FALL, 1986 NUMBER 6 .\$3.75

# SHAMAN'S DRUM A JOURNAL OF EXPERIENTIAL SHAMANISM



by Mariano Valadez

### SPECIAL COLOR ISSUE ON HUICHOLS

Interview with Ulu Temay, Huichol Shaman Prophets of the Mexican Sterras by Carl Lumholtz Mirrors of the Gods by Susana Valadez Dance of the Tonal by Jose Stevens

#### SHAMAN'S DRUM

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SHAMAN'S DRUM (ISSN 0887-8897) is published quarterly for \$15 per year by the Cross-Cultural Shamanism Network, 1130 Portland, Albany, CA 94706. Application to Mail At Second-Class Postage Rates is Pending at Berkeley, CA. POSTMASTER & SUBSCRIBERS: Send

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## From the Editors

#### Panparios For a Good Year

During this Thanksgiving season, I am reminded of the Huichol way of saying thank you, panparios. The word is a short version of the Spanish phrase, "Pan para dios", meaning everything goes to and is for god. Having personally received many blessings and teachings from the Huichols, I would like to say panparios and acknowledge them for preserving a beautiful tradition that honors the gifts of the gods.

I would also like to say panparios to Debra Carroll for all the long hours and hard work she put into editing Shaman's Drum over the last year. I would add a hearty panparios for the spirits helping persuade Dennis Dutton to join us as our new Associate Editor.

Finally, I would say panparios to our readers, advertisers, and supporters who have helped make the "Drum" a success. And in keeping with another Huichol tradition, I would say panparios in advance to the gods and spirits for helping us all through the upcoming year.

Thank you, Timothy White

#### So Long But Not Goodbye

It's autumn again, a time when I like to orient myself in the presence of the harvest. Standing in the garden, I survey the fruition of dreamseeds carefully planted and lovingly tended in previous seasons. At the same time I consider which produce to use or give away now, how best to preserve the remainder for the future, and where to cut back growth whose cycle is ending.

Looking back on 16 months as editor of *Shaman's Drum*, I am pleased that the journal truly has become a forum for discussion of ideas and issues of concern to the shamanic community. *Shaman's Drum* has gained the respect and support of native and non-native leaders in shamanic practice from around the globe. And it is contributing significantly to the study of shamanism by stimulating the writing of original articles by practitioners about their training and experience.

It has been exciting to solicit participation from and to work alongside with people like Vicki Noble, Doug Boyd, Angeles Arrien and Luiz Gasparetto. Reading letters from the readers has been equally rewarding, if at times frustrating, hilarious or sobering. Needless to say, there are numerous controversial topics I'd like to see addressed in future issues, profound considerations I'd like to write

But the time has come for me to

move on, to expend more time teaching and completing a book I am coauthoring. Over the last three years I have been teaching and consulting individuals and small groups in the shamanic arts of ritual drama, sacred vocal practice, mask-making and tonal dance as skills for seeing oneself clearly and aligning one's actions with that insight. I have nurtured this small practice and also my own work as a ritual dramatist, allowing them to grow at a gradual pace. Now it is time for them to bloom.

Three other women - Carole Dowling, Terry Hatcher and Shaman's Drum's own Cindy Pavlinac - and I are writing a book based on our personal experiences as artists and sensitives. This practice, like my private practice, has been several years in the making, and the time has come for this dream also to be actualized.

I set out to write my last editorial about some of my favorite pet peeves in the misuse of shamanic practice. It seemed more appropriate, though, to write a letter to the readers expressing my gratitude for the opportunity to have helped present Shaman's Drum to you. Although this is my final contribution as editor, it is not, hopefully, the last of my writing to appear on the pages of the Drum.

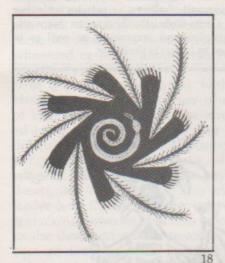
May you all

Walk in Beauty, Debra D. Carroll

## SHAMAN'S D

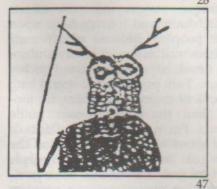
DRUM

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ON THE FRONT COVER: Spirit of Peyote by Huichol yarn painter Mariano Valadez depicts a peyote vision of Kauyumari, the spirit and guardian of peyote. CENTERFOLD: Tatewari, Our Grandfather, by Mariano Valadez, portrays peyoteros listening to the fire during their pilgrimage to the Huichol holyland. ON THE BACK COVER: Eagle of the Sun by Elijio Carillos shows a Huichol shaman leaving offerings to Grandfather Sun and to the double-headed eagle.



Susana Valadez '86

## **HUICHOL EARRINGS**

from the Huichol Center for Cultural Survival and Traditional Arts



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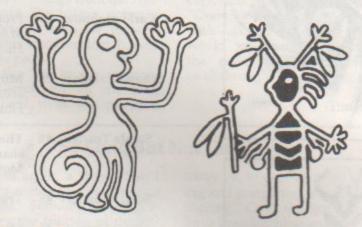
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## Open Dialogue

Open Dialogue is an editorial column designed to initiate discussion on controversial questions and topics of interest to our readers. The viewpoints expressed in Open Dialogue are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policies of either the staff of Shaman's Drum or its publisher, the Cross-Cultural Shamanism Network. Readers are invited to respond with further discussion and comments, as well as to open new dialogues. The best letters will be published in Letters to the Editor.



Guided Tour Spirituality:
Cosmic Way
or Cosmic Rip-off?

by Susana Valadez

This letter is in response to ads appearing in Shaman's Drum inviting readers to take guided tours to remote villages of traditional peoples or sacred places of power. Sometimes these ads suggest that participation on these journeys holds the promise of spiritual awakening or the acquisition of shamanic powers. The tour guides are advertised as people with competence and knowledge of the cultures to be visited. The ads often give the impression that villagers will welcome the visitors, and that their presence poses no threat to the stability of the cultures. I take issue with the implications of these ads and would further assert that guided tours into some of these secluded cultures is perhaps one of the most dead-

ly weapons the Western world possesses for contributing to the extinction of traditional peoples.

My philanthropic work with the Huichol Indians for the past decade and my eight-year marriage to a member of the tribe provide me with a unique insight into the effects guided tours and tourists have upon these people. Because of my marriage, as well as strong family and social ties I have within the Huichol culture, I am privileged to spend long periods of time among them, far longer than the average tour guide spends. I'm in a position to witness or hear about what happens when the tour goes home, how some people react to their visits, and the overall effects that my paisanos, or countrymen, have on the health and wellbeing of the people. My personal observations are quite shocking and may or may not apply to guided-tour activities in similar cultures. In any case, my inside view of guided tour spirituality should provide food for thought to both tour organizers and people considering embarking on such ventures. I will briefly describe here some occurrences I have personally witnessed or heard about from Huichol family and friends.

In a recent conversation with a Huichol leader, the governor of one of five Huichol localities, he stressed his great concern to me over the difficulties tourists are now posing to Huichol people who make their religious pilgrimages to the peyote desert, 300 miles away. This tribal leader feels the Mexican government is cracking down on Huichols who go to the desert to gather peyote. He cites as the reason for this the involvement some Huichols have with

outside tour groups.

While the use of peyote in Mexico is illegal, the Huichols are granted immunity because peyote is the foundation of their magico-religious belief system. However, Westerners who participate in peyote pilgrimages with Huichols not only are in danger of getting picked up by the Federal agents, but also are endangering the Huichols who escort them. The soldiers patrolling the peyote desert are not impressed by Americans who claim they come for enlightenment. The Mexicans think the outsiders come for dope, and accuse the Huichols of dealing drugs to the 'gringo Hippies". The Huichol governor I spoke to was aware of several instances of harassment of peyoteros by the federales, even though the groups in question had nothing to do with the outsiders or Huichols from the community that sponsor the tours. On the contrary, they were Indians who had sold their last chickens or suffered enormous hardship to make passage to their holy land. The soldiers forcibly removed them from the bus, their medicine baskets and peyote were confiscated, and they were thrown into jail.

Where does the responsibility lie when innocent people are victimized

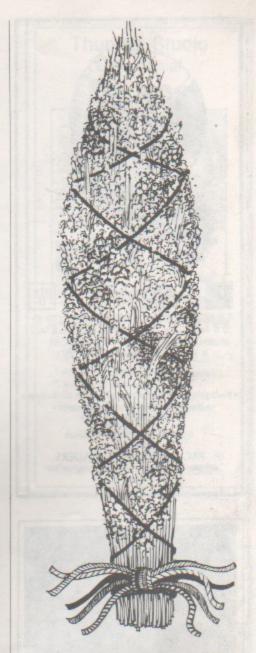
like this?

The law is cracking down on Huichols in their homeland as well. Drug raids - soldiers flying into the remote mountains in helicopters look-

ing for marijuana - are the latest repercussions of tourist activity to the Huichol area. The link between drug seekers and Indians was well established in Mexico a couple of decades ago, when tourists from all over the world flooded into the Oaxaca area, further south, seeking the "magic mushroom". Oaxaca turned into what looked like a war zone, with road checks, shake-downs, and complete disregard for human rights by the soldiers. This has not yet happened in the Huichol area, but imagine how these folks feel when their houses are ransacked, their bags of corn emptied out, belongings thrown about, and the people stand by, watching the terrifying rifle-bearing soldiers who find nothing. Because of the precedent set in Oaxaca and the mentality of the soldiers who can't imagine any other reason for Americans seeking out contact with the so-called ignorant Indians, the Huichols are suspected of planting marijuana fields for drug dealers.

The health hazard visitors may bring to the Huichol homeland is something to be seriously considered as well. The Huichols are not an immunized population, and contact with the outside world is diminishing their numbers at an alarming rate. Measles, whooping cough, tuberculosis, and other infectious diseases are often catastrophic. Huichols partake in many food sharing ceremonies involving communal eating and drinking vessels, which are passed to Huichols and visitors alike. Because of this, what may be a little "touch of the flu" for a tourist from San Francisco may be the touch of death to little Huichol children. Presently the infant mortality rate among the Huichols is a disturbing fifty percent. I can't help but wonder how many fatal illnesses were transmitted by tourists drinking out of a communal water gourd, or by unwashed hands passing out edible Certainly there are other ways these diseases are transmitted, but tourist germs aren't helping.

The next consideration is whether visitors truly are welcome. The people who sponsor tours into the Huichol areas claim to be invited by members of the community. But in the case of the Huichols, members of the community do not represent the consensus of the entire community or communities that make up the Huichol culture. While certain members



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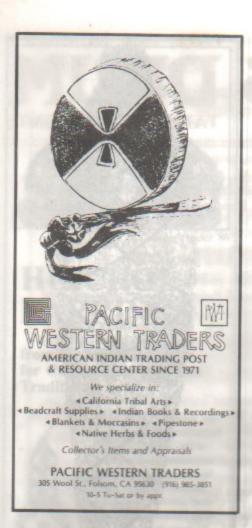
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For more info call or write: Moving Circle (415) 488-9531 c/o Box 615 Woodacre, CA 94973 of one community may benefit from outside alliances and guided tours, the rest are forced to put up with it. One shaman who wishes to share his knowledge with outsiders may very well be acting of his own initiative and perceived by other Huichols as betraying the confidence of his

I have seen what happens when tour groups have come into areas I've worked in, where shy women and children are placed on display for the vacationing voyeurs. Indians who should be taking part in important ceremonies to ensure the wellbeing of their families and their spiritual paths are moved aside to make room for the visitors. One of my shaman friends who worked for years to complete his vows, which included strict sexual abstinence, confided to me how distracted he was during one ceremony by a pretty blonde tourist sitting across the temple from him who had not yet learned how Indian women sit on the ground without exposing themselves. Another married couple I know had problems for months because the husband beat the wife after she became jealous of him for hugging a female visitor who was a little too free with her emotions. Shamans who conduct important ceremonies often remark how distracting it is for them to have people speaking in foreign tongues, flashbulbs in the church or temples, and other nuisances, such as people freaking out with culture shock. But the Huichols are very polite, and while they'll express their discontent among themselves, they rarely say anything to offend visitors.

Uninvited guests pose great difficulties for the Huichols. Often times people who were originally introduced to the Huichol area on a tour now make their way back to different, more secluded areas where they are neither invited nor welcome. Since there are no hotels, restaurants or accommodations for tourists, Huichols are at times forced to accommodate tourists for days while they await the next plane out. Even though outsiders may feel they are helping the people by purchasing their arts and crafts or giving away gifts and money, they may also be creating rivalries among the people with repercussions disruptive to the

harmony of the group long after the outsiders leave. The Huichols do need help from the outside such as water systems, medical help, tree planting or donations for fixing the community truck. Most tourists don't offer the kind of help the Huichols need.

Now don't get me wrong. I am not against the idea of non-natives acquiring native knowledge to better their lives. On the contrary, if this planet is going to survive into the next century, it will undoubtedly be because of the teachings native peoples have provided to awaken our consciousness. The knowledge native peoples have been safe-keeping for the world all these centuries may be thought of as seeds in incubation waiting to be planted in the fertile soil of our times.

The lineage of these seeds stretches back to times when people and nature lived in unity and the sacred realm existed in harmony with the mundane. The seeds of knowledge we acquire from native peoples contain our common human memory, something long forgotten by much of the Western world, but able to be reawakened, and to thrive if properly planted and nurtured. That is precisely why this knowledge must be attained under more special circumstances, not packaged and sold like trips to Magic Mountain.

The impression I get from reading the ads in Shaman's Drum is that guided tour spirituality promotes the idea of "instant" enlightenment. For the price of a plane ticket, tour guide, and room with double occupancy, one can reenter the sacred realm and acquire the knowledge of the ancients. While the ads might not say this, this is what they imply to me, and perhaps to other readers as well. In addition to the blatant disregard promoters of such tours may unwittingly exhibit for the wellbeing of the native cultures targeted, the whole premise of acquiring peak spiritual experiences by transplanting ourselves into sacred Indian settings for the duration of a tour seems very shallow and misleading to me.

For more information, contact: Susana Valadez, c/o Huichol Center for Cultural Survival and Traditional Arts, 414-41st Street, Oakland, CA 94609.



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with Vicki Noble and Susana Valadez

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#### FRIDAY NIGHT:

"Sacred Art & The Huichol Woman's Shamanic Path"

This lecture is open to the public (for \$10) and will feature Susana Valadez and her slides of Huichol women — their life and creative work. Vicki Noble will place this in the context of global female shamanism and sacred art.

### SATURDAY & SUNDAY: "FEMALE SHAMANISM: SACRED ART"

Everywhere in the world women have channeled the energies of the Divine Feminine through their arts and crafts. Because women are the child-bearers and responsible for feeding, clothing and teaching the children, they have utilized the gifts of the Earth Mother in joyous and innovative ways throughout human evolution. Some anthropologists believe that it is women who are responsible for the "leap" in consciousness from the ape ancestor to the human family. The beginnings of human civilization are marked by female inventions: spinning, weaving, pottery, basket-making; the use of fire and cooking food; food-growing and preservation; even home-building.

Much of the art that women have made is sacred or "shamanistic" in nature: pots for catching spirits of illness; fetishes for healing; chanting and musical instruments for banishing illness and raising energy for healing; dancing, movement arts, and raising the "kundalini" for divination, magic, and regenerative healing; and beautiful pots and carvings to be offered to the Goddess in thanks for her continued nourishment of humankind.

In this intensive two-day workshop, we will invoke the ancient sacred power of the female group for shamanistic healing and transformation. In the old ways, we will make art together, that is, without contemporary "aesthetic" judgments, we will create from inner guidance and intuition, as women have always done. We will listen to the voice of spirits and let our hands create what is wanted for our individual healings. Finally we will consecrate these pieces and take them home to promote healing and transformation in our daily lives. These actions link us with women through all time who have brought into life the Divine Feminine energies of truth and light and love.

Susana Valadez has been working with the Huichol Indians for ten years, helping to reclaim and salvage their ancient sacred culture; they in turn have blessed her life with beauty. Her husband Mariano is one of the finest contemporary Huichol yarn painters, and Susana herself has learned some arts of the women. Susana will have on hand her special collection, and will share materials and knowledge with the group. (See articles this issue)

Vicki Noble is a feminist shaman-healer working with cross-cultural female shamanism in ancient and contemporary times. She has been making sacred art for ten years and works with individuals and groups of women on the healing path. She is co-creator of MOTHERPEACE TAROT CARDS, author of MOTHERPEACE: A WAY TO THE GODDESS (Haper & Row, 1983), and co-author of MOTHERPEACE TAROT PLAYBOOK (Wingbow, 1986). Vicki will facilitate the shamanistic healing process with ritual and ceremony.

#### LETTERS

Descendants and relatives of the Sinkyone still gather at Sally Bell Grove for ceremonies, for collecting medicines, and for honoring the ancestors that are buried there. The animal relatives also, such as the salmon, steelhead, trout, bears, mountain lions, eagles, osprey, and sea lions still gather and thrive on the coast beneath Sally Bell Grove.

We are at a pivotal point in history where we can save these ancient power spots of the world that keep the channels open for healing, and keep the eco-system in its perfect blessed balance. The trees draw the Earth energy up and draw the heavenly energy down, and keep us inspired, breathing. In this way they are teachers, and are examples of what we can be! Let us be as stalwart as they. Keep the saws out of the heart of the Earth. Please write Governor Deukmejian and your legislators at the State Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814. For further information you can contact the International Indian Treaty Council at: 1259 Folsom Street, San Francisco, CA 94103, (415) 863-7733.

> Amy Trussell Petaluma, CA

#### Call For Sponsorship

I recently saw an advertisement describing your publication and I am very interested in receiving Shaman's Drum.

Unfortunately I am in prison and have been in solitary confinement (disciplinary custody confinement) for religious reasons. I am an activist concerning the rights being denied Native American prisoners, and that's the right to practice our spiritual/cultural beliefs freely. The Bureau of Correction demands that I cut my long hair, and since I refuse to do this I have been kept in solitary confinement for 17 months. This makes it impossible for me to pay the subscription price of Shaman's Drum.

Maybe Shaman's Drum could inform its readers that prisoners are often unable to pay for subscriptions, and some arrangement can be made for Shaman's Drum readers to donate subscriptions to prisoners.

May Grandfather aid you in your own quest for knowledge and spiritual enlightenment.

We have received several letters from prisoners requesting complimentary subscriptions, and we have happily been able to give them subscriptions so far. Unfortunately, as second class regulations require us to send complimentary copies by first-class mail, the cost for us to give a subscription is very high. We are, however, permitted to send half-price subscriptions second class. So, thanks to Wildcat's letter, we are starting a new sponsorship program (see p. 54) whereby readers can donate special gift subscriptions (at \$7.50 each) to be sent to prisoners and other no-income persons.

Editors

#### Where Does Jesus Fit In?

Greetings of peace from the Colorado Rockies. My question to you this day is where does Jesus fit into the subject of shamanism? Or does he? Is the Great Spirit and the Creator the same as the God that is spoken of in the Gospel?

Your help and response in this matter will be greatly appreciated.

> Mark Quire Boulder, Co

Beliefs among students and practitioners of shamanism vary widely. There are some who believe Christ was himself a shaman; there is certainly circumstantial evidence that he participated in shamanistic activities such as fasting, talking with the Holy Spirit, exorcising evil spirits, and faith-healing the sick. For a discussion of the prophets as magicians (shamans?) one might refer to issue No. 46 of the Catholic journal Kerygma, which is reviewed in this issue.

The question of whether the Great Spirit or Creator is the same as the God spoken of in the Bible is again a matter of personal belief. If one accepts the belief that both the Great Spirit and God are all encompassing, then they are probably the same. Of course, exactly how we perceive or interpret the Great Spirit or God through our limited abilities may be quite different.

Editors

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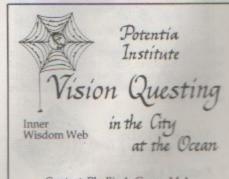
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#### LETTERS

#### Words on the Creator's Laws

I am a spiritual man from Peckwan Village on the lower Klamath River, Yurok Nation, and have traveled with Archiefire Lame Deer, Phillip Deere, Thomas Banyaca, Oren Lyons, Rolling Thunder and many more in Canada, Mexico and Central America. Many of my elders want me to talk for the Creator's Laws.

The following Articles of Commitment were formed out of Calvin Rube's talks to those who came to see us in Northern California. There are many reasons these words and laws of life need to be brought out, so you can use most of it as it is. You're doing a good thing with your magazine.

Lester Jake McKinleyville, CA

#### Articles of Commitment for Concerned People for the Natural Laws

The True Creator's people have never permanently lost their rights inherited from nature.

We stand to recognize our inherited rights and responsibilities for clean air, water, and earth. We recognize our other purifiers, such as fires, winds from each of the four directions, earthquakes, tidal waves, volcanoes, the rains, snows, and floods. These are warnings which help us become aware of the disturbance in the balance of nature. As the True Creator's children, we work and are committed to continue this good Universe for all God's people. Natural Law has and always will supersede law created by man.

Every decision of our Concerned People for the Natural Laws will reflect on the future of our children.

We acknowledge and respect all forms of life from the smallest animals, the birds, reptiles, sea life, and insects to the sacred plant life. These creatures and plants have rights inherited from the True Creator. Our True Creator has made all things to be in balance.

Human beings were given reason and knowledge with responsibilities. These gifts are to be developed and shared for the common good; yet they do not set us apart from, nor indicate we are better than, other forms of life. Being aware of this relationship within the natural world, we have formed our commitment. The reality is that we will pay for transgression against the life on earth. Nature has no mercy: "As you sow, so shall you reap."

We are concerned people, and with the help of all members we are becoming aware of the natural laws. Because

of our respect for all life,

We oppose such things as: disturbance of all sacred land, the use of herbicides and pesticides, the damming of creeks and rivers, water and air pollution, destructive logging practices, the denial of the right to gather food and medicine herbs, the use of nuclear fuel for energy and weaponry, and all forms of hard-path technology, such as solar satellites, off-shore drilling, strip mining, laser weapons, and synthetic fuels.

We can see how abuse of natural laws has affected life in the past, so that, as concerned people, we must stand for what is true, right, kind and necessary to be consistent with all nature's laws. There is a part of God in

all things.

We oppose, for example, the Gasquet to Orleans Road in northern California and its use within the sacred Traditional training ground. We oppose the proposed Burrills Peak micro-relay station that is to be used by federal agencies. We hold all land to be sacred.

We must be aware that we all live within the air around us. We all use the water that is around us. Our life depends on this earth. Without these things we would die. Preserving them is a common cause, no matter what our

race or gender.

These actions cited above and any other acts of disrespect or even violence against nature and human beings are detrimental to all life. As equal children of the True Creator, therefore, we will work to stop these violations of the True Creator's Law. Man may not attempt to add to or subtract from that Law. We are part of a great cycle of life on which the welfare of the entire world depends.

So be it!

Interested people may contact N.W.T./Concerned People for the Natural Laws, P.O. Box 1421, Eureka, CA 99501.



## Regional Calendars

SHAMAN'S DRUM calendar listings are provided free as a service to our readers. Both organizations and individuals are invited to announce classes, workshops or events with specific starting dates that might be of interest to our readers. We reserve the right to select those announcements of most relevance and to edit copy at our discretion. The announcement of an event in the calendar should not be considered an endorsement by either Shaman's Drum or C.C.S.N. COPY SPECIFICATIONS: Each listing should be headed by date, location (city and state), event title and optional subtitle. The description of the event should list important details, but please be brief (about 20 words) and end with a telephone number with area code for additional information. Each listing should be typed on a separate piece of paper

SHAMAN'S DRUM, P.O. BOX 2636, BERKELEY, CA 94702.

#### International

Nov. 19-26 / Jamaica RETREAT SEMINAR With Harley Swiftdeer

Magical Ceremonies to Dance the Sacred Dream Awake in the beauty of secluded Jamaica shoreline. Previous experience with Swiftdeer's work is a prerequisite. (416) 722-8604.

Nov. 21 - Dec. 11 / Bali & Indonesia INST. NOETIC SCIENCE TOUR

Meet healers, shamans, sorcerers, dance & puppet masters. Join festivals, Bali, Lombok, Toraja cult of the dead, Yogjakarta, Singapore. (415) 331-5650.

Nov. 28 - Dec. 14 / Brazil SPIRITIST HEALER SURVEY TOUR With Dr. Mariorie Rand Edmundo Barbosa

Five city journey to observe and/or participate in sessions with spiritists, Condomble rituals; visit centers of Umbanda, psychic research, Valley of the Dawn esoteric community. Eileen Sadoff (213) 475-3813.

Dec. '86 / Nayarit, Mex.; Teopantli, Calpuli MEDICINE JOURNEY

Native American New Age Community. For healing and purification. Learn Spanish and ancient healing techniques. MAIS (714) 646-4455.

Dec. 15-Jan. 1/Peru PILGRIMAGE TO THE SACRED LAND OF

With Inti Cesar Malasquez

Explore the sacred power spots of Cusco, the Inca Way and Machu Picchu; then on to the rainforest of the Amazon. (707) 874-2893.

Jan. 1-31/Peru & Bolivia PILGRIMAGE TO THE MAGICAL ANDES MOUNTAINS & AMAZON RAINFOREST With Inti Cesar Malasquez

Feel the strength of Mother Earth in the Amazon jungle and the Andes Mountains. Explore sacred power spots of the Incas in Peru and Bolivia, including Lake Titicaca. (707) 874-2893.

Jan. 10 - 24 / Mexico POLARITY THERAPY, HEALTH PSYCHOL-OGY, TRAD. MEXICAN HEALING Eighth Annual Seminar

With Leslie Korn, Psychology Instructor, Harvard Medical School; Janet Schreiber, Director, Center for Traditional Medicine, Cambridge and Mexico. Also enjoy afternoon scuba diving, horseback riding and visits with local curanderos. Center for Traditional Medicine. (617) 489-3806.



Jan. 15 - Feb. 4 / Burma & Thailand INST. NOETIC SCIENCE TOUR

Contrasting Buddhism and hill tribe animism. Meet healers, dancers, and artists in Bangkok, Northern Thai hill tribes, Phuket Island, seven days in Burma. (415) 331-5650.

Feb. 16-25/Mexico PILGRIMAGE TO MEXICO With Larain Boyll

Ceremonies with the Huicholes, at the ocean and power places, led by dona Andrea Rios, Huichol shaman. Four Winds Circle. (415) 383-

Mar. 4-14/Mexico PILGRIMAGE TO WIRIKUTA With Larain Boyll

With shaman dona Andrea Rios and family. Experience ceremonies and healing, learn preparation of medicine. For advanced group. Four Winds Circle. (415) 383-6599.

#### West Coast

Nov. - Ongoing / Berkeley & Los Altos, CA WAYS OF POWER With Shelley Thomson

Training in an East European shamanic tradition. Power objects, healing, reality change, clairvoyance, sacred ways and personal power. 8 week sessions. (415) 644-2874.

Nov. 7/San Francisco, CA THREE CIVILIZATIONS & THREE PROBLEMS OF LIFE

Lecture, discussion, film; 7 - 10pm. California Institute of Integral Studies. (415) 753-6100.

Nov. 22 / Palo Alto, CA HEALING JOURNEY With Mary Bellsmith

Learn a process that enables participants to create and maintain wellness in all aspects of their lives. Santa Clara Valley Wellness Institute. (408) 973-9069.

Ongoing / Oakland, CA **FULL MOON FIRE CIRCLES** 

In Oakland Hills. Call Potentia Institute. (415) 339-8148.

Nov. 22 / Berkeley, CA THE ART OF HEALING One-day workshop

With Joel Alter, Ron Bugaj, Edie Hawthorne, Ruth-Inge Heinze, Stanley Krippner, Lewis E. Mehl, Rowena Pattee, Cheri Quincy and Donald Sandner. (415) 849-3791.

Nov. 22 - 23 / Berkeley, CA SHAMANIC EXTRACTION TRAINING WORKSHOP

With Sandra Ingerman

Prerequisite is the Shamanic Journey, Power and Healing workshop by Michael Harner or an authorized faculty member of the Center for Shamanic Studies. Sylvia Bell-Tull. 236-1302.

Nov. 30 / Oakland, CA CRYSTAL ENERGY

Participants will travel from crystal basics to programming for energetic transformation and acceleration. Call Barbara. (415) 937-SONG.

Dec. 5-7/Marin County, CA UNMASQUE YOUR SHAMANIC POWER With Suki Rappaport, PhD., Jim Swan, Ph.D. At ocean retreat, create evocative masques inspired by sweat lodges, dream ceremonies and guided imagery. (415) 924-4013.

Dec. 6-7/Bay Area in CA ONE DAY GATHERINGS Include sweat ceremonies

With Ovate Sunkawakan Waste, Good Horse Nation, Lakota Teton Sioux. Keeper of the Sacred Pipe, Sundancer and Medicine man of Makawakan Sacred Earth Society. Gayan (415) 383-0827.

Dec. 6-7/Palo Alto, CA ARTHRITIS SELF-HELP WORKSHOPS

Mental imagery, relaxation, managing pain, participation in health/disease, secondary gains of illness, early life decisions, goal setting. Santa Clara Valley Wellness Institute. (408) 973-9069.

December 13 - 14 / Folsom, CA 16TH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS SHOW Pacific Western Traders

General show and sale featuring a dozen or more artists and traders. (916) 985-3851.

Dec. 19-21/Eureka, CA WINTER SOLSTICE CELEBRATION Sponsored by Church of Loving Hands. Call (707) 733-5554.

#### MODERN PILGRIMAGE TO ANCIENT PLACES OF POWER - MEXICO AND GUATEMALA

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Study with 107-year-old HUICHOL SHAMAN

Don Jose Matsuwa

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#### FEBRUARY 9th - 23rd, 1987

For more information, contact: Singing Pipe Woman, The Bear Tribe P.O. Box 9167, Spokane, WA 99209 509-326-6561



## West Africa TRADITIONAL AFRICAN MEDICINE PROGRAM

with
Danny Slomoff, Ph.D and Durchback Akuete

#### February 24 - March 10, 1987

A unique opportunity to experience the fascinating and profound healing traditions of West Africa. You will meet with scientists, herbalists, priests, and priestesses, each a student of traditional healing. In Togo in-depth time will be spent with Durchback Akuete, a wise and powerful traditional spiritual master, studying dance, trance, and healing ceremonies. In both Togo and Cote D'Ivoire, we will journey to the remote interior to explore the herbal and fetish rites of several fascinating tribal cultures.

several fascinating tribal cultures.

ITINERARY: Lome, Togo 5 days; Northern Togo 3 days; Cote D'Ivoire 4 days; Abidjan, Korhogo and the Senoufo. Optional Extensions: Mali and the exotic Dogon Culture, 4 days. East African Wildlife Safari including Nairobi, game reserves at Amboseli, Masai Mara & Sambura, and the Great Rift Valley, 6 days.

TOUR COST: Approx. \$3,490, including air from New York. Limit 20 people. Sponsored by Institute of Noetic Sciences.

#### WRITE OR CALL FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

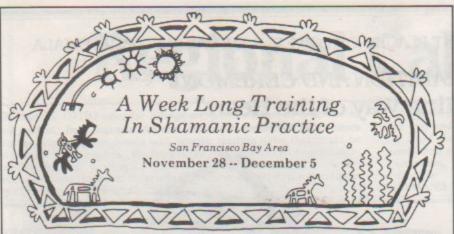
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Danny Slomoff, Ph.D.



Durchback Akuete



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This is an opportunity to push up against and expand your boundaries of reality. You will walk away with new skills, new possibilities, new choices -- with an added dimension to your perspective, with a deeper ground of being.



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- Recognize and access specific trance states to increase your mobility of mind, flexibility of perspective, and direct experience of the various realms of reality
- · Make prayer arrows and lucid dreaming bundles
- Explore maps of universal 'laws,' patterns of energy motion, maps of power and intention, linguistic patterns of creating and maintaining reality, the landmarks or 'gates' to the path
- Create ceremony for healing, change, rites of passage, purification initiation
- Develop practices for grounding, aligning, balancing, stilling internal dialogue, and becoming awake



Tuition and materials \$295; meals and lodging \$155 Shuttles provided from local airports To reserve a space, send \$100 deposit

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TRANSFORMATIVE ARTS INSTITUTE PO Box 6564, Albany, CA 94706





## Visit the Huichols with Prem Das

Monthly one-week trips to the Mexican Sierras

The rich pantheistic cosmology of the Huichol Indians of the Mexican Sierras expressed through their art, music and religion has inspired many people. At their request, each month Prem Das will lead a group of 3 - 6 people to spend a week in one of some 100 traditional Huichol villages, visiting shamans and power places, sleeping in thatched huts and enjoying the local culture.

Prem Das lives today among the Huichols as he has for over a decade, during which time he completed an apprenticeship with Don Jose Matsuwa. In these trips he will be helped by his wife Silve, a Huichol artist and grand-niece of Don Jose, and by their many relatives.

\$475 includes all food, lodging and travel in Mexico.

For details and scheduling contact: Jim and Roberta Swan Box 637 Mill Valley, CA 94941

415 - 383 - 5064

Jan. 2 - 4 / Big Sur, CA SHAMANIC JOURNEY, POWER AND HEALING With Michael Harner

An authorized prerequisite for Michael Harner's more advanced training courses and workshops. Contact the sponsor, Esalen Institute at (408) 667-2335.

Jan. 4-23/Big Sur, CA
THREE-WEEK TUTORIAL
IN SHAMANISM, SHAMANIC HEALING
AND COUNSELING
With Michael Harner

Prerequisite is Shamanic Journey, Power and Healing workshop by Michael Harner or authorized faculty member of the Center for Shamanic Studies. (203) 454-2827.

Jan. 17-18 / Berkeley, CA DREAMSINGING WORKSHOP With Grant Rudolph

Singing and Drumming as trans-formers to enliven the images of your inner life. (415) 459-2858.

#### **EAST & SOUTHEAST**

Nov. 13 - 15 / Columbia, MD THE SACRED CIRCLE:

Celebrating the Spiritual Fellowship of Therapist-healers. Sixth Annual Conference with workshops on artwork, dreamwork, guided imagery, storytelling, exploring archetypes, and more. Common Boundary. (301) 652-9495.

Nov. 14 - 16 & 29 - 30 / Boston, MA TRAINING COURSE IN HARNER SHAMANIC COUNSELING With Michael Harner

Prerequisite is the Shamanic Journey, Power and Healing workshop by Michael Harner or authorized faculty member of the Center for Shamanic Studies. (203) 454-2827.

Nov. 22 - 23 / New York, NY SHAMANIC JOURNEY, POWER AND HEALING With Michael Harner

An authorized prerequisite for Michael Harner's more advanced training courses and workshops. (203) 454-2827.

Nov. 22 - 23 / Atlanta, GA CELEBRATION AND RETREAT With Sun Bear, The Path of Power

Also, Darry Wood - leather work and wilderness survival; Steven Sparks - shamanistic elements in jewelry; Four Bucks - symbolism in Native American artwork; more. (404) 377-8213.

Dec. 6-7/Princeton, NJ SHAMANIC JOURNEY, POWER AND HEALING With Michael Harner

An authorized prerequisite for Michael Harner's more advanced training courses and workshops. Contact the Holistic Health Association, (609) 924-8649.

#### Southwest

Nov. 15 -16 & 22 - 23 / Boulder, CO FOUR DIRECTIONS GATHERINGS

Includes sweat ceremonies

With Oyate Sunkawakan Waste, Good Horse Nation, Lakota Teton Sioux. Keeper of the Sacred Pipe, Sundancer and Medicine Man of Makawakan Sacred Earth Society. Gayan (415) 383-0827.

## DREAMS AND VISIONS FROM THE GODS

#### An Interview with

## Ulu Temay, Huichol Shaman

by Susana Valadez with drawings by Ulu Temay

"Que pitu hay nu?" (What did you dream?) the Huichols ask each other when they wake up in their secluded homeland in the Sierra Madre Occidental of Mexico. "I dreamed well, I dreamed pretty," they answer.

The Huichols have been dreaming and talking about their dreams for hundreds of years. Their mara'akames (shamans) work hard during their apprenticeships to train themselves to dream, to remember their dreams, and to use their dreams as direct channels to the gods. During their shamanic initiation and throughout their lives they also use the hallucinogenic peyote cactus (Lophophora williamsii) as an important tool, because through their peyote visions the Huichols learn how to dream the special mara'-akame dreams.

The Huichol mara'akames may be thought of as "ambassadors to the supernatural". These shamans are constantly called upon to mediate in the struggle between human frailties and vindictive gods. When humans make mistakes the gods take revenge, so ailing people with broken hearts or sick bodies call upon the shamans morning, noon and night to restore the balance of things, to heal. Success of the "cure" is directly contingent upon what the gods tell the mara'akame in his dreams and visions, and how well the sick one subsequently carries out the orders of the gods.

Other shamanic techniques involving the use of power objects and removal of negative spiritual entities are also employed, but none of these techniques can be effective without the direct communication of



the shamans with the spirit world. Dreams and visions reveal all: what payment is owed to the gods, what ceremony is to be held, what infractions were committed to cause the illness, what animal must be sacrificed to feed a hungry god or goddess, what physical deprivation is required, such as fasting or abstinence from salt or sex.

This interview with the 35-yearold Huichol shaman Ulu Temay, "Arrow Man", is a composite of several discussions taped over the last decade. Arrow Man has been my friend and cultural informant since I began working with the Huichols, and has spoken candidly and eloquently to me about his people and customs. Because the Huichol language is Uto-Aztecan, and very difficult to learn, our conversations were in "Huichol Spanish", the Spanish the Huichols speak when talking to someone outside of the tribe.

My work with Arrow Man began as a result of my helping to heal him at a time when he was about to give up hope of living. He had a severe infection of the lymph glands resulting from a squirrel bite. The lifethreatening disease had caused his arm to ulcerate with pus-filled sores, and his arm was atrophied from nonuse. He had sought the help of shamans, doctors, herbalists and others, all to no avail. Through some quirk of fate I appeared on the scene at that time and was able to obtain the medicines that helped to heal him. I say "helped", because it was not the medicines alone, but the medicines working together with his Huichol belief system which eventually

In the long process of Arrow Man's healing, I gave him "art therapy" so that he could regain movement of his hand and arm. Giving him colored pens and papers, I asked him to draw. He began drawing his peyote visions and other religious symbols, and I began taping his explanations of these drawings, officially initiating our relationship as ethnographer and cultural informant. Since then he has created hundreds of drawings for me, which say more about the Huichol people and customs than words could ever describe. They are a direct line to the collective unconscious of these traditional people.



At a time when the Huichol culture is faced with extinction because of outside pressures invading their lives, Arrow Man and I sit and talk. His dreams tell him that his people may not have many more years on this Earth, and that as the old shamans die, much of the old knowledge will be buried with them. I tell him my concerns about living in a world where people have lost their way, and suggest that the Huichols may be the very ones to guide us back. Both of us are committed to keeping this knowledge alive for Huichol children, and all the children of the Earth, to learn from in the future. So he shares his precious knowledge with me, and I share it now with you.

SV: Why do some people have clearer dreams than others?

UT: If a person doesn't believe in his dreams, he might say, "It's only a dream, it's not real; the gods aren't really talking to me." Little by little everything will become less clear, like things are erased, until there comes a time when one won't dream at all. If one doesn't do what a dream has directed him to do, one won't be able to dream well anymore. That's why so many people don't know how to dream. They don't examine what it is they dream. They don't explain it. Some people are ashamed to tell the mara'akames their dreams; they are embarrassed.

But one shouldn't think of that. One has to tell it, to examine it; if it's true or not. One must take the dream and see what is there until everything is open in front of them.

Now if a person does this - believes in the dream, and follows the directions once the mara'akame explains it - then everything will come out well. The gods will then send more dreams of this type because the person has now proven he believes in the gods and obeys what he is told. In time the gods will teach the person more, and the person's road will open up before him. He will know more and more what he has to do. Then later, when he is a mara'akame, he will easily be able to dream what needs to be done to heal people, and to learn important things from his dreams.

SV: What about your own experience with that terrible disease you had as an apprentice shaman? What were your dreams like?

UT: When my arm was diseased, I dreamed of many bananas, ripe bananas. I was in an orchard of bananas, and I gathered many of them and ate them. Then the next day I asked my grandmother what the dream meant, why I was dreaming about many ripe bananas. She told me that I was soon going to rot. The bananas mean some kind of infection because the yellow juice of the bananas looks like the yellow pus that comes out of the

infected wounds. This is what she told me, but I didn't believe her; I thought it was just a dream. But yes, it was true. She knows many things, my grandmother, and so do other old people. They know a lot about what people dream, and what the dream means.

SV: When you were sick with those infected eruptions, did you ever dream what you had to do to get better?

UT: I was sick for a long time and asked many shamans to heal me, but they wouldn't because they all said I was being punished and it was my own fault. In one dream I went to a Mexican doctor and he wrote something down on a piece of paper which I couldn't read or understand. I dreamed I was getting better, but then another person who was black and naked blew on me and made all of my medicines disappear. They turned into foam, and then clouds came out of the bottles, and the pills turned into powder and didn't work.

I had many dreams like this, and even though I was taking medicines in real life, I wasn't getting any better. It was because I owed many offerings to the gods and because I had taken a second wife in violation of my vows. I wasn't a mara'akame yet, and it is prohibited, for five years, to have sex with a new woman. I made a mistake, and was being punished for it.

Finally some shamans helped me.

They dreamed why I was sick and what I had to do to get better. They told me I had to make many offerings and sacrifice a bull, and if I didn't do that, nothing would heal me. And this was true. It was only when I completed what the shamans said to do that the medicines you gave me were able to take effect. The gods were very angry with me, and I had to work very hard to earn their forgive-

SV: If you dream about a god, is it really the god you're seeing, or is it just a

UT: In the first place, we're never really able to see a god, whether it's a peyote vision or a dream. What we're seeing are images, persons or animals who are messengers of the gods. For instance, we may see Jesus Christ, or the guardians of the "god bowls", or the sacred caves where we take offerings and arrows, where the gods live. But we will never see the actual gods themselves, even though they might speak to us through their representatives - persons, objects, or animals.



When we eat peyote, the Fire and Sun look different. We see them in another form. The Sun looks like something illuminated, like silver or a crystal, or a mirror that gives off light. Then it will change into a person, and won't be round anymore. And the Fire speaks to us.

Our peyote visions also differ when we are at different levels on our "path". For instance, when mara'akames who have reached a very high level look into the fire they will see Tatewari - Grandfather Fire as a person, an old, old man with grey hair and a wrinkled face. He speaks to the mara'akames and they listen to him. He sings things like the mara'akames sing, which is why they sing. They are repeating what



the old man is singing so that the people around them can also listen. The mara'akames use their mirrors and their feathered wands to understand him better.

The other people, the ones who aren't as far along on their "path", don't see this old man in the fire. They will only see rattlesnakes, gila monsters, and mountain lions, who are the special messengers of this god - his representatives. won't understand him yet, but once a person attains a higher level, called Namakame, he won't be seeing the serpents anymore, he'll be seeing the image of the old man. And little by little he'll understand the things that are being communicated to him. It's like learning a special language.

SV: If two of these advanced shamans are sitting together watching the fire after eating the same amount of peyote, will they see the same thing?

UT: We're not all seeing the same thing. That is, we're all seeing the same thing in a different way, in another way. We may see the old one in the fire, but we're not all hearing the same thing the old man is saying.

SV: If you haven't eaten peyote and you go to sleep and dream of the old man Tatewari, will this dream be true? That is, can this old man pass from your peyote visions into your dreams?

UT: Yes. Through dreams one can talk to Tatewari. The same old man appears. That's because through peyote visions, the mara'akame now knows the old man. He knows where the god's sacred temples are, so the mara'akame will dream the place the god lives and arrive there with the god in his dream. The god looks different in the dream though. In the peyote vision we see him in the fire only from the waist up; this is his image. In the dream he walks around and speaks and converses and tells the mara'akame what he has to do. In the peyote vision you can't touch him because he is his true self: Fire. In the dream he can be touched.

SV: Can you ever see Tatewari without eating peyote or dreaming?

UT: No. Only in your dreams or visions. When we are in this world, we can't see these things. Just like when we are in this world, we can't fly, but in our dreams we can.

SV: What do you mean you can fly?

UT: I have to be able to dream the whole world and to see everything in it. Kauyumari, the deer, gives me the power to dream the world, to go to the sky, to see the sun, and to look below the earth. I see this in my dreams as I am flying straight up; without wings, like a rocket, I go flying with my hands and arms. Then I can stop and stand and look down and see the earth down there like a little ball. I make many nearikas with round things and circles on them so that I can use my power to circle the world in my dreams.

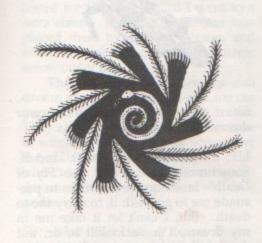


SV: What does it mean when you fly in your dreams?

UT: I think it means that when I die, my soul will fly like this, like an eagle. Some of us have wings; we are eagles, hawks, seagulls, which is why we dream about flying. The ones who don't know how to fly just walk the earth, that's all, and they are wolves, lions, or tigers.

What's the difference between areams and peyote visions?

UT: Dreams are very different from peyote visions, because when I am dreaming, I can never see the same visions I have with the peyote. In my dreams I can see things that remind me of my visions, but nothing speaks to me the same way as when I am under the influence of peyote. In my dreams I will see things like nearikas (round objects with mandala designs) or gourd bowls with money stuck to them, which I have to make to complete my obligations, obligations that were given to me in my peyote visions. I will dream of people who speak to me and tell me to make these offerings, so I can "pay my debt" to the gods with whom I made the agreements in my visions. But in my dreams I never see peyote visions that talk to me and guide me the way they do on peyote.



If I dream about a special nearika, I will remember how it looks in the dream and make it to take with me when I go to Wirikuta, the peyote desert. Since I dream the design, that means I am obligated to create the nearika. Then when I take peyote, I will look at this nearika and I'll be able to see many things, beautiful things. I will see Kauyumari, a deer who speaks to me and shows me many other beautiful nearikas in my peyote vision. The deer talks to me; we sit there together looking at the nearika and he is teaching me. He makes it move, makes it change, turns it into different forms. I obey my dream and make the nearika, and because I do this, I will continue to dream many beautiful nearikas to have visions with. If I didn't obey, then I would never again be able to

dream more *nearikas*, and maybe my peyote visions wouldn't be as good. Most of the time I dream very, very clear, and I can remember them very well



Dreams are messengers, announcers. That's why when we wake up in the morning our greeting is, "What did you dream?" We have to talk about our dreams. Some people don't realize what a dream might mean; they walk about enjoying themselves, not knowing what might happen to them, if they are in danger or not.

The dream is the warning, the advice. If someone dreams something two or three times and doesn't understand, and doesn't take the opportunity to change the situation, then the omen of the dream, the warning, will come to pass. If I don't know what my dream means, then I can go to a mara'akame and ask him to explain it to me. He will tell me what the dream means, and whatever he says will undoubtedly be the truth.

SV: What's it like for you when you eat peyote?

UT: For about the first hour I don't feel anything. Then my voice will start to feel strange and I won't understand very well what people are speaking. Then I will have a very strong urge to play music, so I will play my violin. I will listen to music coming out of the air, pure air. Then I'll be feeling that the air is coming down, like a cloud that is being lowered onto the earth. Soon I'll be able to hear everything very close and clear, but I'll hear things differently than they normally sound. Like right now this plane that's flying overhead - it won't sound the same, it'll have a different voice. The planes are passing and playing songs and singing; the sound is of violins playing or mara akames singing. It's no longer the same as we hear

If I eat peyote at sunset, then I

will feel this way about midnight. I will begin to see beings who look like people, but they aren't people; they are gods, messengers of the gods, who are beautiful. They have beautiful clothes on, their faces are painted, they wear lots of feathers. Then they begin to speak to me and reveal many things about themselves, how they came to be, and what things I must do.

Some visions are stronger than others. One hopes one will be able to see and hear beautiful visions, but it doesn't always happen. Some people are never fortunate enough to be able to see and hear these things, even though they are listening and sitting there under the effects of peyote. But others can see very deeply what there is to see. They sit there quietly for hours with their eyes closed, without talking. It's as if they are dreaming, but it's different. It's not like a dream.

Later they will tell the mara'akame what they have seen. They have
to reveal it to the mara'akame, because they see important things in
their visions. They receive directions from the gods - for instance,
which of the peyoteros will kill the
deer on the hunt, and how will they
kill it; which arrows are needed for
the hunt, and what types of offerings
the peyoteros need to make on their
way home from Wirikuta (the peyote
desert).



So all the people speak of their visions together. Some saw things one way. Some saw things another way. Some people had bad visions because they didn't confess their sins in truth, and the peyote punished them. But everyone talks about what they saw with the mara'a-kame.

Everything appears in a person's visions, and so he talks of it. He re-

veals everything, except for the special messages of the gods that pertain only to his own life and shamanic path. Those special instructions pertain to him and only him, and he won't explain any of this.

SV: Getting back to the difference between dreams and visions, if someone is drunk on alcohol and watching the fire, can they see god-like visions?

UT: No, never. When someone is hung-over sometimes they see bad hallucinations - ugly things, terrible things that frighten them and they jump and can't sleep. And they see devils. But all of these things aren't real. It's just an hallucination. With alcohol you can't see anything that pertains to the gods at all.

SV: What about tobacco?

UT: No, not tobacco either.

SV: Or marijuana?

UT: We never use marijuana, so I don't know about that.

SV: What about Kieli (a psychotropic plant in the Nightshade family)?

UT: Kieli, yes. You eat the peyote together with Kieli and, yes, you can see many things. But many people fear Kieli because they go crazy with it, especially if it's eaten alone, without peyote. Without peyote you can't see good things when you take Kieli.



SV: Are your dreams affected by peyote?

UT: Before, I was not able to dream as clear as I do now. Now that I've completed at Wirikuta with the peyote, and I know how to heal, my dreams tell me what has happened to a patient, and why it has happened. My dreams are more vivid and true now that I've completed my

apprenticeship. Also, after a ceremony, my dreams are clearer. I am able to heal better.



SV: Do shamans dream about the gods as part of the cure?

UT: Yes. For example, if a child is sick, the parents will ask a mara'a-kame to cure him. The mara'akame will tell the parents that he has to sleep and dream, so he can communicate with the gods; with Grandfather Fire, Father Sun, the Corn Mother, and others. He will talk to them and listen to what they tell him, and the next day he'll wake up and tell the person what it is they have to do to get well.

Dreams of eating people or eating raw or spoiled meat mean death for a family member. If a shaman is going to baptize a child and dreams the child is eating meat broth, this

is very bad for the child. Dreams of animal blood are also bad. Once I dreamed they took out the heart of an animal and covered me with the blood. I knew my child would die soon, and it was true. The next time when my wife was pregnant, I dreamed a sheep was shot with an arrow through the heart and the blood sprayed all over the place. The child was born dead. Also, if a pregnant woman dreams of eating red

chiles, it forecasts a miscarriage.

There are also dreams that mean the death of animals. If you dream of guaymuchiles (red pods that grow on a tree) falling to the ground many, many, red ones - this means your cows are going to die. The guaymuchiles look like red meat hanging, that's what the dream means to say.

As I said, the dream is a warning. If someone doesn't listen to the dream and do something to change it, it will come true. Through these ani-

mals and other things that appear in the dream, the person or shaman knows what is going to happen. If I dream that a bull is chasing me and punctures me with his horn, it means I'll be stung by a scorpion. That's because the shamans say that scorpions turn into bulls. Or if I dream that someone stabs me with a knife, that also means that the scorpion can do this. They can turn into bulls or cows or people. The reason I dream this is because the Scorpion God, Palitseka, is charging me. I owe him a bull sacrifice or some other offering I failed to take him. So if I dream this, and I fail to fulfill my obligations, I will soon be stung in real life. The bull who is charging me indicates that I owe a bull sacrifice and, if I don't do it, something bad will happen to me or my family.



SV: Have you ever died in your dreams?

UT: Yes, I have died - well, kind of. Sometimes I dream that the "Fly of Death" lands on me and tries to persuade me to go with it, to carry me to death. But, I can't let it take me in my dream; I have to kill it, or, if I don't kill it, I have to tell it, "No, no. I don't want to die yet. Leave me alone."

Sometimes I also dream that I'm being buried alive, but I defend myself. I dream my grave is dug. I try to escape, but they are already wrapping me in manta (cloth) and putting all of my things in the grave - my tacuatsi (medicine basket), my violin, my hat. They are going to bury me, but I tell them, "No, no, I'm still alive." I am crying because they are putting the dirt on me. But then they unwrap me, I leave and they don't bury me.

SV: And what does the dream mean?

UT: It means a bad mara'akame, a sorcerer, is hexing me, that a brujo is cutting the cord of my life, which is why these devils want to throw Te

the grave alive. But if God doesn't want me yet, then I can escape. Three times now I've almost been buried, but I'm still alive!



SV: Do you mean to say that in dreams people can be aware of others who wish to do them harm?

UT: Yes, in dreams you can feel more about this. Like the other day I dreamed someone was chasing me and caught me and stuck something into my heart. The next day I woke up and my heart was aching, and it lasted for five days, until I went to a mara'akame. He said the dream was placed there by another person, and when he healed me, he took a magic arrow out of me.

The highest level shamans can dream about an ill person and see the person's hand or face in the dream. They can tell if they are sick because of witchcraft or because of something the gods have given them as a punishment. The shamans can also dream whether the person will live or die.

SV: What other kinds of dreams do shamans have?

UT: If I'm going to baptize a child, I'll go to sleep and dream the name, and then I'll know what the name will be.

SV: And do you really dream the name, or do you just kind of think about it when you're on the verge of sleep?

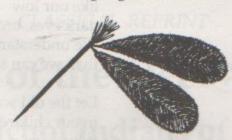
UT: A name is not chosen or made up; it has to be dreamed. In the dream a shaman or another person will tell you the names of the child. We have many different names and all of them must be dreamed. At the time of the baptism the dreams can also reveal whether or not the child will live. If the child will become a shaman, we will also see this in a dream. We can tell from our dreams

what kinds of gifts the child has, and what kind of talent and memory he has, what kind of life is in store. If in the dream the child receives arrows, feathers for healing, violins, the shaman's chair and other gifts, this means he will become a shaman and that his parents must educate him properly in our ways.

SV: Might the child also have special dreams?

UT: Yes. When I was a child, I dreamed of becoming a shaman. I dreamed of many animals, and that I was healing people even though I was still a child and didn't yet know how to heal. I would dream I was hunting a deer, shooting it with my bow and arrow, and it was too heavy to carry. I also dreamed of playing peyote songs on the violin and guitar when I was very small and still didn't know how to play.

If a child is going to become a sha-



man, the parents have to be aware of it when he is small and pay close attention to him. If my child wants to know these things at an early age, I will know it. The shamans will tell me, but also the child acts special. The kid cries a lot because he wants me to make his muvieris (feathered wands) for him. So I make them for him and give them to him, and he calms down. The baby urges the parents to hurry up, to help him complete at a very young age. Sometimes by the age of ten a child is already a mara'akame.

SV: Since shamans can predict the lives of individuals, can they also predict the future of the world?

UT: Yes. Many of them are now saying that the world is coming to an end; that the candles that are in the north, south, east and west are now very small. The candles used to be tall, but now there are just fragments left. When these small candles go out, we will all be finished. The whole world will end. The gods are

telling the *mara'akames* that the candles have to be renewed, but this is a difficult thing to do, perhaps beyond their present capabilities.



SV: How many years do we have left?

UT: Some say ten, fifteen, eighteen years - but one can never tell exactly when a candle that's burning down to the end will go out.

SV: Have they dreamed how the world will end?

UT: There are many dreams. Some say there will be no more rain, the water will run out, there will be no food and all of us will come to an end. It seems like it's already beginning. Last year it rained very little. The people are very sad. This year they say it will rain a little, but not enough. They say there will be a great wind.

Other shamans dream that someone wants to throw a cloud which will destroy all of the people. All of us will end from this cloud. Others say they dream that a giant animal will fall and, where it falls, everything will burn in a great fire.

The only way to stop this is to renew the candles so the gods are contented. The shamans know how; they did this once a very long time ago. Maybe they will do it again, maybe not. They will dream what they have to do.

For more information, contact: Susana Valadez, Huichol Center for Cultural Survival and Traditional Arts, 414 - 41st Street, Oakland, CA 94609; (415) 655-0111.



Sacrificial blood is used to anoint the corn and feed the gods and goddesses who, in return, give life to the Husehols

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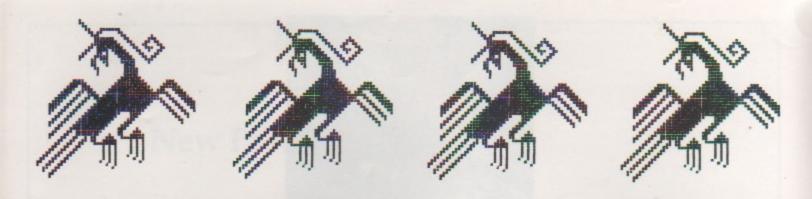
# Prophets of the Deer and Corn The Huichol Indians of Mexico

### by Carl Lumholtz

Little information was recorded about the reclusive Huichols of the Mexican Sierras until the Norwegian ethnographer Carl Lumholtz pioneered the first in-depth study of the Huichol culture in the 1890's. Under the sponsorship of the American Museum of Natural History, Lumholtz made three expeditions to Mexico between 1890 and 1898 to study native cultures. The following article is excerpted from a report published in the Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History, Vol. X, 1898.

After having spent two months among the Coras of the Sierra del Nayarit, I made an entrance into the country of the Huichols on the east, and, in spite of much opposition from these Indians, succeeded in conquering all obstacles in my way. In order to overcome their prejudice against me, on my arrival at the pueblo of San Andres Coamiata I discharged all my men, who were Mexicans, and re-

mained alone among the Indians. The Huichols look upon all strangers with much disfavor; and their feeling against me was so strong that the 'alcalde' of Santa Catarina, the capital, had even made threats upon my life, should I ever go there. Gradually I learned the songs that the shaman was singing in the temple at the feast for making rain, thus breaking the hitherto insurmountable



barrier between them and me; and by degrees I gained their confidence to such an extent that my stay in this tribe, although attended with many privations, was very fruitful in results. I purpose here to make some preliminary remarks concerning this interesting tribe, pending a detailed

report to be issued later.

The name of the tribe is Vi-ra-rika, in the western part of the country pronounced Vi-sja-li-ka, which means prophets' (Sp. adivinos). The Mexicans call them 'los Huicholes,' - a corruption of the tribal name. Their number today is about four thousand. and they live in a mountainous country, difficult of access, in the northwestern part of the State of Jalisco, on a spur of the great Sierra Madre. This range runs in a northerly and southerly direction, parallel to Sierra del Nayarit, both Sierras forming the southern part of Sierra Madre del Norte, which ends at the Rio Alica (also called Rio Santiago, and by other names at different points on its course). The country is well watered, being traversed from north to south by a river, Rio Chapalangana, which runs at the bottom of a mighty, deep valley, a great many small affluents forming as many side valleys. While very narrow and steep at the bottom, the valley gradually broadens out, the sides rising to a height of from eight to nine thousand feet. The country thus consists of two parallel ridges and the valley between, the top of the ridges being covered with immense pine forests, the abode of numerous deer. Down in the little steep and mountainous side valleys, on the borders of the river, the climate is tropical, and sugarcane is raised on a small scale for home use. On the pine-clad heights the Indians are not generally found living; most of the ranches being situated at a moderate elevation above the sea, dispersed all over the district, in numerous small valleys.

The northern part of the country, around the pueblos of Tezompa and Soledad, is not so mountainous, and therefore has already been occupied by the Mexicans. The southern part, from the ranch southwards, presents the same natural features as the northern; but the Huichols here still jealously keep the Mexicans out. It is probably only a matter of time, however, before this section too will become Mexicanized. Mexicans have also encroached on the outskirts of the Huichol country, towards the east and west, on both slopes of the Sierra.

All that is left, therefore, of the country owned solely by the Huichols, is mainly the central part. Here the population is fairly safe from advancing civilization, on account of the ruggedness of the country and its difficulty of access. It would hardly pay for white men to settle here, because of the small extent of country suitable for cultivation by the plough. I should estimate the present territory of the Huichols to be about forty miles long by from twenty to twenty-five broad. This, however, gives no adequate idea of the length of time required to traverse this country of precipitous hillsides and mountain gorges.

The Indians raise corn, beans and squashes on a moderate scale. On account of the mountainous character of the land, ploughing is not resorted to, except in a few places; the old-fashioned Indian way of cutting down brush, burning it, and then tilling the ground, being in vogue. This way of cultivating, which is still used among several tribes in Mexico, is called in Spanish, coamilear, and the field is called coamil.

There is generally an abundance of rain from July till November; but as so much of the corn is planted on the steep sides, where the water quickly dries up, the amount of water needed for cultivation is very great....

The Huichol spends a great part of his life at ceremonies and feasts. From May to August, that is to say the dry and part of the wet season, there are frequent feasts for making rain. During the wet season, should it stop raining only for two or three days, the principal men gather in the temple and decide to sacrifice an ox or two, which means a 'feast', or propitiation of the gods, lasting for two days. Then there is the feast of new squashes and that of the new corn, as well as that of toasted corn, connected with the cult of hikuli (Sp. peyote); but the greatest of all is the feast for eating corncakes, which are made from ground whole corn, and baked in an oven.

Very important in the religious life of the Huichol Indians is the use of hikuli, a small species of cactus (Anhalonium lewinii) which grows abundantly in the central mesa of Mexico. No doubt it is the same plant which in southwestern United States is called 'mescal buttons'. The same name, hikuli, is applied to this plant by the Tarahumares, who make journeys to the east to gather it, as do also the Huichols.

It appears that the gods, once upon a time, left the Huichol country, and went out to the country where hikuli is found today. A gigantic deer is the god of hikuli, and is called Ta-mats Pa-li-ke Ta-mo-jae-ke, signifying "elder brother, walking at daybreak, everywhere", no doubt the dawn god. The plant is considered as the votive bowl of Ta-Te-wa-li, the god of fire and the principal god of the Huichols, and has to be procured every year, or it will not rain.

In September, parties from the various districts of the country start out to gather the plant, which is found near San Luis Potosi in the









drawings after Huichol embroidery patterns collected by S. Valadez

State of the same name. They stop overnight at the same camping places every year, going and coming, and have gods all the way along in the shape of mountains or springs. The time consumed in going is seventeen days. They remain at the place three full days, and are twentythree days on the journey back. After the return of the hikuli-seekers to their own country, they must spend many weeks in procuring a number of deer, so necessary for the hikuli feast. The meat of the deer, having first of all been cooked between hot stones in earth mounds, is cut into small square pieces, and strung on strings and dried, and in that way kept for the feast. When the needed amount of deer meat has been obtained, the hikuli-seekers must next cut down the brushwood and trees at a certain place, this being the first preparation for the communal field on which the new corn a few months hence will be sown. Immediately afterward the feast comes off, generally not before December or January. As indicated above, it forms an integral part of the feast for eating toasted corn, and is named accordingly ra-ri-ki-ra (ra-ki meaning 'toasted corn').

A peculiar feature in the hikuli ceremonies is the painting of the faces, in various designs, with a yellow root brought from the same country where the plant grows. These designs, which may also be found on the tobacco-gourds of the hikuli seekers, are of different patterns, but are all signs of fire, in honor of which the whole feast is carried on. Both men and women partake of the drink made from the plant.

The effect of this plant on the nervous system is exhilarating, and it allays the feelings of hunger and thirst. Although, when fresh, it has a nauseating, slightly sour taste, it is wonderfully refreshing when one is taking exercise. So far from suffering fatigue in walking, one feels as if pushed along, as I can testify from my own experience. In this respect it resembles Peruvian coca; but, unlike that remedy, it leaves a certain depression, as well as a headache. Although one feels as if drunk after eating hikuli, and the trees dance before his eyes, still the balance of the body is very well maintained. It is also very important to note that a marked effect of the plant is to take away all sexual desire, this no doubt being the cause of the Indians imposing, by a curious aboriginal mode of reasoning, abstinence from sexual intercourse as a necessary part of the hikuli cult.

Professor A. Heffter, of Leipzig, writes me that, having made experiments with this plant upon himself, he had beautiful color visions. This he attributes to the new substance, which he calls 'mescalin', discovered by him in the plant (see also the article 'Beitrage zur chemischen Kenntnis der Cactacceen,' in 'Apotheker Zeitung,' 1896, No. 79).

During the months of preparation for the feast of hikuli the Indian is constantly seen eating slices of the fresh plant, cutting it lengthwise, and generally not consuming more than one slice, perhaps a quarter or a half of one plant, at a time. As a rule, a man does not eat more than four or five a day; but the number may reach as many as twenty. When taken in moderate quantities it has the effect of making him merry and good-tempered, and of putting him in a singing mood. His eyes assume a peculiar stare. His step and movements become quicker than usual, although steady. He shows in his ecstasies, however, nothing similar to the effects of alcoholic drinks. In a few cases a man may consume so much that he is attacked with a fit of madness, rushing backward and forward, trying to kill people, and tearing his clothes to pieces. People then seize upon him, and tie him hand and foot, leaving him thus until he regains his senses. Such occurrences are thought to be due to infringements of the law of abstinence imposed upon them be-

fore and during the feast.

Hikuli is generally strung on long strings to dry, being in this state hung up in coils, like huge necklaces, in the temple or at the houses. When the feast comes on, the plant is dry, or nearly so, and, mixed with water, has invariably to be ground on the metate. A kind of thickish drink, rather brown in color, is produced from it, which is offered in small quantities, but at frequent intervals, to those present. It is never mixed with any other drink.

This plant is also used to a certain extent by the Cora Indians who buy it from the Huichols. Both tribes cultivate the plant on a very small scale; lilliputian gardens, or tiny patches of land, being enclosed with a stone wall for the purpose.

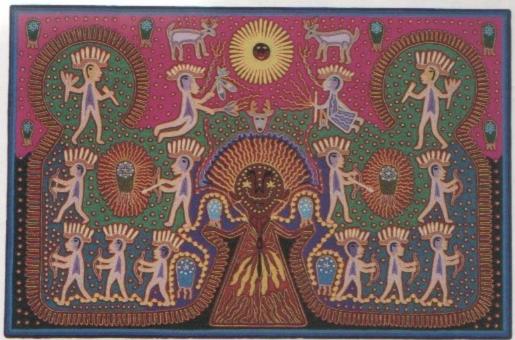
The plant is also considered to be medicinal, being rubbed on the body in cases of rheumatism. Rubbing it on the knees is said to ensure strength in walking, and taken internally it is

thought to give life.

The moving principle in the religion of the Huichols is the desire for producing rain; the deer and the hikuli being the chief factors in attaining this end. Once upon a time the all-important thing for the Huichols to eat - the deer - became god, and he is to them the symbol of life and of fertility. With his blood the grains of corn are sprinkled before being sown. The great god of hikuli, when he appeared the first time out in the country of the hikuli, showed himself as a deer, and every one of his tracks became a hikuli plant - the plant of life; and the life is that of the deer.



For Huichol peyoteros on their pilgrimage to the holyland of Wirikuta, face painting is their "passport to the god realm" transforming them from mortals into gods.



The Goddess Yurianaka wearing face paint.

by Mariano Valadez

## Mirrors of the Gods:

## The Huichol Shaman's Path of Completion

article and photographs by Susana Valadez, yarn paintings by Mariano Valadez

"If I conduct myself well, if I don't go around doing bad things, if my soul and heart are good and clean, then the gods will look upon me well. It doesn't matter if my hat is old and my clothes are ragged. If my heart is good then I become a reflection of the gods, like a mirror." - Arrow Man, Huichol Shaman

While many native peoples in the Western Hemisphere have been absorbed into the mainstream of the modern world, the Huichol people, who live in a secluded part of Mexico, have maintained their traditional ways. For centuries the rugged and remote terrain of the Huichol homeland has provided a pocket of isolation where the Huichols have triumphed over the challenge of natural phenomena. In this wilderness setting, their physical and spiritual needs have nurtured a value system and way of life which has carried itself through the generations. Today

the Huichol culture survives as a window to the past revealing the legacy of indigenous ways which have become, for the most part, long extinct in many parts of the Americas.

The Huichols believe themselves to be "mirrors of the gods" and try to reflect this sacred vision of the world both physically and spiritually. Their highly ornate and colorful dress, for example, is said to give pleasure to their divinities, ensuring the benevolence of the deities and protection of the Huichol people. In turn, the deities teach the Huichols a variety of esoteric techniques they

may employ to influence the elements and maintain the delicate balance between life and death, sickness and health, abundance and misfortune. These techniques include ritual fasting, sexual abstinence, pilgrimages to sacred power places, penance, purification, dream interpretation, and the ceremonial use of peyote. When these techniques are practiced by Huichols over five or ten year periods, it is then and only then that dynamic spiritual leaders, the mara-akames, emerge.

While completing five or ten years of shamanic apprenticeship,



Married couples often undertake a shamanic path at the same time, helping each other complete their religious obligations.

the mara'akames in Huichol culture become the repositories for a vast spectrum of information giving meaning, definition and form to their world. As guardians and caretakers of a rich historical legacy, they devote their lives to practicing, preserving and passing down this knowledge for future generations. This article will explore the life cycle of the mara'akame in Huichol culture, and bring to light aspects of their initiation and acquisition of power on their path to completion.

#### The Challenge of Completion

From conception to death every Huichol who practices the traditional way of life, shaman and nonshaman alike, is faced with the challenge of completion. When a woman learns she is pregnant, her husband will make the first of many offering-arrows to be left on the unborn child's behalf. The arrow will introduce the fetus to the deities and carry the parents' prayers for a healthy birth. As soon as an infant emerges into the world, the child inherits a spiritual path set out by previous generations of the family. For example, if a great-grandfather had vowed to take on the obligations of certain gods or goddesses and died before these obligations were completed, then the vows would pass through the succeeding family members in subsequent generations until they were completed. Thus, in addition to vows individuals might make for themselves throughout the course of their lives and those made on behalf of them by their parents, Huichol children are born into the family network of tasks and obligations either to be completed or to be passed on to other siblings or descendants.

Whether one's spiritual path was mapped out by deceased family members, or is taken on by one's own initiative, completion is the key to leading a fulfilling life as a Huichol. Completion can be thought of as the bargaining tool the Huichols use to keep the gods happy and benevolent. Shamans, artists, musicians, ill people, farmers, and others from all walks of Huichol life attain their "luck" by striking up bargains with the gods and "paying" for what they receive. Payment may entail sacrificing animals to feed the gods their favorite food of deer or bull blood, making long pilgrimages to shrines where the deities live to bring them offerings of prayers and gratitude, or making personal sacrifices such as observing abstinence or refraining from meat or salt for periods of time. Whatever promise a Huichol makes to a deity in order to receive some benefit must be fulfilled by completion of that vow. The most difficult and time consuming paths are those undertaken by the shamans

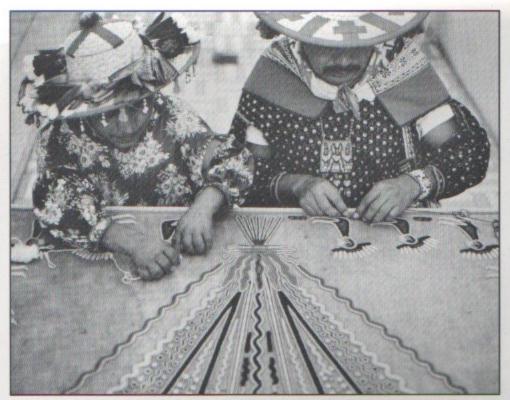
who dedicate their lives to completion. Huichol ceremonies educate their young ones into the Huichol way of life, making them aware of their options and obligations at an early age. Even before they can speak, children are required to participate in certain ceremonies that provide them with an early awareness of their religious duties. Parents make special journeys with infants to introduce them to the gods and goddesses to whom they might later be in service. The parents beseech the gods to protect the children and to bestow them with the luck and power they will need on their future spiritual paths and to fulfill their Huichol destinies.

#### The Drum Ceremony

One of the most important ceremonies pertaining to children is the "Drum Ceremony", performed at harvest time for the dual purpose of blessing the first fruits and, in the process, educating the children about the Huichol way of life. The singing shaman communicates with the deities through his drum and deer allies, becoming an intermediary between the gods and the children. Invested with the power of the gods, the shaman transforms the spirits of the children into hummingbirds and flies them on a mystical journey to sacred landmarks they will be required to visit later in life.

During the three-day ceremony the small children become acquainted through the shaman's songs with the geographic locations of the religious shrines, learn the attributes of each god or goddess in the pantheon and the offerings and rituals pertaining to each deity, and participate in an imaginary journey to the sacred peyote desert. In this way Huichol children are initiated into the tribe. Huichol children are not formally named until they are five years old and have completed five Drum Ceremonies. They are only then considered to have passed through the lifethreatening phase of infancy and regarded as full human beings with their first challenge of completion now behind them.

As soon as children are able to comprehend the world around them, they are given responsibilities in both the home and the religion. It's not unusual to see Huichol children five or six years old with infant sib-



Peyote visions are considered "gifts from the gods" and are dutifully recorded in the colorful yarn paintings and other crafts of the Huichols.

lings tied to their backs. Children help with the obligations of parenting and are particularly valued at the ceremonies when the parents are too busy to keep an eye on infants and toddlers.

At certain times during the ceremonies, some youngsters are even chosen to participate in special roles. Children are considered especially useful during the rituals because their purity is equated with the divine essence of the deities. That is, because the children are virgins and have not been "stained" by human frailties such as sex, they are still god-like. So the children are used ritually as messengers to the gods, conveying the wishes, prayers and payments to the deities on behalf of the people.

During this process the elders observe the youngsters carefully, paying special attention to those children who show a particular talent or "grace" in performing their duties. These children are later given special guidance by the elders to help them, undertake shamanic initiation at a young age. By the age of ten, some children are already well on their way to accumulating the power objects and patron deities that will help them learn and refine their special skills. They are well on their way to completion.

#### Gifts from the Gods

For those who undertake the vows of shamanic initiation, ceremonial life is the ladder to success and completion. Adolescents and young adults may devote one or two decades towards the fulfillment of their spiritual goals. This learning process is one of growth and discovery. Through ritual and ceremony they are taught the formulas for negotiating with the sacred realm to secure such things as good rainfall and crops, healthy children, abundant animals, and protection from supernatural harm (i.e. witchcraft). This knowledge comes to the initiate shamans directly through their peyote visions; therefore a good deal of Huichol apprenticeship centers on how each individual can establish a good rapport with the spirit guides contacted while under the influence of peyote in the ceremonies.

Peyote visions are thought of as "gifts from the gods", rewards to those who have conducted themselves well, divine illumination for those the gods deem worthy. Visions transport individuals out of ordinary reality into an inner reservoir of knowledge and power. This process allows the Huichols to tap into a network of deities who can link the initiates directly with the sacred realm so that the gods may be persuaded to share their secrets with them. Peyote provides a link to a power source for the mara'akames who may then enter into the cosmos at will and retrieve methods and magic for healing, developing mental powers, bewitching, and control-

ling human destiny.

One important spirit guide the initiate shamans experience in their peyote visions is Kauyumari (Our Brother Deer). Kauyumari is guiding energy which materializes when one is in the state of visions or trance. The Huichols refer to shamans who are communicating with the gods as Kauyumari; it is likened to a state of uncontrol, such as that experienced by trance-mediums. The Huichol shaman, Arrow Man, describes the relation between Kauyumari, peyote and power objects:

"We look for the deer in Wirikuta (the peyote desert), a deer that never dies, a deer who appears out of the air, Kauyumari. And if the gods want us to find him, we will, we will find our way with this deer, who will teach us many things with the special peyote we

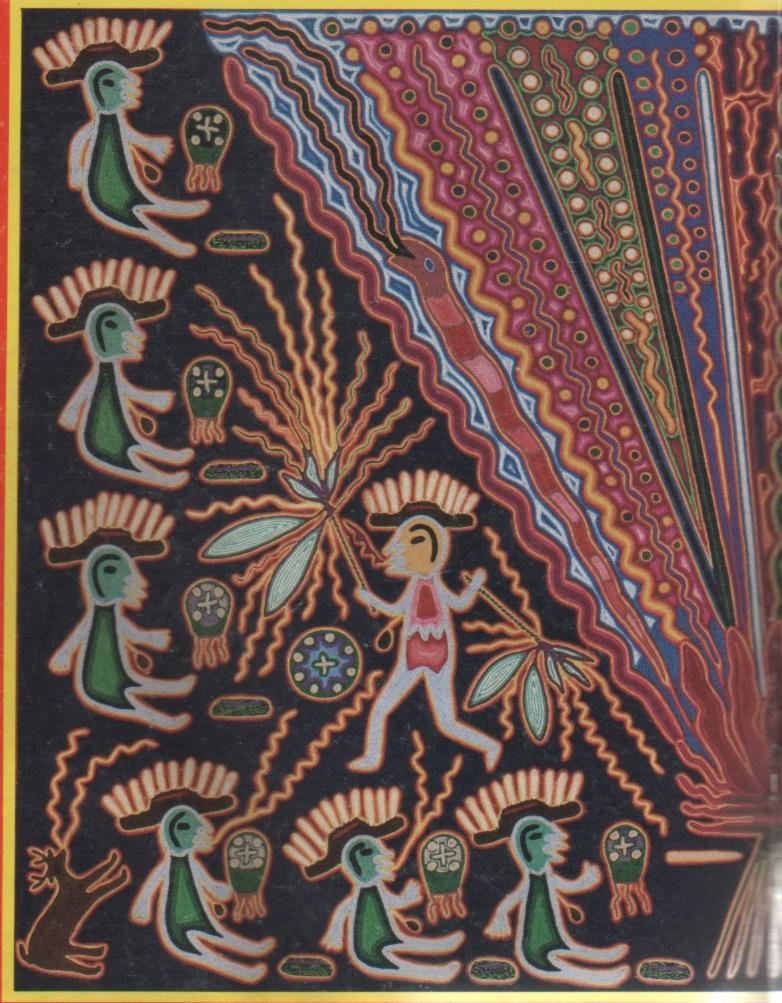
find in his tracks.

"Once I found him there. The deer spoke to me and told me things. He said he was going to teach me to be a mara'akame, to cure, and that he was going to teach me all of the nearika (power objects in the form of round discs) he had, to see which ones I liked. He told me that if I could endure, he would show me all of them and teach me what each of them means.

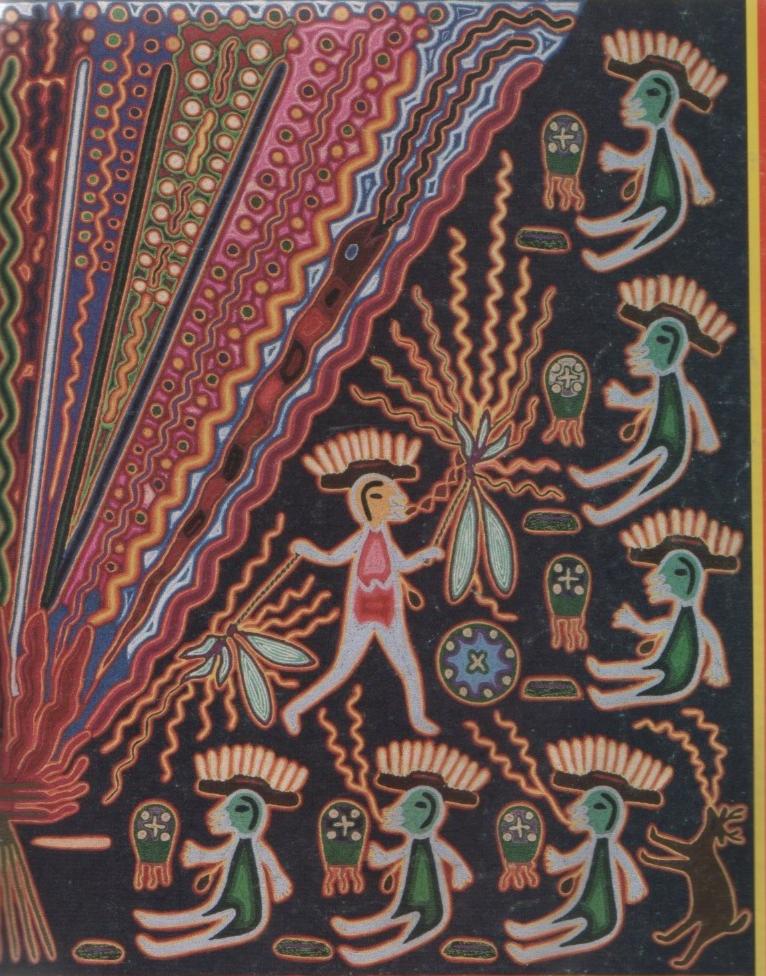
"Kauyumari speaks with the gods, he understands the Fire and the Sun. When the shamans sing, they are speaking with Kauyumari, who is in touch with the rest of the gods. He sends the shamans their dreams and power ob-

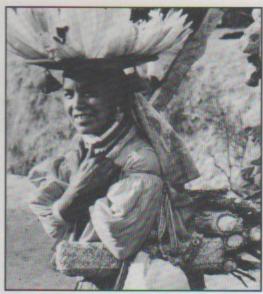
jects."

Thus Huichol apprenticeship may be viewed as a time of transformation, when shamanic initiates are learning about the powers available to them, and how to harness and use these powers. Their path to completion is filled with hardships, payment and sacrifice, but if they can endure, their tradition promises them the ultimate reward of encountering their deities and origins face to face in a mystical experience which ele-



Tatewari, Our Grandfather Fire





Turkey feathers in her hat, a medicine basket under her arm, and a load of firewood - "food for Grandfather Fire" - identify this woman as a peyotera on the way to Wirikuta, the Huichol holyland.

### Ulu Temay on The Path of Completion

There are five power places where one can complete a five year apprenticeship to learn to become a shaman. A person can complete at one of these places, or at all five places, as I have. That's the best thing to do. But wherever you go for this type of luck and knowledge, whether it be Wirikuta, the sea, or other places, you have to complete. You can pick your patron gods, where you want to be on the road, because all the different gods at all these different places know this knowledge and will teach it to you. You get strong visions when you eat peyote at any of these places for the first time, like the first time people go to Wirikuta. The reason many people go is so that they can be placed on a good path. They eat peyote there for the first time and stay very serious and auiet.

When you go to the peyote desert, thinking only of becoming a mara'akame, you will eat the peyote and speak to the deer and say, "I come here to learn how to become a mara'akame. I think only of this."

You speak to the peyote with your heart, with your thoughts. And the peyote sees your heart, and then you can eat as much as you want, with total confidence. You eat it without fear...and you sit there thinking, what will I see, how will it be? In a little while you lose all of your

thoughts, and you begin to see and hear beautiful things, moving nearikas, and you just sit there watching, like you're at the movies. If you have luck, you will hear things and receive things that are invisible to others, that god has given to you to help you pursue your path. That means you are starting off on a good road - a wide road - and that you will continue on this way. If you don't, if you leave this road, you're just going to become a person without a purpose in life, irresponsible, with nothing. If you stay on this road you are given all the knowledge. The gods tell you what you have to do, what's prohibited; no new women, no acting bad until you have completed...and if you accept these visions and the knowledge these visions give you, you will eventually become a mara'akame. You will complete, and now bad things won't happen to you. Now you have your special shaman's heart, and the knowledge in your mind. You have earned it and no one can ever take it away from you. You have won your special powers and the right to use them. Whenever one chooses to go, they must do this for five years, and then they will acquire these visions and this good road. It is only then that they will be able to use their dreams for healing people.

vates them to another level of consciousness and way of life.

#### The Accumulation of Power

During the course of apprenticeship the initiate concentrates on filling up his tacuatsi, or medicine basket, with his or her power tools, or instruments. The objects inside of the tacuatsi are all imbued with special powers the shaman will use to negotiate with the spirit world. Each object is acquired as a reward for completion of a bargain or vow with a patron deity, or as a "loan" to be repaid by the shaman in the future. Arrow Man explains the function of this elongated medicine basket:

"The tacuatsi is what is used by the mara'akames for their power to be able to communicate with the spirits and gods. There are many things inside, which allow shamans to communicate with the five directions, objects that allow us to see the gods and goddesses, objects that protect us from harm or the evil intentions of others, things that bring us close to our animal allies and give us courage in the spirit world. As soon as a person knows that he wants to become a mara'akame, even if he dreams it as a child, he will begin to make his tacuatsi and fill it with ob-

jects the gods give him."

Thus, the mara'akame's medicine basket embodies the power of the shaman. No Huichol shaman would attempt to heal, chant, or communicate with the gods without his instruments. Arrow Man and other Huichol shamans I've known emphasize that their powers come from their objects, not from within. Their communication with the god realm is only possible by invoking the spirits and gods that are contained in essence within the objects. Each and every power object is a symbol of the initiate shaman's completion of a certain phase of his long spiritual path. Arrow Man has likened his power objects to special keys the shamans are rewarded with that unlock doors to specific skills. I will briefly explain here what some of the power objects in the tacuatsi are, and what they are used for.

#### Muvielis

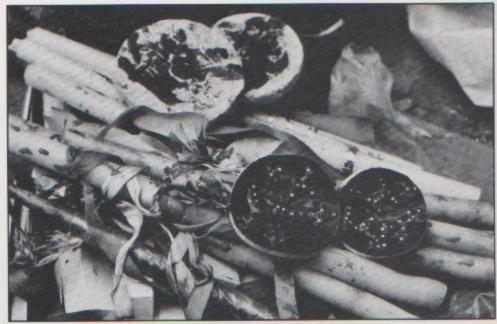
The most important objects in the tacuatsi are the muvielis, the feathered wands, or prayer arrows with pairs of feathers attached. Birds

are considered by the Huichols to be messengers of the deities, and these feathered wands are used for blessing people, removing negative energy, sucking out illnesses, hearing messages from the deities, annointing people with sacred substances such as holy water or animal blood, and giving libations of corn meal, chocolate, and alcoholic beverages. A Norwegian explorer who studied the Huichols about a hundred years ago, Carl Lumholtz, had this observation to make about the feathered wands, which still holds true today:

"The birds, especially those that soar the highest...are thought to see and hear everything, and to possess mystical powers, which are inherent in their wing and tail feathers. Thus... the shaman's plumes enable the shaman to see and hear everything both above and below the earth,...and help him perform his magical feats, such as curing the sick, transforming the dead, calling down the sun, etc." [Lumholtz 1902: 7-8]

The shaman uses his plumes to receive communications from the gods, or as Arrow Man comments, "like a radio antenna." Different birds are in tune with different frequencies, so numerous species are valued and pursued by shamans and initiates. Hawks, eagles, and macaws are the most potent bird allies, and their feathers help the shamans hear and see the metaphysical nature of disease, misfortune, and death. Rainmaking, deer-hunting, and luck in acquiring artistic skills fall under the domain of other birds such as swifts, kites and hummingbirds. Allies are made of these birds by a person capturing one, painting his or her cheeks with the bird's blood, swallowing heart and removing the feathers. This is done once a year for five years. Combinations of wands with pairs of feathers from several different species are used by the more knowledgeable shamans.

Often the muvielis are used in conjunction with other power objects, such as mirrors or other round discs called nearikas, crystals, deer-tail wands, and reptile tails. The comment by Arrow Man that his feathered wands are like radio antennas becomes even more interesting when he adds that the shaman's nearikas are the "transmitters". Thus the nearika and plumes used together create a circuit that channels the messages of the gods and goddesses to and from



Nearikas and candles annointed with animal blood are taken as offerings to the gods who answer the peoples' prayers.

the mara'akame like a radio transmitter and receiver.

#### Nearikas

Nearikas are also used by the Huichols to express certain messages or prayers to the deities. They can be made in the form of round objects, such as gourd tops with bead and wax figures stuck on, or made of other material such as wood, paper, yarn or plant fibers. Nearikas of these types are used throughout the Huichol life cycle as offerings as well as power instruments. For instance, when a person wishes to commemorate a five year completion period with a god or goddess, he or she will create a nearika in the customary technique that applies to that specific deity. The round object is made and attachments that symbolize the attributes of the deity are tied onto it. The nearika is then taken to the home of the god or goddess (which may be miles away from the person's home) and left as an offering. This type of nearika symbolizes a pact between the person and that specific god. The person who leaves his or her own offering may then pick up another one, left by a previous person, and carry this from then on in his or her medicine basket. This is how power objects are often acquired.

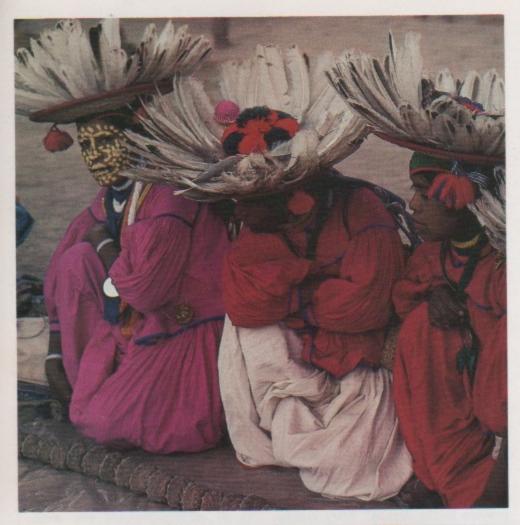
Mirrors, so important to mara'akames, are also called nearikas and are obtained the same way. Arrow Man describes the process through which initiates acquire their magic mirrors:

"There is a very steep peak where people climb to leave offerings. Kauyumari lives there, it is 'the place of the singing shamans'. He's the great chief of all singing shamans and healers. That's why both men and women visit him, because he gives luck to initiate shamans. I went there with my shaman teacher to look for my luck. He looked for my special power object there, my nearika, which took the form of a mirror. I took a mirror there and left it as an offering and picked up another one left by someone else, which had been blessed by Kauyumari. This will be my helper for the rest of my

Arrow Man further comments on how the shamans use their mirrors, and why they are so important:

"We say that mirrors are the nearika of Kauyumari, the 'oracle' of the singing shaman. With his mirror the shaman can see very far, like binoculars, he sees the gods. He holds it in his hand in front of the fire, in front of Tatewari, Grandfather Fire, and this way the shaman can make no mistakes when singing.

"The shamans use the mirrors to see inside a person's stomach, to see the animals in there, to see which illness has fallen into the stomach. For example, if it is a corn illness, a peyote illness, an illness sent by the gods, or an illness sent by bad people who have sent a hex



(Above) Wearing the colorful dresses, face paint, and feathered hats of peyoteros, three women watch over long strings of peyote buttons as they celebrate their return from the "realm of the gods".

(Right) Tin-can pop-tops dangling from this man's hat add a modern touch to the beauty of his traditional Huichol costume.



in the form of a thorn or other evil thing. With the mirror, his nearika, the shaman sees all of this and can remove the problem."

With the nearika in one hand and the feathered wands in the other, the shamans see and hear communications which are invisible or inaudible to non-shamans but are nonetheless significant aspects of Huichol reality. Their power objects allow them to tune in, and refinements on those objects, such as additions of reptile tails, crystals, thorns or other attachments symbolizing each individual's level of completion, allow

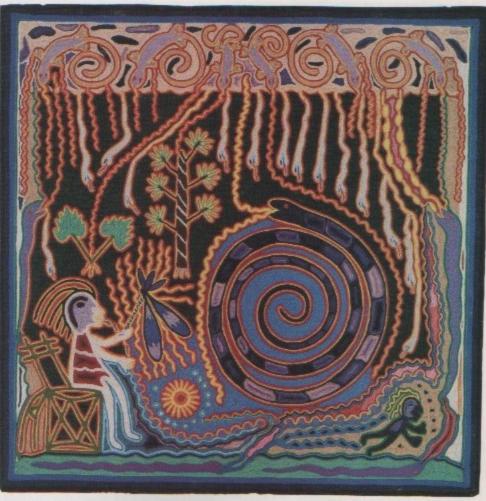
for the fine tuning.

The fine tuning the shamans practice is what distinguishes them in their respective specialties. are many different levels of shamanic competence in the Huichol culture. Among the many individuals who claim to be shamans are those who have rudimentary knowledge and those who truly excel in the esoteric arts. This is much like our own culture where skill levels in the field of medicine may range from paramedics to neuro-surgeons. The level of skill one acquires is contingent upon the degree of commitment the apprentice vows towards completion. Among the upper echelon of Huichol shamans are those with a multitude of specialties based on the spirit allies and patron deities they've amassed over the years by completing vows to each one of them. It's awesome to imagine the immense body of information and archaic cultural knowledge lying within the palm fibers of the shaman's tacuatsi, or medicine basket.

#### **Obtaining Animal Allies**

Allies from both the plant and animal kingdoms imbue Huichol shamans with talent and proficiency in their specialties. The importance of birds has already been discussed; dozens of reptiles and mammals are also considered of the utmost importance in helping the shamans control or negotiate with the spirit world. For example, reptiles are powerful allies because they are associated with water and falling rain, as well as with the Sun and Fire gods, who exert their influence to make the rains stop so the world may dry up and the crops can be harvested. Lizards, Gila monsters and horned toads are believed to be particularly bene-





ficial to shamans. Snakes provide other powers such as protecting shamans from evil spirits or the hexes of sorcerers. Non-shamans also employ the powers of snakes and other reptiles to help them become good weavers and embroiderers or become good hunters.

Life-long pacts are established between people and reptiles over a period of five years. A person who desires the animal's favors, or the apprentice shaman who desires the animal's power, will seek out the reptile in its hiding place and wait to capture it. Having caught it, the person will cut off the animal's tail, suck the blood, and set it free. Sometimes the person will tie a small pouch around the animal's leg. The tails are kept in a special place until five are obtained, one a year for five years. Then the five tails will be taken to the god or goddess they pertain to, made into a nearika and left as an offering.

Anyone breaking this alliance once it is formed - meaning that the person does not acquire the five tails as promised or commits other infractions (such as extra-marital sex)
- will incur the animal's wrath,
whose revenge could be fatal. But
those who succeed will encounter the
reptile in the future, remove the
tail, and attach it to their shaman's
wands, significantly increasing their
level of power.

Arrow Man describes how he became allied to the rattlesnake:

"I want to have the power of these snakes so no one can harm me. It's what I need to be a good shaman. I pick it up and grab it by the neck, and in the middle. Now, other shamans respect me because they know I'm rattle-snake.

"When I go to find the rattlesnake I go there fasting, abstinent, without having eaten salt. I think only of the gods, and think about what the gods might send me. One day it doesn't appear but the next day there it is. The rattlesnake allows himself to become my ally."

Arrow Man further describes the process of obtaining animal allies and the consequences of breaking one's vows to them in the following descriptions of mountain lion and wolf spirits.

(Above Left) The shaman's tacuatsi (woven basket) is filled with the "tools of his trade", power objects made from bird, animal and plant allies.

(Above Right) Holding his muvieli high, a shaman sings to his snake and lizard allies which help bring water and rain.



The Huichol apprentice must face many challenges to the mind, body and soul.

"To get power from the mountain lion one enters its den and brings it arrows. If it's there we grab hold of it like a dog, and pass it over our heads, hearts and bodies. We aren't afraid of the animals....

"The mountain lion is the 'police' of Grandfather Fire. If a shaman breaks his vows, Grandfather Fire will send the lion to capture the person. A spirit will attack the person and cause him to get sick, have an accident or die. Another shaman who tries to heal this person will see a mountain lion in his mirror and try to calm him.

"Our brother wolf, Tamatsi Kumu-kimae, is a god, and so wolves are all considered gods. They defend those who bring them offerings. We take arrows, chocolate, animal blood (bull, deer), feathered wands, nearikas and more, so that they will give us luck. They defend us so that other people who wish to do us harm won't be able to reach us.

"One has to complete with them or they will eat you, that is, they will send a wolf spirit to make you sick, or your family sick, or your animals might be eaten. If you go with them and spend the night and bring them special things for five years, they will speak to you and teach you how to turn into one of them, how to become a wolf. They will invite you to go around with them for a night, and you will watch as they eat calves and other raw meat. Then they will teach you how to turn back into a person. If one isn't afraid, the wolves will teach one many things."

The apprenticeship of Huichol shamans is filled with challenges to the mind, body and soul: eating bird hearts, sucking lizard tails, grabbing rattlesnakes, entering the lion's den and running with the wolves. Once

they undertake these alliances, there's no going back for fear of fatal consequences. The key to obtaining metaphysical powers for the Huichols is overcoming their fears, not once, not twice, but five times for each ally they acquire. Their boldness is a statement of faith to their gods, and is rewarded by a step up the spiritual ladder for every fear they conquer.

#### Kieli, The Jealous Ally

On the other hand, people who fail are scorned as cultural outcasts if they don't die or commit suicide. A good example of this can be seen in Arrow Man's commentary on a plant ally, the powerful Kieli plant (in the Solanaceae family, an hallucinogenic plant resembling datura), highly esteemed for its magical properties. Kieli is used by shamans and nonshamans for a variety of reasons: to excel in the shamanic arts, to become good artists, musicians or deer hunters, and for love spells. Different Kieli plants rule over these various powers, and the mara'akames dream about which plants pertain to the desires of each individual.

Once the person finds the plant that pertains to him, the individual must pledge himself to it for five to ten years. The person is then obligated to bring it offerings which express his/her prayers - such as shaman's wands for becoming shamans, deer antlers for hunting, embroidery and artwork samples for becoming good artists, tiny guitars or violins for becoming good musicians, and lipstick, rings and beads for love spells. The Kieli plant is described by Huichols as being a very jealous ally. It won't stand for any sexual relationships outside of marriage by either partner after one of them has vowed to it. This rule stays in effect until the person completes with the plant for a period of five or ten years. If an unmarried person pledges himself to the plant, he is obligated to forego sex until the vow is complete. This is often a difficult restriction for the Huichols to maintain, in spite of the benefits. Arrow Man comments,

"Many people are afraid of Kieli because it can cause great harm to someone who doesn't complete as he should. Most people don't ingest the plant. It's so powerful that just carrying a piece of the branch in one's tacuatsi is enough to gain its powers. Those



The powerful Kieli plant is considered a dangerous and jealous ally.

who ingest it suck the milk from the branches and feel 'drunk' like with the peyote. They hear many things and see many nearikas. Whether or not a person drinks the milk, once they pledge themselves to the Kieli they can't take on any new lovers until they complete.

"If someone makes love to someone new before they complete they can't become good mara'akames. They turn into bewitchers to cast spells on other people. They become this way because now their hearts burn and devils control them. Soon they will cause so much harm that someone will eventually kill them for revenge."

#### Sorcery and Black Magic

This brings up a whole different category of Huichol shamans, the ones that fail in the "white arts" and sink into the "black". While bewitchers and hexers are scorned by the Huichols, they nonetheless have their following by Indians who wish to avenge and settle "scores". The atmosphere of mistrust and hate bred by the hexers looms over Huichol consciousness like a black cloud. People are constantly paranoid about the doings of these black magicians, and those shamans who are famous for their abilities to reverse the damage caused by sorcerers never "hurt for business".

Here Arrow Man describes the difference between good and bad shamans:

"The bad shamans inflict harm onto others because someone has commissioned them to do so. The good shamans know how to do bad things but they don't ever do them. That's because the good shamans aspire to reach very high, and surpass the lowly level

of the bewitchers, who are dedicated to causing harm and can reach no higher.

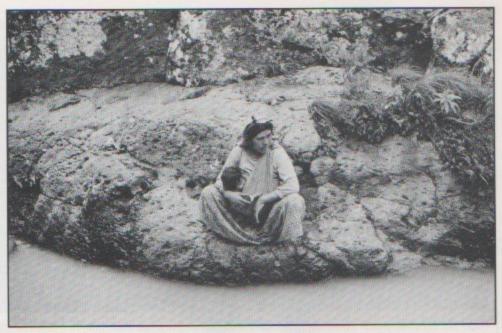
"A bad shaman who is angry with a woman may hex her so that she is unable to have children. But a good shaman can take away the damage. Another illness a bad shaman can give to a woman is called 'flowers in her hair'. It makes the woman want to have many men; she leaves her home and goes with one, then another. That's because the bad shaman put a magic flower in her hair which makes even an ugly woman appear desirable to all men."

Whether an illness was caused by a bewitcher or results from the displeasure of the gods, the mara'akames are the only ones who can restore equilibrium. Like doctors, the mara'akames are frequently awakened out of a sound sleep and called to travel by foot or mule to a moonlit rancho where someone has been stung by a scorpion, is giving birth, or suffers from some malady. Day or night the shamans carry their tacuatsi with them so that whatever medical emergency comes up, the shaman will be ready and the power allies will be standing by.

#### Completion and Closed Power

From adolescence to middle age every Huichol Indian is a potential candidate for accepting the challenge of completion: acquiring the knowledge, discovering more about it, using it as a way of life and passing it on. By the time the shamans enter into their elder years, their training has resulted in a compendium of knowledge about the physical and metaphysical worlds that is encyclopedic in scope. The average shaman's botanical knowledge alone could fill volumes.

In addition to healing, the allencompassing powers of the shamans extend to the far corners of the universe, where they travel in their dreams or visions to talk to the Sun, the Eagle-Mother of the Sky, the Wind God, the Rain Goddesses, the Underworld and the Land of the Dead. Imbued with the power of divine beings, the power of transformation, the shamans transcend the barriers between hidden worlds as easily as a chameleon changes its color. A mara'akame is defined by the ability to transform illness into health, drought to rain, seed corn to harvest, misfortune to luck, death to



With the Huichols coming under increasing pressure to integrate into the modern world, the future of their ancient culture remains uncertain.

life, and imbalance to equilibrium.

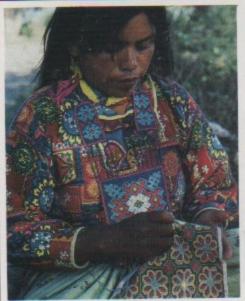
Elder shamans are the most highly esteemed individuals in Huichol culture. Those who reach the state of wisdom and illumination that characterize the ultimate stage of completion are given a special name, Nacame, or "closed power". These individuals have endured all of the obstacles, passed all the tests, climbed the magical ladder to enlightenment and reached the top. There is no more for them to complete, their power is closed, so they become, as the Huichols say, "living gods".

These are the high priests, the keepers of the collective sacred knowledge that extends back through history to pre-Columbian or perhaps even pre-historic times. They are the memory of the people, and the seeds of their future. Every detail of every ceremony, every place name, observance, prayer, object and deity is logged in the elder shamans' memories and called upon over and over again by every new generation. They are the spiritual leaders, healers, and psychologists of their people, and offer cures for the ill, comfort for the distraught, and encouragement for the fledglings.

As the wise old mara'akame sits before the fire with his tacuatsi at his side, his feathered wands in one hand and nearika in the other, he listens to the voices most of us have forgotten how to hear. He performs his diplomatic duties and magic in invisible worlds that have long disappeared elsewhere on our planet but are still remembered, visited and worshipped by the Huichols. It's sad to think that many of these elders dream that the Huichol world is coming to an end and that the peyote dance, which is like the heartbeat of the world, will soon be silent.

While in some areas of the Huichol Sierras the traditions are still strong, in other areas the knowledge of some elders who have recently died was buried with them. The outside world has discovered the Huichols, and now many of the youngsters have traded their rattles and gods'-eyes for school notebooks and pencils. Unless something is done in the near future to help the Huichol people to hold onto their traditional culture, the voice of the wind and the teachings of the deer will soon become echoes of the past.

Susana and Mariano Valadez are founders and directors of the Huichol Center for Cultural Survival and Traditional Arts, which operates out of Santiago Ixcuintla, Nayarit, Mexico. Susana's work documenting Huichol art and culture goes back over the last decade. Mariano is a noted Huichol artist and cultural scribe who uses his yarn paintings to record and give form to some of the most profound experiences of his people. For more information, contact: Susana Valadez, Huichol Center for Cultural Survival and Traditional Arts, 414 - 41st Street, Oakland, CA 94609. (415) 655-0111.





(Left) The Huichols produce beautiful embroidery and other artwork that could provide a financial alternative to working on tobacco plantations. (Right) Unaware of the danger involved, a woman and child handle insecticide-covered tobacco leaves.

## The Challenge of Integration: The Current Situation with the Huichols

There are still approximately 8,000 Huichols living in five autonomous communities scattered throughout remote areas of the Sierra Madre mountains of Mexico. For centuries the Huichols have lived as sedentary agriculturalists, surviving by cultivating maize, beans and squash, gathering wild plants, hunting, and tending domesticated animals. The ancient methods of survival that served so well in the past, however, are now being challenged as a viable means of sustaining the Huichol

Over the last two decades, the Mexican government has attempted to integrate the Huichols into the mainstream of Mexican life by building roads, schools, airstrips, clinics, and lumber mills in the Sierras. The influx of civilization has had a disintegrative impact on all aspects of the Huichol way of life. The Huichols are now discovering they need currency - to pay for high taxes on their land, to purchase costly materials for their native dress and votive arts, to pay their passage on buses so they can make religious pilgrimages once made on foot, and to buy cattle for use in their ceremonies now that the deer is nearly extinct in their homeland. Money has started to play increasingly significant roles in Huichol life, and the activities needed to generate it are threatening the survival of their traditional way of life.

Every year from December through June, hundreds of Huichol families migrate from their homelands in the Sierras to the humid coast of Nayarit in search of jobs on the Mexican tobacco plantations. Once the Huichols leave the protection of their homelands and enter the world of twentieth century Mexico, they are like strangers in a strange land. The four day

walk from the Sierras to the coast is like a walk through a time machine - except speeding trucks and buses whiz by them as they walk on the highways, and people hurl insults about their strange dress, their long hair, the feathers in their hats. They are now Indios, and are no longer treated

as respected members of society.

As migrant workers with few marketable skills, the Huichols discover they must work under difficult conditions for Even obtainlower-than-average wages. ing the basic necessities of life such as food and water, going to the bathroom, and finding sleeping arrangements can be bewildering to the Huichols. They sleep on newspapers in churchyards, or at garbage dumps where they can burn refuse to keep warm. The unfamiliar and often hostile environment of the coast, however, is more than just disorienting to the Huichols. Because of their lack of immunity, they are highly vulnerable to diseases such whooping cough, measles, and tuber-Those who survive the illnesses often unknowingly carry these infectious diseases back to the Huichol homeland. Disease, suicide and alcoholism are becoming epidemic among the Huichols.

In addition to the tragic loss of life from diseases, the Huichols face another kind of loss. Separation from their communities prevents the Huichol migrants from participating in important religious rites and ceremonies that are central to their health and well-being. The shamans, once the central figures in all areas of life and death, are losing control and credibility because of their inability to cope with the new "civilized" diseases. Lack of faith in the shamans, in turn, threatens the very fabric of Huichol traditional life and accelerates the disintegrative impact of Western influences on their tribal lifestyle. er or not the shamans can hold onto their cultural legacy in the face of so many challenges remains to be seen.

In 1981, The Huichol Center for Cultural Survival and Traditional Arts was established to help the Huichols preserve their cultural, spiritual, and artistic heritage while adapting to the demands of the twentieth century world. Founded and operated by Susana Eger Valadez, an American, and her husband Mariano Valadez, a Huichol Indian, the Huichol Center provides shelter and nutritious food, plus medical, economic and legal aid for migrant Huichols working on the tobacco plantations near the small urban center of Santiago Ixcuintla, Navarit.

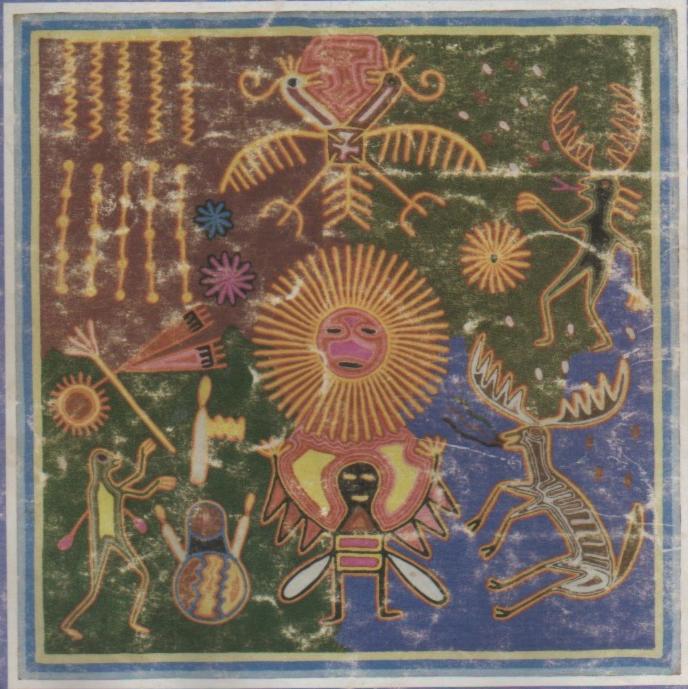
Equally important, the Huichol Center teaches the Huichols to value and use their artistic talents, vision, and cultural integrity as assets. By providing art materials used by the Huichols at a reduced price, and by purchasing finished artwork to be marketed, the Huichol Center offers a direct economic alternative to the debilitating migrant work. In addition, the Center's Design Archive collects, records and passes on traditional Huichol patterns (many of which may otherwise be lost) to the artists. It is hoped these projects can help the Huichols achieve economic self-sufficiency through sale of their arts and crafts, so that they don't have to leave their homeland and seek outside work.

The Huichol Center For Cultural Survival and Traditional Arts is supported by private donations and the sale of Huichol artwork. For more information write: The Huichol Center, 414 - 41st Street, Oak-

### SHAMAN'S DRUM

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