

X I have heard it stated at Pine Ridge that Short Bull, the prophet of the ghost dance religion, made a similar ceremony but without the torture on top of a high hill near the White River. In the old days the Sioux seem to have preferred the Black Hills for this purpose because the region was considered "wakan". The torture in this ceremony seems to have had the same purpose as the torture in the sun dance or a similar one. There is an illustration somewhere in Catlins works of an Indian standing alone hitched up in the way described above to one sapling and, I think, with a buffalo scull attached to his back, a sort of a solo sundance. The selftorture probably had the same meaning as that of the priests of Baal in the old Testament scarifying their bodies when they prayed to Baal in the presence of Elijah. Either to attract the attention of the deity or as a blood sacrifice.

Ihanblapi Ceyapi would mean "They have Visions (and) they weep" or "Having visions they weep". The word "ceya" means to weep and also to pray. Prayer was often accompanied by ceremonial weeping. The purpose of the weeping (as of the praying) was to appeal to the pity of the power appealed to. This is also expressed by the concluding phrase of so many Indian prayers of all tribes and periods: "Great Mystery have pity upon me". This attitude expresses the feeling of utter helplessness of the Indian over against the powers of nature, especially the destructive powers.

Ihanblapi Ceyapi could thus also be translated: since the third person plural (ihanblapi) is also the form for the noun (compare: "tipi" literally, "they dwell" and also the noun "dwelling") : "They are praying for visions". This seems to render the meaning best in English. Or: "Prayer for Visions".

I am glad to hear that you have found such valuable additional material concerning S. B.

Don't hesitate to call on me for additional information which I shall be glad to give if it is within my knowledge and power. I wrote to the omniscient gentleman in Washington concerning your previous questions. You can enlist him for your service by subscribing to a newspaper that carries that service, which I do. But all you need to do is to send your questions to me, I shall relay them on to Washington. The explanation for his omniscience is that he has a large organization of, perhaps, a hundred clerks and assistants who know where to look for information on any conceivable subject. I have received a good deal of valuable information on technical matters through them from the Bureau of Standards, for instance. For questions concerning Indians they would apply to the National Museum, the Bureau of Ethnology or other museums. The advantage of this service is that they push their inquiries to the point of actually getting the information wanted which a private individual cannot always do.

Cordially

x If you ever go to Pine Ridge, don't fail to look up Short Bull.

xx Please write such questions, each numbered, on a separate sheet (separate from the rest of your letter) as you did last time, so that I can send it on to W. without copying.

Frederick Weygold