

After Tom was through praying he threw the cedar on the fire. Then James Silverhorn took the little peyote up and handed it to Alfred. Then James started the drum around again. By the time the three Comanches had finished singing the food came in. Three dishes, and they were lined up behind the water. Sarah came over and sat down by me where she had sat most of the night.

When the food came in, James called for the drum. He sang the four Quitting Songs. Then the drum was dismantled and passed around, with the drumstick. Some people drank of the water that was in the drum kettle or washed in it, or took the drumstick and sprinkled some of the water on themselves. James poured out the water that was left when it had gone around. About half of it was poured along the altar on the outside edge--the remainder was poured along the altar on the fire side. The staff, gourd, and sage wand were passed around, also. People hit themselves with the sage or smelled it and rubbed it on themselves. Men would contemplate the gourd and give it a shake as if to see how it sounded. The fans were put up and finally James removed all his ceremonial equipment from the altar and put it up in his box. His eagle bone whistle, and finally the chief peyote was removed from the nest of sage and put in its container and placed in the big box. He offered Alfred some of the sage that the chief peyote had been resting on, and suggested he might want to keep some of it to go with Richard's little peyote. Alfred got up and took the sage. He took a portion of it and fubbed it back and forth in his hands and then rubbed his hands on himself. I don't know if he took any for the small peyote or not.

After everything was put up the water was passed around. First a little was spilled on the floor just in front of the fire. Then the other dishes were passed around, one at a time. First came corn--canned corn in a lot of juice. Then came fruit--sweet light-colored cherries in their syrup. Then came meat--ground up cooked beef tenderloin with chopped pecans and sweetened. This ground mixture was packaged in individual "baggies" and everyone took one bag. Everyone took what they wanted from each dish and then passed it on. Spoons came with the corn and cherries, and everyone used the same spoon. The ground meat was eaten with the fingers. I noticed that most people took only a few bites and put the rest away to eat later. Everyone was talking and smiling and seemed happy and contented. The atmosphere was relaxed and calm. Also a plate was passed on which coins were placed for the Kiowa chapter of the Native American Church. People gave whatever they wished. When everyone had finished eating, everyone got up and left the tipi, this seeming to be the last ritual act. The exit was in single file, in a clockwise direction, in the order in which people were seated. If someone was slow to get up, those behind waited till they finally got ready and left.

Outside people stretched, talk, greeted each other, and breathed deep. A number of visitors had gathered and were standing around or were seated in cars, waiting for the breakfast to be over. Several people came over and shook my hand. After a few minutes some people began to walk away, and others went back into the tipi. Several people invited me to come back and talk and relax, and I decided to go. John went in, too, and we sat in the place where we had been all evening.

After the Meeting

I had never joined the people inside the tipi after a meeting so I was curious to see what went on. I knew that some of the men always went back in and sat and talked and visited till dinner, but I don't think it's customary for women to join them. However, since I was invited I decided it would be a good time for me to see what it was like. For a while John and I talked mostly with Tom Bitseedy and Charlie High. Tom wanted to know what we thought of the meeting, and if we had ever had this experience before, and so forth. We asked him questions, and he explained points of the ceremony, and talked out about how he liked to fix his peyote, and how he got it,