

The University of Oklahoma

Norman, Oklahoma

August 22, 1929.

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Dear Weygold:

Can you tell me anything about the Dakota ceremony HANBLE CEYAPI, or "Dreamy Cry", as they translate it for me? It appears that Sitting Bull made this ceremony once, and I have his prayer (with translation) for the preservation of his people from the white soldiers. He is described as standing all painted up having with him such offerings as a pipe, small bags of tobacco attached to cherry sticks, and a buffalo robe. If you know anything of the details of this ceremony, I shall be happy to know it. I gather that no torture was involved, and that it was performed at night before a battle.

I have just come into possession of 25 songs (hitherto unpublished) composed by Sitting Bull and touching almost every phase of his life (in the explanations), including his visions and Societies, family, and political advancement. A great find, and just what I needed. Hence my enquiry.

I seem to remember that you told me how Hump made a lonely sacrifice involving torture, but have forgotten the Sioux name.

Cordially yours,



W.S. CAMPBELL

X The "Ihanblapi" Ceremony. Ihanblapi = they have visions or dreams.

The devotee goes into a lonely place, preferably a high hill or mountain, fasts and prays and sometimes undergoes tortures by having his breast and back muscles perforated by a medicine man and having rawhide thongs attached to them by means of cherry wood skewers. The other ends of the thongs are attached to four poles between which he stands until the fasting - sometimes for days - and weakness induced by the loss of blood causes a "vision" (hallucination) which is considered an indication from the "powers" as to his future course of action. This was the account I received of the ceremony from the Hump (Chanchachake). He made the ceremony with the assistance of a medicineman on the top of "the highest mountain in the Black Hills" which, if true, would have been on Mount Hearney (?). He stood, hitched up between four sycamore sapplings, for four days. On the night of the fourth day he had the vision of a great spirit tipi near by which was painted with certain designs which the spirit man in the tipi told him to copy on a new tipi when he came home, which he did. This sacred painting protected him and the family of his sister against disease and bad luck.

x the "y" is a nasal (n) at the end of syllables.