whips, which will then be taken away by the Katchina Father, depending on how he feels. Thereafter each racer must catch his challenger around the waist after he overtakes him.

They came in different representations, but the most feared are the one who rips your clothes off, the one who clips your hair from your head, and the one that feeds you hot chili pepper. There is also one that feeds you animal droppings. But the ones especially feared by men are the kokopell manas, or "sexy girls." When caught by them and once laid, it is very hard to get away, unless your aunts come to the rescue and drag them off of you. Just the same it causes great excitement and fun for the women.

Strings of corn and tamales, sho-me-vicki, are placed at the starting point. Each challenger gets his reward from these, and most of them are given to the children as gifts. The children are half hidden under their mothers' shawls, all the time in fear, hoping the kokopell mana will not see them and attack them as with the older boys and men.

"Mother, where is our big brother? He should have been here to get those prizes!" The smaller child boasted, "Our brother can run faster than anybody!" "He went herding sheep this morning and won't be back until later," she answered, to cover up for the older brother who is participating as a katchina.

Thus another event passes so that the spirit of life will be strong, bringing blessings for the coming spring. Our life was filled with such ceremonies not long ago, but today fast feet are being replaced with fast moving wheels. Our wonderful life will be restored only when we learn that wheels are dangerous to our health.

In the Words of Dan Katchongva...

"It was when I was just reaching manhood that the long road of iron came together between Winslow and Flagstaff." Dan Katchongva often recalled the great occasion in 1881, when the Santa Fe Railway joined East and West about 50 miles south of Oraibi. "At that time the air was so clear that you could see it all the way from Oraibi, where I was raised. Some days we could actually see the machines move in the distance. Perhaps our eyes were better at that early age."

Katchongva belongs to the Sun Clan, which took over the chieftaincy of Hotevilla

after Pongyayouma of the Fir Clan neglected his duties and left the village. (See Techqua Ikachi No. 5). He is the son of Yukiuma, the chief who founded Hotevilla in 1906, and served as a spokesman and advisor up to the time he became chief.

"When I was growing up there was not much trouble," he would tell us. "What you see around Oraibi has changed a great deal! Down there to the southeast, that wash used to be flat with many cornfields, belonging to many clans. We had heavy rain, but there were no deep arroyos like you see now, for we could control it with our sacred knowledge, so the flooding waters would spread evenly throughout the fields. But we were upset and angered when our own people in Oraibi turned against us by choosing the white man's ways and evicting us from the village. We delivered our pahos and digging stick to the water spirits and commanded that deep wash to be formed, so the waters coming from above would be useless to those who disregarded the Spirit's laws. There was also sand down below Oraibi which is no longer there. With our sacred knowledge we took a handful of sand to Hotevilla when we moved, to make the land richer, so we would have plenty of food." Such statements must seem unbelievable to people who have never experienced this type of power.

"I was young and strong when we had the clash between the 'hostiles' and the 'friendlies' in Oraibi." (The United States Government and the missionaries called the faithful Hopi "hostiles." Only later did we learn the true meaning of that word. "I was full of vigor, and felt no one could throw me. But when the factionalism erupted I was stormed by four or five men, each to one limb, and another jumped into my midsection and knocked me unconscious. That convinced me that I was not so tough after all."

Thus Dan Katchongva recalls his involvement in the famous split in Oraibi, out of which Hotevilla was founded as a sanctuary for the Hopi way of life. He was involved continually in countless efforts to protect our right to live according to the Great Spirit's instructions.

Not long after we moved to Hotevilla, Government troops came and marched us, men, women, and children, to a place six miles below Oraibi and tried to get us to sign an agreement to join the Government Agency's flock, and be spared from further harassment. We refused, and the men were marched over thirty miles to Keams Canyon.



"There we were shackled and chained together, starved and forced to work to build walls and roads," Dan recalls. "I and many of the followers of Yukiama did not weaken in spite of all we were put through to break our spirit. If they had shot us all then, they would have no obstacle crossing their road to riches, but for some reason they didn't."

Katchongva withstood the trials along with the rest of us, and later emerged to take over the duties abandoned by Pongyayouma. As Yukiama's son, he became the natural successor. "I have protested against the hindrances to our ways of life for years, but the more I reject, the bigger the offers get. Some people think I am a crazy teller of fairy tales and doomsday stories. Since I became recognized as the leader of Hotevilla village, I have met many times with those who want to better our ways with material things, some who say we must meet such offers halfway, and those who agree that I must refuse entirely. I think the ones who refuse entirely are right, because they have experienced our struggle. Those still living through it are having a hard time, and will probably continue to as long as they live.

"Some day all of my story will be written down after I pass on. It will be long if written in detail. I have lived to journey to Washington, D.C. at least two times, and to the 'house of glass,' and on all occasions I found eyes and ears closed. Mouths were too tight to let out anything positive. I have lived to see and ride on the 'road in the sky,' the 'moving house of iron,' and the horseless carriage. I was fortunate enough to speak to many people through the 'cobwebs,' and through space as well, as our old leaders had predicted, to reach people with my message.

"I have lived to wear, and wear out, many pieces of white man's clothing, and eat many of his fine foods. I am getting old and will pass on someday. It makes me sad to think I may not get to meet our True White Brother in person, but it is prophesied that just two or three righteous persons will be plenty to fulfill his mission. Even one truly righteous would be able to do it."

Katchongva passed on in February, 1972. Unlike his father, Yukiama, he didn't get to shake hands with the President in the White House. But in the late '50's, when he was in Washington to attempt communication with U.S. Government, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, himself of native ancestry, asked him why he wore a white man's coat and rode in a white man's car, if he refused to support the white man's schools and way of life. Katchongva replied, "I have heard these words from traitor Hopi, but I never expected to hear them from you!" The Commissioner blushed and hid his face. What Katchongva stood for is hard for anyone to face while trying to go the other way. That is why every attempt is made to discredit his authority, even today. But he saw, just as clearly as his father did, the grief and confusion that would strike Hopi soon after a few of the Government's tempting offers were accepted. He knew very well the tragedy that would befall our future generations once we sacrificed our land and our self-determination for a few handouts.

Following the example of Dan Katchongva, his father Yukiama, and many other dedicated traditional leaders of today and of centuries long past, the true Hopi would

rather die than see their children obliged to serve a dangerous system beyond their control.

The Attack on Traditional Authority

We gathered the following information from a newsletter issued by Bacabi Village this March, to which we add our opinion.

The biggest item of the discussion was the water/sewer project at Shungopavi Village, which has been stopped by the Kikmongwi, Claude Kewanyawma, and some of his followers. Kewanyawma says that the water/sewer project was not approved by him, and that a group led by Alford Joshvaem and Fred Kaboti had no authority to go into an agreement with the Indian Health Service. So this group, the Village Committee of Shungopavi, then asked the Tribal Council to go into the agreement with the Indian Health Services on their behalf.

This shows that the puppet committee will do almost anything on their own, desperately trying to get what they want, even if it means denouncing the authority of the Kikmongwi, the village doctrine and the great laws of the Great Spirit.

The newsletter continues to report that several important questions were raised, including how much authority the Kikmongwi has under the present "Hopi Constitution." It was argued that the Tribal Council is the governing body for the whole tribe, and that the individual village has little or no power.

This is completely wrong. The Tribal Council is not the governing body for the whole tribe, as we have pointed out many times. This is no doubt a scheme by which to combat our true leaders' refusal to allow a takeover. Traditional authority, as we still practice it, is the most perfect form of government to be found anywhere in the world. The belittling of our religious leaders as "illiterate" cannot change this.

The article further points out that the chairman believes that if this issue reached the courts, it would be decided in favor of the Tribal Council. The chairman claims that if the Tribal Council were to enter an agreement on behalf of the "Village Committee" of Shungopavi, it would signify that any group from any village could work through the council without going through the proper local authorities. In the case of Bacabi, for example, even the progressive "governor" and his "Board of Directors" would be bypassed. The Tribal Council agreed that representatives of the Indian Health Service, Richard Gruitt and John Martin, redraft the agreement for presentation at a later date.

The real issue is village sovereignty. By long established tradition each Hopi Village governs itself, and the traditional village leaders represent this authority. The "Tribal Council," which the United States has forced on us, seeks to destroy our traditional system, regardless of the fact that its own constitution guarantees the right of a village to govern itself in the traditional way.

Mormon Church Requests Land Tract

Wayne Sekaquaptewa, brother of the puppet council chairman, and president of the Oraibi branch of the Church of Jesus Christ of the latter Day Saints, announced in Qua'toqti (March 11, 1976) that members of the LDS Church on Second and Third Mesas have petitioned the Hopi Tribal Council on February 5th, for a 99-year lease on five acres of land about one mile north of Old Oraibi. The Church intends to construct a chapel and other facilities with a kitchen and classroom and special features for the preparation of Hopi food, such as oven pits and a piki house. The remaining land would be used for additional buildings as the membership expands.

It has been our experience throughout recent history that Bahanna (white-man) missionaries are always at the root of our problems. The younger generation would have a greater understanding and trust in their own teachings, and our way of life would not be disintegrating as it is today, if these missionaries had not been so persistent in their efforts to convert us to their beliefs. Perhaps our attitude towards the Mormon Church would be less bitter if their conduct toward Hopi traditional-thinking people had been less excessive.

Any average person can easily see that it is wrong for them to construct their temples here without consulting the rightful people. That land might not appear to be in use now, but this area is already bound for a sacred purpose. There are many shrines, some of which have already been destroyed by road construction.

We look at this with suspicion. The establishment of this indoctrination facility, and the methods by which the land is being obtained, could be part of an attempt by the Mormon Church to take over all of our land. It is a fact that many key posts are occupied by Mormons, including the two Tribal Council attorneys from Salt Lake City.

It is very sad that the Mormons must disregard our rightful leaders to get what they want. It is clear that they follow this course knowing that they can get the land without question from none other than their own kind, working with young Hopi who have no spiritual or earthly foundation, and have lately been brought to power by outsiders.

Upon hearing the proposal, Mina Lanza, Kikmongwi of Oraibi, and Sewemanewa, a religious leader of Hotevilla, went straight to Wayne Sekaquaptewa's office, since they knew that he would not come before the traditional leaders when invited. They both gave him a tongue lashing, but it was as if they were talking to a dead stump.

"You listen to me carefully," began Mina. "I have come clear over here to look right in your eyes and speak to you. You must lack respect by not coming to us for proper approval to build your church between my village and Hotevilla. You know very well that the Tribal council does not own that land. Who gave it to them? On what authority? We Traditional Leaders and people desire no church on our land in that area. Please heed what we say to you here today. Do not intrude upon our land with your church."

Sewemanewa added, "We are closely related brothers. I have spoken to our

brother Abbott (the Tribal Council Chairman) several times. Ever since you and your whole family became the ruling class, you do as you please, regardless whether it is right or wrong. You are breaking up and dividing the whole Hopi Nation. One day you will come to the dead end with your faithful followers. It may not be good, so I warn you both to be prepared for the consequences. We do not want that church there, and we mean it."

More words were spoken, although Wayne did not challenge them, but promised to let them know the outcome of the proposal.

Shungopavi Sellout and Coverup

We feel obliged to comment on a very confusing article in Qua'toqti, the weekly newspaper of the "puppet" Hopi who have abandoned their tradition. The April 29 issue ran an article which quoted "leaders" in Shungopavi who claimed that the priesthood in that village is "jeopardized by corruption." This statement would be music to our ears if it were not from the mouth of "Bahanna Traditionalists," who in fact have abandoned their religious purpose.

We regret that we must intervene and defend our traditional brothers in Shungopavi. We've known all along that one day our old songs would become very popular, and our pattern of life would once again be regarded as very beautiful, yet we would have to beware of the danger hidden beneath this show of "tradition."

The article stressed that several religious leaders were dissatisfied with the political affairs of the Kikmongwi (chief) of the village, Claude Kewanyawma, claiming that his actions are not in harmony with his responsibility for the "welfare" of the village, and that "tradition" obliges them to reveal the "confusion" now threatening their "religious" way of life.

It went on to say that serious consideration was taken to inform the people of Shungopavi of the "unfortunate situation," and that the Kikmongwi has become involved with "outsiders" and Hopi from other villages who were breaking down the "ancient custom" for some selfish political purpose.

In reality the "puppet" Hopi who make these claims are not defending Hopi tradition, though they would like it to look that way! They smear the Kikmongwi because he has taken a stand in opposition to a housing project which is indeed the work of outsiders breaking down the ancient customs.

They claim to act from religious obligation, but they would not dare tell the truth, that the Kikmongwi is bound to defend the right of his villagers to own their land in common without allowing it to be leased or sold to the United States.

These so-called Hopi are only looking for hand-outs. The Kikmongwi and the true Hopi in Shungopavi know it is best to survive in freedom as our ancestors have, by their own hands. All true Hopi deeply oppose handouts such as housing, sewers, water and power lines, because we want to remain farmers of the land, not puppets looking for a job. This is what is meant by following the Great Spirit's instructions.

It suits the purpose of these seekers of handouts to make it appear that outside "radicals" are interfering and corrupting the religious structure, but it's the other way around.

Chief Kewanyawma has appealed to the Secretary of the Interior of the United States to review the decision of the so-called Hopi Tribal Council by which land below Second Mesa is now being developed for a HUD housing project. The houses are nearly completed, yet there are at least ten grounds on which this appeal is being made, mostly violations of the constitution under which the Council is required to operate.

If the Secretary should recognize the illegality of the lease, by some change of heart, it might make Watergate look like child's play in Hopiland.

The article fails to mention that these supposedly Hopi religious leaders are not Hopi, but Mormon! What else could they be, considering the fact that they prefer to follow the Mormon chairman of the Tribal Council rather than their traditional chief!

As we have said before, the Bahanna road is no path of roses. This is proven again and again by hard experience. It looks nice at first, as the "progressive" Hopi start to accept the handouts, but any Bahanna will tell you the road never ends. The bills keep coming, and they can't be paid with corn. That means giving up the Hopi life and looking for a white man's job. The word "unemployment" meant nothing to us before such government programs were introduced.

In spite of experience, the "progressives" say "We know we have to deal with the present way of life for our children's sake." Their selfish motive keeps them from admitting that with these words they are selling their children's birthright.



The shield symbol with its four circles in four quadrants means: "Together with all nations we protect both land and life, and hold the world in balance."