

The Horns are accompanied on this occasion by two old men who have good war records. The rite of procuring the center post is one of the most sacred of the many ceremonies pertaining to the Medicine Lodge. None but the Horns themselves and the old men, formerly members of the Horns Society, may take part in it. Arriving at the edge of a grove of cottonwoods, a halt is made, and the Horns go into the grove to find a tree of proper size and forked at the right height for the post. Having found it, they send messengers to report to the old men, who approach and count coups, four each; striking the tree at the end of each one, and finally praying that, when cut, the tree will not lodge on others, and that it will not break and split the fork when it strikes the ground. They assure Sun that, when the post from the tree is set up, they will hang presents upon it for him. Younger members of the society then cut down the tree, and all return to the Medicine Lodge structure, forming a long procession around the camp, singing as they approach the structure; and lay the center post with its butt end at the hole in the center of the structure, that has been dug for it, its fork-end to the west.

All of the preparations have now been made for the raising of the post, and the people assemble. The women of the Matokiks, four of them dressed to represent buffalo, file out from their lodge and seat themselves northeast of the shelter of the sacred woman. The Horns Society members, all dressed in their best, come from their lodge, and sit to the east of the shelter, and face it; and in a great circle around, the whole tribe gathers.

In front of the shelter, a well soaked beef hide is laid, and, with considerable ceremony, is cut into strands for binding the butts of the roof poles of the Medicine Lodge to its wall rails. This rite must be performed by a warrior who counts four coups before cutting the hide.

Owners of medicine pipes, after taking their elaborately decorated pipes into the shelter for prayers, pass them along the line of Horns and Matokiks, and give each one a few whiffs of the pipes, during which the smokers pray the Above Ones for long and full life.

Steps forward then the vow woman, the relative for whom she made the vow beside her, and both stand upon a robe while the sacred woman holds the dried tongue up to the sky, praying to the Above Ones, and breaks off portions of the offering and buries them in the ground with prayers to Earth-Persons. She then gives out a small piece to each applicant. Those who take the sacred tongue offer prayers as did the sacred woman; then eat the remainder of the portions.

Now the sacred woman faces the center post, and the Horns go inside the Medicine Lodge structure. One of their number, painted black, is stretched out full length on the post. Behind robes, medicine men perform a rite over him. He rises, and in his place they attach gifts which the people have brought as offerings to Sun. Then from north,