"The concept of a 'pueblo spirit', as suggested by some experienced ethnologists, seemed at first to be invalid. However, in view of the disintegrative possibilities of this pueblo, as one analyzes its social organization, there must be something that does hold the inhabitants together." Mischa Titiev: personal diary, 1 December 1933 (Titiev 1992)

Cutting across the high Colorado Plateau, the Little Colorado River runs northwest from its headwaters in the peaks of the White Mountains to the Grand Canyon where it joins with the west flowing Colorado River. South and west of the Four Corners locality is a desert region of high rocky mesas and wide sandy valleys carved by arroyos blending gently into the shifting dunes of the Painted Desert bordering the Little Colorado drainage. This region has been home to numerous prehistoric and historic cultures, each forging a precarious existence from a seemingly inhospitable environment. Separated by intermittent washes, four rocky fingers jutting southward from the core of Black Mesa are the only bastion of Hopi culture.

As descendants of the *ancient ones*, the Hopi are one of a handful of living peoples that exhibit a cultural pattern whose genesis can be directly attributed to the prehistoric Anasazi. The history of Hopi culture on Black Mesa begins with the great Puebloan migrations of the 13th century. Most likely emigrants from the Kayenta region, early Hopi settlers had established their first communities by late in the 13th century. Contact with Coronado’s liaisons in 1540 ushered in a new chapter in Hopi history (Simpson 1953:9). Regarding the foreigners with distrust and suspicion, the Hopi remained relatively unaffected by the cultural intrusion until 1629 when the Spanish began actively missionizing the native villages (Simpson 1953:9).

The Hopi attempted to maintain an informal policy of passive resistance towards the Spanish but in 1633 frictions flared briefly into violence with the poisoning of a missionary (Simpson 1953:9). The already tenuous situation exploded in 1680 with the Pueblo Revolt. Puebloan peoples ejected the Spanish from the American Southwest until 1692, but another eight years passed before efforts were exerted to reestablish missions on the Hopi Mesas. Again the inhabitants of Black Mesa rose up, burned the new church and expelled the Spanish. Buffered by the Navajo, Apache and Comanche, all practicing lifestyles of nomadic raiding, the Hopi remained relatively well insulated from influence flowing out of the Spanish colonial stronghold of the Eastern Pueblos.

With the Gadsden Purchase of 1848 and the United States subsequent acquisition of the Greater American Southwest, power shifted from Spanish hands. U.S. military action curtailed nomadic raiding in Hopi territory and in 1882 federal legislation granted the Hopi reservation land. In possession of only a small portion of their pre-European lands, the Hopi Reservation is surrounded on all sides by the reservation of their traditional enemies, the Navajo. The 19th and 20th centuries have been a complex period of transition for the Hopi. The Hopi people have attempted to maintain their traditional life ways while seemingly under the grip of white culture and economics. Attributable in part to their geographic isolation, lack of exploitable natural resources and imperviousness to cultural change the Hopi have maintained the integrity of their cultural core.

The settlement of Oraibi, which is fabled to be the longest continually occupied settlement in America, echoes a theme of continuity that pervades Hopi culture and ethnohistory. Considering the archaeological record of the Four Corners region, Hopi culture may have roots extending back over 2,000 years or beyond. Even discounting their derivation from the Anasazi, the Hopi have been a viable culture unit for about 700 years. Generation by generation a certain cultural concept of Hopiness has changed hands by tradition, ceremony and legend. Even today, the conservative inhabitants of Antelope, First, Second and Third Mesas express what it is to be Hopi as the Hopi Way.

Essentially their world view, the Hopi Way prescribes proper patterns of behavior and responsibilities required, on an individual level, for a long, happy life and rebirth in the Underworld (Thompson and Joseph 1944:40). According to Hopi thought, on a societal level the Hopi Way guarantees harmony and continuity for the community as a whole. Considering the Hopi Way as the avenue to success in the here and after, then the Hopi Road of Life can be conceptualized as the road map. Graphically mirrored in the Powamu ceremony sand painting, a yellow line with four crooks is drawn symbolizing emergence in to this world and the proper path to rebirth in the Underworld. The Hopi Road of Life is one of "gradual growth and development" segmented into four phases by the crooks or points of transition (Thompson and Joseph 1944:50). The four segments of Hopi life are childhood, youth, adulthood and old age. With each successive phase, cultural norms demand different behaviors and new social responsibilities must be attended to in order to conform to the...
Hopis. As a Hopi progresses on the Road of Life, each successive phase augments and expands the individual's kinship, ceremonial and economic ties with fellow community members. While the Hopi Way is an outline for ideal individual behavior it seeks to expand and cement social networks within communities increasing Hopi inter-relatedness, harmony and continuity on a cultural level through time.

**Birth and Infancy**

Just as the symbolic Powamu sand painting originates from the kiva si' papu or mythical place of emergence, birth begins the Hopi Road of Life. Although custom decrees that an expectant mother should engineer her delivery as much as possible, her family tends to her needs during labor and birth (Titiev 1944:7). The mother goes through labor reclined on a bed of warm sand and as the time approaches she assumes a kneeling position for the actual birth. Delivered on a sheepskin rug, attendants wrap the child in a blanket or cloths. Immediately after delivery, the mother reassumes her recumbent position on the warm sand and paternal relatives are summoned. Guarding against the perceived detrimental effects of sunlight on their newborn, windows and doorways are blanketed casting the home into a darkness required to last for twenty days. The maternal grandmother enters the birthing room and severs the umbilical cord (Titiev 1944:7). Because the Hopi consider the navel a spiritual locus, the umbilical cord holds special significance (Thompson and Joseph 1944:51 and Walters 1963). Tied to a bow for a male offspring or a stirring stick for a female, the cord is hung from the home's rafters. After the mother delivers the placenta, the sand bed and afterbirth are basketed and scattered into a special crevice, as are the remains of stillborn infants (Thompson and Joseph 1944:51).

Cries of the newly born infant initiate a shift in responsibility from the mother's family to her husband's kin. Female relatives of the father are obligated to care for the physical and spiritual well-being of mother and child alike for the subsequent twenty days. After being anointed with ashes, the newborn is bathed in a basin with warm water and yucca suds. Ashes are then applied again and are not removed. Swaddled in a blanket or cotton cloth, they are lashed to a cradle board and moved to a small cloth beneath their head and a roll under their neck (Dennis 1940:30) to prevent cervical deformation. Other than for changing and bathing, from their first day on the infant is bound to the cradle board for the next six to twelve months. During their confinement, infants become dependent on the board and will often cry when removed for an extended time (Dennis 1940:96).

Once every four days, female in-laws bathe the mother and child. With each cleansing a calendrical cornmeal mark is removed from one of the four walls or a beam in the ceiling and on the twentieth day, with all marks removed, the child is shown to the sun. The father's mother and sisters arrive at the baby's home well before sunrise. One of the women bathes the child in yucca suds and gives it a name. The ritual repeats until every relative present washes and names the infant. Just before dawn, the mother, child and paternal relatives walk east to the edge of the mesa. As first light appears, each woman takes a handful of cornmeal, blows on it and says a silent prayer to the sun asking that the child enjoy a long, happy life (Titiev 1972:286). As they scatter the meal to the wind, the most senior member repeats the names given to the baby. With the introduction to Great Father Sun, the baby is ceremonially initiated as a member of the Hopi people.

As they scatter the meal to the wind, the most senior member repeats the names given to the baby. With the introduction to Great Father Sun, the baby is ceremonially initiated as a member of the Hopi people. Conducting fieldwork at the village of Old Oraibi during the 1930's, Mischa Titiev found that under ordinary circumstances Hopi fathers tended to remove themselves from activities surrounding the birth. Traditionally, a couple observes forty days of continence after a birth and typically new fathers take up secluded residence in their kivas "where days are less harassing and the nights far more serene than in [the] household" (Titiev 1944:7). Sociological investigations carried out during the same decade by Wayne Dennis at New Oraibi, the most Americanized of the villages, mention the presence of the father and other male relatives during the birth (Dennis 1940:30), but their participation is minimal compared to that of the women.

The birth of a child is a joyous time in any Hopi community but especially so for maternal relatives of the infant. The Hopi practice a kinship system where blood descent flows through the female lineage. Upon birth, the Hopi child automatically achieves membership in the lowest level of this matrilineal social organization, the household. As a reflection of this female descent pattern, a typical traditional household includes maternal grandparents, parents, maternal aunts, their spouses and offspring, unmarried maternal uncles, female siblings, their families and unmarried brothers. Households that can trace their descent through a common maternal ancestry are the integral elements of a lineage group. Essential for the perpetuation of the lineage, female offspring are especially prized among the Hopi and occupy a central position in kinship system.

Lineage relationships, primarily those of the household level are central to socialization and development during the early years of life and it is within the lineage that the child "first becomes cognizant of those ties of kinship which in later life are to be extended to other relatives" (Titiev 1944:7). During the first several months of life, mothers all but exclusively care for their children. Rarely are children taken out of the household dwelling until about four months of
surrounding kachinas revolves about a pattern of reciprocity and exchange that seems to pervade Hopi culture. Kachina society or the Powamu society marks a Hopi children's first membership in a social group that crosscuts blood kinship lines. In addition, induction into a society involves adoption into a new clan establishing new inter-clan relationships thereby furthering an individual's relatedness among the group as a whole.

Respectively, girls and boys are chosen either a godfather or godmother that will accompany the child through their first initiation ceremony. Afterwards, godparents supervise the youth's spiritual and social developments through later segments of the Road of Life. Sexual lines divide decision making power in choosing a godparent; men pick their son and mothers their daughter's. In choosing ceremonial parents, Hopi mothers and fathers select both their child's adopted clan affiliation and later society memberships (Titiev 1944). The Powamu society is the more important of the two and it is reserved for boys with potential for ceremonial leadership roles (Walters 1963:176) and other good children (Thompson and Joseph 1944:55). All other children are inducted into the Kachina society with "bad boys" being especially steered so (Thompson and Joseph 1944:55).

Initiation ceremonies are conducted during the Powamu ceremony that is held about every four years. The Powamu and Kachina initiates and their sponsors are taken to a kiva. At midnight, the kachinas costumed as both men and women enter through the kiva roof and dance before the children. This ritual repeats for three more successive days. After which, on the next night, the Kachina society ceremony is performed (Walters 1963:177). Both the Powamu and Kachina initiates and their godparents gather in a different kiva where the Powamu sand painting is reserved for boys with potential for ceremonial leadership roles (Walters 1963:176) and other good children (Thompson and Joseph 1944:55). All other children are inducted into the Kachina society with "bad boys" being especially steered so (Thompson and Joseph 1944:55).

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has been constructed on the floor. The Powamu chief enters the kiva dressed as the Muyingwa kachina who is the God of germination and regales the children with sacred tribal lore about the kachinas (Titiev 1944:116). Muyingwa departs and soon after lookouts report the arrival of three other kachinas.

Announcing their presence by beating and stomping on the kiva roof, Hahai’i Angwucnasomtaka and two Hu kachinas descend into the kiva armed with long yucca whips (Titiev 1944:116). With the Powamu initiates marked by feathers in their hair excluded, the remainder of the children are one by one led to stand on the Powamu sand painting where they are given four lashes by one of the Hu kachinas. When all the Kachina initiates have taken their turn on the kiva floor, the Hu kachinas flog each other and the Hahai’i and then depart. The Kachina society chief threatens the neophytes under punishment of another stout beating if ever they betray the kachinas' secrets that they have just learned (Titiev 1944:116).

On the sixth night, organizers again gather all the neophytes in a kiva. The arrival of this night’s kachinas is announced with sweet corn dropped down the kiva opening and an invitation to eat. With the children held fast to their seats with fear the costumed kachinas come down the kiva ladder only this time they are without their ceremonial masks. Here for the first time do the Hopi children realize their relatives and fellow villagers have been impersonating the supernatural visitors (Titiev 1944). The kachinas dance until daybreak when the performers assemble in their kivas to feast. The newly initiated Hopi are escorted to the homes of their ceremonial parents where the children’s heads are washed with the traditional yucca suds and they are given new names. Parents present gifts to the ceremonial sponsors and the newly initiated children are adopted by their godparents’ clans. Extending kinship terms, initiates refer to their sponsors and people of prominence in their new clan as mother and father.

Adolescence

After induction into their first societies, initiates are no longer considered children in the eyes of their community. Though still lacking considerable life experience, villages fully absorb the youths as productive members. Responsibilities and obligations change dramatically and roles diverge along gender lines. Responsible for maintaining very little of the ceremonial calendar, women are primarily confined to the domestic sphere of Hopi life (Schlegel 1973:451). Extending training begun early in childhood, young women are expected to assume a greater share of household labors. Duties pressed upon them may include grinding corn, care of younger siblings, carrying water and gathering fire wood. Depending upon which mesa she lives on, a young female may learn to weave, coil baskets or produce pottery vessels (Titiev 1944:20). Tradition entrusts Hopi women with the responsibility of caring for clan and lineage ceremonial objects and fetishes. Training for maintenance and “feeding” of ritual equipment begins at this time for young women (Schlegel 1973:452). As economic assets, young women very quickly assume an indispensable position in the household.

Like the girls, boys’ domestic training ensued early in childhood but with initiation young men’s ceremonial education begins in earnest. Driven by the “sex dichotomy in labor “after societal initiation a son’s relationship with his father develops into an intimate bond (Titiev 1944:17-18). While boys follow their fathers to the fields as early as four, most of the boys’ time is spent in play. As they grow older, fathers give instruction on farming and herding and a portion of the day may be allocated to “moral teachings” (Titiev 1944:18). After initiation, a boy may tend to a portion of sheep from his father’s flock or he may manage an allotment of clan land. Over time, a son carries more and more of his father’s domestic burden.

As members of the Kachina or Powamu societies, young men have free access to their fathers’ kivas and begin to participate in religious ceremonies that they were previously unaware of or excluded from. Inside the kiva, young men learn the Hopi craft of weaving “to the accompaniment of story and song” (Thompson and Joseph 1944:57). Spending time away from his mother’s household, a young Hopi masters secrets of clan and society rituals and learns tribal lore under the guidance of his biological and ceremonial fathers. Initiated boys participate in kachina rites and gradually assume their share of responsibility for maintaining the ceremonial calendar (Thompson and Joseph 1944:56). Hopi fathers take great pride in their sons’ early kachina performances and assist them in learning the necessary dances and songs. As with domestic subsistence activities, a son gradually assumes a share of ceremonial obligations under father’s watchful eye.

Adulthood

During late adolescence, Hopi males experience a distinct transition from youth to adulthood through the complex series of rituals aggregately known as Wuwutcim. Pervaded by symbolism of death and rebirth, Wuwutcim is “practically universal” for men throughout Hopiland (Titiev 1944:130). While always performed annually in some capacity, the full Wuwutcim ceremony is conducted only in years that the numbers of male youths necessitate tribal initiation rites. The
Hopi Way prescribes young men join one of four tribal societies; Singers (Tao), Horns (Al), Agaves (Kwan) or Wuwutcim. With induction into the secret society of his godfather, which is usually also his father, tradition pushes young men into the ceremonial and cultural responsibilities of adulthood.

The tribal initiation begins when the Horn chief observes the sun rising at the proper point on the horizon. The four society heads gather to hold a formal smoke where offerings are exchanged. Before the next morning’s dawn, the Crier chief announces the upcoming ceremony throughout the community. On the morning of the fourth day afterwards society chiefs erect standards in their respective kivas indicating that the Wuwutcim rites are in progress (Parsons 1936b: 964). Officers of the Wuwutcim and Agaves kiva set about constructing altars while chiefs of all four societies prepare prayer offerings of cotton string and pine-needles (Titiev 1944:131).

Late in the afternoon members of the societies and their initiates, garbed in only white kilts, proceed to the central kiva (Parsons 1936b: 965). While filing in, participants toss a handful of cornmeal through the hatch onto the fireplace below before moving down the kiva ladder (Parsons 1936b:963). With members lining the kiva’s walls, a member of the Agaves and one the of Horns kindle two fires with rotating drills, one north of the central fire pit and one south. When the cedar bark fires are blazing, the string and pine-needle offerings are pitched to the flames in sacrifice. Wearing the two horned headdress of his order, a Horns officer ignites a torch from the new fire and makes a round to each society’s kiva touching off their hearts. Exiting the kiva, participants congregate at the shrine of Sand-altar Woman (Tuwapongtumsi). After honoring the deity with a brief ceremony, a member of the Horns leads the party down to a space below the mesa regarded as a great si’ papu where the wise old men live (Titiev 1944:131). Offerings are left for their ancestors, who are now believed to reside in the Underworld as kachinas, in hopes they will repay the act with blessings of rain, health and profitable harvests. Retiring to their respective kivas, initiates and their ceremonial fathers sleep wrapped together in a single blanket, while patrols of Agaves and Horns keep a vigilant watch throughout the village because “unseen evil spirits [are] abound” (Titiev 1972:146).

The Singers begin the second day of Wuwutcim with a public dance escorted by members of the Agaves. Taking advantage of a more relaxed atmosphere, throughout the day men gather in loose social groups weaving, smoking and sharing stories while initiates remain confined to their society’s kiva. Later in the evening, Agaves join together in their kiva for a ritual smoke from a special pipe which Alexander Stephen describes as holding “two great handfuls” of tobacco (Parsons 1936b:968). With darkness, Agaves and Horns resume their sentry duties and initiates again slumber under the protection of their ceremonial fathers nestled in society kivas.

Again Singers open the next day’s observances with a morning dance. While most of the day is spent in preparation, that afternoon societies conduct a public performance in which some novice members are costumed as pregnant women marked with phallic symbols and signs of fertility. With sunset, tensions mount as Wuwutcim approaches its most critical phase. Now considered to inhabit “the depths of the underworld sea,” initiates begin a fast that will prepare them for their return to the surface world in six day’s time when their metamorphosis into manhood is consummated (Parsons 1936b:973). This night’s Horn and Agaves patrols intensify as the time of the spirits approaches. Like the other nights, the rising of the star group Pleiades above kiva hatches signals an end to third day of Wuwutcim and men retire in the kivas with their godsowns.

Activities of day four are the least viewed and most clandestine of the tribal initiation; aspects of which “no white observer has ever glimpsed” (Titiev 1944:135). Early, before sunrise, sentinels of the Horns barricade trails leading into the community with a line of cornmeal (Walters 1963) and under physical threat bar access to all human visitors. One path left unobstructed will serve as the portal through which spirits of the Underworld will enter the village under the cover of darkness on this night of the dead. As before, preparation for upcoming activities consumes the daylight hours. Singers and Wuwutcim members dance under a strong Horns guard who later hold a private altar ritual in their society’s kiva (Titiev 1944:132). The Agaves kiva bustles as men tend to their costumes, don their warrior paint and otherwise ready themselves for Wuwutcim’s most important and arduous night. Women contribute by preparing large feasts for expected spirit visitors and as nightfall approaches a cornmeal line is drawn bisecting the community; one half for the villagers and the other for their ancestral spirits (Titiev 1944:135). Women deposit the food offerings outside and doors and windows stand wide open on one side of the ground corn barrier. Vacating their homes, Hopi seek shelter with friends and kin on the other side of the village that is “tabu [sic] for the dead”(Titiev 1944:135). People are confined inside their homes as Horn and Agaves soldiers again take to the streets with the prime purpose of ensuring that no undesirables or witches mix with the dead.

With villagers forbidden even to peak out of their dwellings, costumed Horns and Agaves rush wildly about the village challenging spirits and each other while constantly on the watch for intruders of the human sort. If an outsider is encountered, the Horns may thrash them severely and if ferreted out by the Agaves they may exert the right to put an intruder to death (Titiev 1944:135). Fear prevails among the Hopi as the guards’ racket reaches a mad cacophony. Simultaneously, locked away in their subterranean kivas, the four societies initiate their new members in esoteric rituals of
which few details have been recorded. The tribal initiations and Wuwutcim as a whole climax with the arrival of the dead. After plundering a community cemetery, four Agaves men make a circuit entering each society’s kiva enshrouded in the burial clothes of recently deceased villagers (Titiev 1944:136). Cloaked by the dim light of the kivas, initiates readily mistake the foul smelling Agaves for the departed ones themselves. Instilled with the sheer terror of their introduction to the dead, initiates are symbolically killed and “their boyish lives terminated” (Titiev 1944:136). Drawing the ceremony to a close, the Agaves chief “obliterates the path” of the only open trail into the village thereby severing the connection between the spirit world and that of the living (Titiev 1944:136).

At dawn of the fifth day, all the groups make a pilgrimage to the shrine of Dawn Woman (Talautumsi) with appropriate rites being conducted (Titiev 1944:136). Men return to their kivas where they purge themselves with emetics before feasting together all as full-fledged members (Parsons 1936b:978). That afternoon, covered in only breech clouts, Singers dancers marked with phallic symbolism conduct a rowdy and sexually explicit exhibition. The women respond by dousing participants with water, urine and other filth. Wuwutcim men may emerge from their kiva and “try to outdo their predecessors in obscenity” and are likewise retaliated against by the women (Titiev 1944:132). A few dances take place on the sixth day, but on the whole, activities are social and also domestic in nature; various groups may set out to gather fuel or a hunting expedition may be mounted. With activities winding down, on the seventh day Wuwutcim men again put on a bawdy performance taunting and badgering women as they dance while on the eighth afternoon dances assume a more serious tone. “Disorderly conduct of any sort” is not tolerated (Titiev 1944:132) and rituals fully emphasize aspects of germination and fertility. Wuwutcim, Singers and Horns perform together in “alternating columns” (Titiev 1944:132) and at its completion women spectators receive gifts from the dancers.

Wuwutcim concludes on the ninth day. Agaves men begin preparations early before sunrise by carefully decorating themselves and practicing the day’s dance steps in the privacy of their society’s kiva (Titiev 1944:132). Later, still well before the sun has breached the horizon, members chant thirty-two sacred songs (Parsons 1936b:990) in nearly inaudible voices accompanied by a great uproar to disguise the nature of the lyrics from those not associated with the Agaves (Titiev 1944:132). For the last time during Wuwutcim, Agaves men emerge from their ceremonial chamber in full costume. In the meantime, Horns members have lit off bonfires in the village plaza and are imitating the behavior of mountain sheep by bounding here and there and occasionally leaping the fire while Singers and Wuwutcim societies look on (Titiev 1944:132). The Agaves garrison arrives and begins to sing as their chief sprinkles a cornmeal line on the earth. As their songs come to a close, the chief sweeps away the line and its symbolic connection with the Underworld. Having fulfilled their ceremonial roles, the Agaves and Horns are dismissed and return to their homes for breakfast (Parsons 1936b:992). About an hour after sunrise, Wuwutcim and Singers men perform their last dance throughout the village and the year’s Wuwutcim observances come to a close. Just as with other Hopi ceremonies of spiritual and social transition, the heads of newly initiated society members are washed by their ceremonial parents and they are given new names that will follow them throughout their adult life.

Collectively having witnessed far more of the Wuwutcim ceremony than any other ethnologists, J.W. Fewkes and Alexander Stephen concluded the observances defied “all attempt at interpretation” (Titiev 1944:130). While the complex meaning and symbolism of individual Wuwutcim elements may not be apparent or even discernible to an alien observer, common cultural themes repeat throughout the nine day observance. Most obvious are the deeply imbedded recurrent symbolic references to emergence. As “a myth of gestation and of birth,” (Titiev 1944:134) by default the emergence intimately intertwines with birth and death throughout Hopi thought.

As an integral component of emergence lore, the *si’ papu* represents not only the orifice through which man came forth on to earth but also a direct link to the Underworld where spirits of the ancestral Hopi dwell. The *si’ papu* acts as the medium through which the breach between earthly life and the spirit world is transcended, linking both realities in an unbroken circle. Death in one spiritual hemisphere is only a transitory crisis occurring in unison with the conjugate element of birth in the other half of the continuum. Wuwutcim observances draw heavily upon this sequence of death and transformation coupled with spiritual progression and rebirth.

Wuwutcim mirrors many elements of infancy and the rituals associated with birth. Known as *kele* or little chicken hawks whose “quills are not strong enough” (Titiev 1944:133), hungry initiates move their arms in the flapping motion of wings and their ceremonial fathers hold out bits of food to them. Symbolically, *kele* rely upon their godfather for their physical survival paralleling the ceremonial parent’s necessity to the initiate’s spiritual well being. Throughout Wuwutcim, ceremonial fathers carry their neophytes as infants to represent their spiritual immaturity. Following the fourth night’s ceremonies, blankets seal kiva hatches to block the sunlight from the fledglings’ eyes furthering allusions to childbirth. Kivas remain dowsed in darkness until the final initiation when initiates are reintroduced to the sun as adult men with full societal membership. The ritual head-washing and naming ceremonies that coincide with transitory life events demonstrates even more the successive cycle of death and rebirth as a new individual characterized by the Hopi Road of Life.
As initiated members, social and economic ties develop between compatriots as well as the obvious ceremonial bond that cements society members and the organizations as a whole. Society membership dissects the matrilineally derived kinship lines developing a strictly male social institution irrelevant of clan affiliation. Fostering inter-clan contacts, men's societies open lines of communication and reciprocity between clans that would otherwise be juxtaposed entities. With roots extending into the Powamu ceremony, tribal initiation furthers the development of age stratified groups increasing community homogeneity and group cohesion. Crosscutting age defined social stratigraphy is the practice of ceremonial parenthood where by even the loose event based factions integrate. On an individual level, Wuwutcim publicly marks the passing of male youths into adulthood where ceremony and tradition explicitly define expected cultural and social responsibilities and behaviors.

Unlike boys who culturally have a definite point of transition into adulthood, Hopi girls are subject to a phase of transformation usually culminating just before marriage. After initiation into either the Kachina or Powamu society young women essentially achieve economic adulthood as viable producing units within the household. Although socially integrated within the lineage and to a certain extent at the clan level, initiated girls lack the social status and cross-clan connective tissue of adulthood. Communal wide connections begin to bloom when a young woman joins her first female society.

The form and function of women's societies are in no way equivalent to that of the men's organizations. Among the Hopi communities there are three female organizations; Marau, Lakon and Oaqöl (Titiev 1944). Hopi women may, but are not required, to join any number of the societies, in any order. As with male societies, the ceremonial mother's group affiliation determines a young woman's first society membership. Girls usually join their first societies around thirteen years of age barring other circumstances. If a pregnant mother carries a female child into a meeting of her society the unborn baby automatically obtains membership in that society (Dennis 1940:77).

Although women maintain very few ceremonial obligations, the function of women's societies in Hopi ritual life is of paramount importance. Women's societies sponsor dances and ceremonies of the men's societies throughout the year. Drawing upon the economic and labor resources of several clans, women's societies provide the conjoining feast and reciprocal payments to dancers and ritual leaders. Besides providing capital to back men's ceremonial endeavors, societies hold regular women's dances where they themselves execute ceremonial duties. Following a pattern similar to that of the men's groups, women's society rituals are carried out by secret organizations; they are connected to central fetishes; and they consist at least partly of esoteric kiva rites (Titiev 1944:164). Unlike the ridged mechanics of men's groups, Hopi women's societies maintain an open membership where all girls wishing to join gain admittance. Initiation rites for all three societies follow a "customary scheme" and exhibit an "exceedingly close resemblances to each other" (Titiev 1944:164). Marau and Lakon initiation rituals generally take place in even years while the society women perform Oaqöl rites in the alternate years. The Lakon ritual focuses primarily upon germination and fertility as manifested in their worship of Muyingwa (god of germination) (Titiev 1944:168). Activities also express elements of healing and war during the eight day observance.

Operating in parallel with Lakon, the Marau rite "presents ritual for reproduction or fertility, for favorable weather, for war and for cure" (Parsons 1936b:864). Unlike the other two women's societies, Marau conforms closely with the pattern of men's ceremonies, particularly Wuwutcim (Titiev 1944:168). Joint symbolism permeating both observances include: the use of the chicken hawk analogy in reference to initiates and the exchange of bawdy songs and dances between the sexes. Like Wuwutcim, the more arcane rituals of Marau are performed in absolute secrecy. Of the three female organizations, only the Marau society maintains their own private kiva while Lakon and Oaqöl utilize men's kivas for their private society functions. Titiev suggests that the connection between these two sex based societies may be an indication that Marau may have once been a tribal initiation for adolescent girls (Titiev 1944:168). In the very least, Marau is the "most highly developed" of the women's societies and "sets the fashion" for Lakon and Oaqöl (Titiev 1944:168).

As the most religious of the Hopi women's societies, older women compose most of the organization and while doing little to exclude new membership, the Marau maintains some eligibility requirements. All initiates of the Marau society must either be of the Snake Clan or have a ceremonial mother who is a Snake (Dennis 1940:77), reflecting the foresight involved in choosing ceremonial parents. Rounding out Marau eligibility, in the event of a severe childhood illness a girl may be pledged to the society in exchange for her recovery (Dennis 1940:77). Pledges of the Marau society are generally considered to have a spiritual calling to join the organization.

The Oaqöl society and their ritual observances appear to be a relatively recent addition to the Hopi ceremonial cycle and social system (Voth 1903:3) probably introduced sometime in the 18th century (Titiev 1944:169). Eslie Clews Parsons recognizes through informants and observation that Oaqöl women's songs have been "stolen" (Titiev 1944:170)
and Hopi regard the Oaqöl as a new innovation resembling long-established ceremonies (Titiev 1944:170, Parsons 1925 and Voth 1903). Despite underlying themes of witchcraft, stemming in part from the illicit procurement of ritual and song, the Oaqöl maintains a significantly large membership and Hopi communities are in no way "adverse to its performance" (Titiev 1944:170) or the functioning society as a whole. As with the other societies' ritual endeavors, the Oaqöl and their initiation rites focus chiefly on aspects of fertility and germination.

While predominated by different clans and controlling different rituals, the three Hopi women's societies may be considered three related manifestations of a single ritualistic pattern relating back to the religious observances of men's societies. The Marau's relationship with Wuwuticim argues that this society is the prime materialization of female obligations while Lakon and Oaqöl are both derivative outgrowths of the original society and associated rituals. The Marau is primarily a religious organization with associated social implications while the Lakon and Oaqöl are social societies binding women of various clans into single, unified groups regardless kinship. Like that of the men, women's societies promote the development of reciprocal and social relationships outside of consanguineal lines while at the same time furthering intra-clan obligations and social ties. Operating within a purely matrilineal social system, women's societies create confederated reserves of cultural power able to handle social and economic concerns and crises.

Courtship and Marriage

Traditionally, young women conforming to the Hopi Way are fully indoctrinated into adulthood after participating in a four day ordeal of corn grinding known as pōliintevplatuwa (Titiev 1944:203). The rite ensues after a group of eligible, unmarried girls arrange for the ceremony by informing their paternal aunt that they are "ready to grind corn" (Titiev 1944:203). In its complete significance the statement indicates to relatives and community members that the young women are ready not only to participate in their adolescent rite, but also consider themselves prepared for the responsibilities of adulthood, marriage and family.

The ceremony begins that evening when participants are secluded in a room where they devote their daylight hours to grinding corn without the accompaniment of song or much conversation. As with other rituals of transition, windows are blanketed excluding rays of the sun. During their ordeal, the young women maintain a strict diet abstaining from fats, meat and salt. In charge of the ceremony and enforcing a demanding culturally prescribed schedule is a young woman who has already done her grinding (Titiev 1944:203). Participants grind all day long with only short breaks for food and water. Each girl presents the fruits of her daily labor to a relative or other respected woman in exchange they return the present by providing her evening meal. A young woman is obligated to present her ceremonial mother with a day's grinding.

On the fifth and final day of the ceremony, participants cease grinding and devote themselves to baking piki bread from the freshly ground meal. That afternoon, the director of the ceremony fashions the young women's hair into the traditional butterfly whorls signifying her readiness for marriage. A woman will wear their hair in this manner at all ceremonial functions until she is tied to a man. Ordinarily, an elaborate feast and kachina dances are held at the culmination where the female grinders present themselves to the village for the first time as adults eligible for matrimony. In essence the corn grinding ceremony is a test and a symbolic proclamation that the participants are prepared for the economic responsibilities of wedlock and maintaining a household. Up to this point, a girl's work and even her amusements have been directed towards a goal of preparing her to be a good wife and a mother in hopes that she secures a strong, productive young man from a respected family (Schlegel 1973:457).

While some courting may occur before the grinding ceremony, it assumes a more serious nature afterwards. Although the proposal of marriage is the woman's responsibility, the process of courting falls upon eligible males. As a reflection of acceptable cultural norms, true courting is considered strictly a night time activity. Young men, sleeping in their kivas and free from parental control "prowl about" (Titiev 1944:30) at will to call upon girls of their choosing. Young men visit their prospective lover's windows under the cover of darkness taking care not to awaken other members of her household. If the suitor is acceptable to the woman, he may stay the remainder of the night with her, sneaking away before first light to avoid detection (Titiev 1944:31). This custom of late night encounters or dumaiya is wide spread throughout Hopiland, continuing without an open cultural sanction (Titiev 1944:31). Young couples are often found out but seldom receive punishment unless one of the parties is considered unworthy of the other. Traditionally, less clandestine courting was carried out at picnics following night kachina dances where young men and women would exchange gifts and niceties without "any special formality" (Titiev 1944:31). In recent times this custom degenerated into a public prelude to dumaiya and as since been abandoned by the Hopi (Dennis 1940 and Titiev 1944). Although Hopi culture harbors very few sexual taboos, ideal cultural norms tend to frown upon experimentation, but a pre-marital pregnancy carries no particular social stigma and usually results in marriage without any coercion.
Upon encountering an adequate suitor, Hopi women initiate the proposal of marriage. Traditionally, the question is dropped with a tender loaf of qömi baked from a sweet cornmeal dough (Titiev 1944:32). Without words the proposal gift usually changes hands after the conclusion of a public event such as a dance. Prospective suitors accept the qömi regardless of their disposition towards the woman. Those looking unfavorably upon the proposal covertly pass the loaf on to the father of the Kachinas or else throw it away, but in either event the man sees to it that the woman learns of his rejection. If the proposal is accepted and both parties are in agreement, the man returns to his mother’s home with the qömi where marriage plans are arranged.

The clan head and maternal uncles are ordinarily consulted on the subject of marriage and although they exert a great influence their advice is in no way obligatory. Aside from the obvious factors of individual temperament, social status and economic condition, the union must meet accepted standards of exogamy. Ideally, individuals are expected to marry outside their clan and their father’s clan but in practice the Hopi make allowances for contrary situations. Social norms are flexible concerning endogamy within a father’s clan and although exceedingly rare, Mischa Titiev even recorded the occurrence of intra-clan marriages at the village of Old Oraibi (1944:36). Although readily endorsed, it is still considered improper to marry outside one’s own age group. Those who enter marriage for the first time with another who has previously been wedded are referred to as “basket carriers” (Titiev 1944:36) for their punishment in the afterworld will be burdening heavily laden baskets from the grave to the home of the dead. Despite retributions in the Underworld, these forbidden marriages do occur with some frequency especially among women. Should the proposed marriage be deemed advantageous, the soon to be bride relocates herself to the home of her groom bringing with her a gift of cornmeal. Kept in semi-isolation by her in-laws, the woman devotes the next three days to grinding corn from early morning to late in the evening in order to prove her worth while her groom goes about his normal daily routine. At sometime during this “probationary period” the man’s paternal aunts stage a mock attack on the bride’s temporary residence to punish her for “stealing their sweetheart” (Titiev 1944:37). Relatives execute the mud and water bombardment in good nature and compensation is later made for all damage inflicted.

Early on the fourth day the man and woman are ceremoniously joined in a traditional fashion reminiscent of other rites of transition. Well before dawn, the mothers of the couple about to be wedded prepare two bowls of yucca suds. The women along with other women from both clans wash the heads of the bride and groom each in their own bowl. Then comes the “crucial moment” when both heads are washed in one bowl (Voth 1912:148). Symbolic of union, the couple’s hair mingles or is actually knotted (Titiev 1944:37) and at this point bride and groom “become one” (Voth 1912:148). With dawn approaching, the couple walks to the east edge of their mesa where they scatter cornmeal into the wind as they pray to the sun. The couple returns to the his mother’s home where the new bride prepares a wedding breakfast. That evening the couple and their relatives dine on a wedding feast complete with a traditional wedding cake (Simpson 1953:40). Maintaining their residence in the groom’s household, from this point forward the pair may sleep together as husband and wife although the wedding rites are by no means complete.

Beginning when bride takes up her mano and metate in preparation for the wedding feast, the groom’s clansmen cooperate to fashion their contribution to the occasion. No Hopi wedding is complete without proper bridal garments and the responsibility for their manufacture falls upon the groom’s immediate male relatives. With news of a pending wedding, community men and others from different villages take to task spinning and carding wool as well as the actual weaving of the costumes as a show of good-will (Titiev 1944:37). In return for their labors, the groom’s relatives provide a number of feasts of mutton and corn. As a requisite for passage to the Underworld for every Hopi woman, volunteers weave the necessary garments; two large white robes, a smaller robe and the bridal sash (Simpson 1953:40). With the process sometimes spanning a period of weeks or more, the wedding rites do not conclude until the bride’s costume has been completed. (Voth 1912:149).

At last with her wedding fineries woven, the wedding ceremony comes to a conclusion with the bride’s return to the home of her mother which will be the couple’s permanent residence. Just as dawn breaks, the bride dresses in her wedding garb and wraps the duplicate robe in a reed or willow case. Carrying her second wardrobe, the bride follows a cornmeal trail laid down by her father-in-law to her mother’s home where she is received with warm greetings and great ritual. For the remainder of the day the bride and her female relatives grind massive amounts of corn to pay her in-laws for the loss of their son (Simpson 1953:40). Basket loads of meal are delivered to the groom’s household where they are exchanged for gifts and late in the evening the groom follows his new wife to her mother’s home where he will be incorporated socially and economically into their household.

A matri-local post-marital residence pattern typifies conservative Hopi culture. While historically the flexible Hopi marital norms have always made allowances for other patterns, as of late a trend of neo-local residency among newlyweds has developed (Titiev 1944 and Dennis 1940). Traditionally, men relocate as economic resources to their mother-in-law’s household while maintaining ceremonial and religious loyalties to their mother’s lineage and clan. Bringing with him any sheep he owns and farming tools, a new groom cultivates fields for his in-law’s household. As property of the
clan in a matrilineal society, Hopi women own all arable land and their agricultural production. In addition men herd, haul wood, weave and fashion clothes all for the benefit of his wife’s household. Expatriate husbands return to their birth household for ceremonial observance of their clan. The ritual tool kit and fetishes of his clan are held and owned by the women of his lineage and his primary religious obligations reside within his mother’s home.

A married couple will remain in her mother’s home, possibly for several years, until the household becomes over crowded with children and an ever growing web of extended family. With several daughters and their families residing under mother’s roof, the necessity of a new residence is inevitable. House building is a husband’s responsibility and is often considered a measure of a man’s worth. Even when contentedly living in their mother-in-law’s home, a man may construct a new dwelling to dispel talk of laziness. Although a man constructs his dwelling with his labors, a wife is sole owner of the home. Even after establishing a new household, a husband and wife sustain economic attachments with her mother’s household that strengthen as the couple’s family grows and as her parents’ increase in age.

Divorce is culturally sanctioned, is executed with ease and occurs with some frequency at least in a historic context. Without ritual or ceremony, marriages dissolve when a woman leaves her husband’s things outside their home’s door or a married man gathers his few possessions and returns to his mother’s or sister’s home. Such a lack of formal procedure creates difficulty in differentiating separations from divorce. In many instances a man may find himself cut out after which he takes up residence with another woman which could be construed as a second marriage (Titiev 1944:40). The Hopi Way necessitates only one sacred wedding ceremony for a proper life and with all other ensuing marriages formality is disregarded. Such a loose flexible system tends to blur affinal relationships throughout the community.

Old Age and Death

With age, although in no way dependent upon it, men and women acquire status and prestige. Men develop their social position through ceremonial societies by assuming community leadership roles while women gather power through key positions in women’s societies and their place in the Hopi kinship hierarchy. More than anything, whether male or female, social status correlates with “an effort of will on living the good, the peaceful life” as mandated by the Hopi Way (Thompson and Joseph 1944:64). Primarily men harbor power within the religious and ceremonial sphere while women dominate the social and familial arenas.

Just as there is no retirement in Hopiland, there is no point of transition to old age. As individuals become aged, tradition decrees that they train successors and pass on their social and ceremonial responsibilities. Elders are respected for their wisdom and continue to participate in whatever tasks they are capable of completing. As the end of the Hopi Road of Life approaches, individuals gradually remove themselves from active community life. Elderly women by their virtue of age and kinship status may enter a figurehead position as a matriarch of their lineage or clan. Those who live by the Hopi Way are thought to have lived the ideal happy life and gracefully accept the reality of their impending deaths.

Generally revered with fear and aversion among the Hopi communities, those who are dying are deserted by most of their relatives and friends (Voth 1912:99). A father, mother or other older relative will provide sympathy and tend to the needs of the bereaved. Upon passing, a few relatives may assemble where the deceased lies and weep, but those cases are exceptions. Death initiates immediate preparations for burial and almost as a rule, corpses are interred within half a day of death. Ideally, a paternal aunt oversees the mortuary treatment of the body (Thompson and Joseph 1944:64). The head of the deceased is washed as it was in birth and marriage and the face is covered with a layer of cotton cloth with openings for the eyes and nose (Voth 1912:101). Sometimes a little food or a small vessel of drinking water is placed on the chest and the body is wrapped in its funerary shroud (Voth 1912:101). Men are interred in a blanket of distinctive pattern while women are garbed in their wedding robe (Simpson 1953:42). The corpse may then be wrapped in several blankets secured by wound around ropes.

Now adequately prepared for the journey to the Underworld, the deceased is carried on the back of a son or other relative to one of many graveyards situated on a slope of the mesa or a hill near the village. A hole from five to seven feet deep is dug; the body is deposited in a vertical attitude with the knees flexed and the head facing towards the east (Voth 1912:102). Attendants fill the hole with sand or earth usually capping the grave with rocks. Grave markers are entirely absent but occasionally an insignia of the deceased’s societal affiliation adorns the site. These community burial grounds are not marked nor maintained in any way and are frequently subject to natural inundation.

On the third day after burial, final rites are given to the dead. A feast of a final meal is prepared by a close female relative and is deposited in bowls and baskets on the grave where it will remain. A father, uncle or brother of the deceased that assisted in burial preparations makes a set of prayer sticks and towards evening leaves the ritual offerings, some cornmeal and a bowl of food at the grave site. Corn meal is then sprinkled on a westward path to guide the dead to the skeleton house (Voth 1912:103). The Hopi Road of Life terminates on the fourth morning after the body has been
interred when the hikvi or Hopi soul emerges from the grave, partakes of the food offering and journeys down the path set before them (Voth 1912:103). If the deceased Hopi lived in accord with the Hopi Way they can expect to enter the si’ papu and return to the Underworld where they will live another happy and harmonious life.

The Hopi Way

Immersed in the cycle of the Road of Life, during their lifetime Hopi are kept on the proper social and spiritual path, all the while fully cognizant of expected cultural behaviors and responsibilities collectively conceptualized as the Hopi Way. As the four stages of life are experienced, individuals are gradually absorbed by their communities. Transitory crises of birth, initiation, marriage and death mark points of development where culturally defined obligations either alter or intensify. On the Hopi Road of Life, single strands are woven into a network of wide reaching social, economic and ceremonial relationships encompassing the whole of Hopi culture. Gradual growth and development of the individual as prescribed by the Hopi Way is the key to the homogeneity and continuity of their singularly unique culture throughout time.

In passing through the life stage based ceremonies of the Road of Life individual human components are integrated culturally into Hopi society. Seeking to maintain Hopi inter-relatedness whether it be social, religious, consanguineal or affinal, a multitude of reciprocal ties crystallizes between entities throughout the social structure on the varying levels of individual, household, lineage, clan and community. Through the Hopi Way a theme of commonality develops not only between individuals and within the community but also extends ancestrally into the past. When one looks past the individual through to the community, irregardless of time, the seemingly opaque phenomena of "pueblo spirit" that Mischa Titiev agonized over readily materializes. By observing the Hopi Way individuals are tightly culturally bound to each other, ancestral spirits of the ancient ones and to Hopi that have yet to be conceived. While the Road of Life outlines a spiritual path for the individual, the sum of its function can only be witness on an all encompassing cultural scale. In no way a strict spiritual dogma, the gradual growth and development so characteristic of the Hopi Way is reflected throughout Hopi ethnohistory tying past, present and future on a single continuum. Inevitable on any social or chronological scale, change is a given and through the cultural institution of the Hopi Way inhabitants of Black Mesa confront the present and prepare for their future as highly integrated individuals within an incredibly complex conservative culture.

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