

medicine wheel, that it represented the ground plan of an old time Medicine Lodge of their people. Their explanation of various parts of the wheel in terms of a former ceremonial structure appeared convincing to Grinnell. The facts that both the Black-foot and the linguistically related Cheyenne interpreted medicine wheels in terms of structures, the one mortuary, the other ceremonial, basic to their former cultures, suggest that the concepts underlying them were not unrelated.

We may refer briefly to another point in connection with the medicine wheel in Blackfoot territory. Adam White Man explained that the four spoke-like extensions from the stone circle was their representations of paths trod by followers of the deceased coming to partake of his bountiful hospitality. That such a concept was meaningful in the value-system of the Blackfoot is attested by the calls to share food and tobacco frequently issued by chiefs in the camp circles of former days. In contrast, Weasel Tail identified the stone radii as representative of the dead chief's war deeds. What may really be involved, however, beneath these native rationalizations is an expression of the idea of orienting and marking a place of death or burial according to the cardinal directions. Emphasis ~~upon~~ upon directional symbolism is not unknown in other aspects of Blackfoot religious life, being expressed in medicine pipe rituals, the Sun Dance, etc. Even greater ceremonial attachment to this widespread concept is manifested by Dakota, Pawnee and other tribes to the east.

This concludes the data which we have been able to assemble in respect to the peculiar stone configurations of the Montana-Alberta area. No doubt there are further references in the literature as well as unrecorded medicine wheels in the field that have escaped our notice. The present paper is preliminary, however, and represents merely an attempt to introduce some meaning into an otherwise obscure and puzzling topic.