

to the Council of Chiefs in some instances. They served also as an enforcement agency to implement the decisions of the chiefs. They helped preserve order in the tribal encampments and enforced the rules of the communal hunt. Practically all brave men among the Cheyenne belonged to a military society. There were six of these societies and they were not ranked in importance nor graded by age. All were given the opportunity to participate in tribal activities. Members of the warrior societies were scattered throughout the band divisions except for the Dog Soldier society, whose members camped together and constituted one of the tribal bands.

The great tribal ceremonies of the Cheyenne were the Sacred Arrow Renewal, the Sun Dance, and the Massecam or Animal Dance. The four Sacred Arrows were the most valuable possession of the Cheyenne and symbolized the collective existence of the tribe. They had the power of protection and well-being for all Cheyenne, so long as the people lived in harmony and according to teachings handed down by the elders. The ceremony of Sacred Arrow Renewal was usually held every other year. It was pledged by an individual who desired some personal favor such as success on a war expedition or restored health for a relative. However the ceremony involved the participation of the whole tribe, and was conceived as a ceremony of world renewal and integration of all Cheyenne into a harmonious whole.

Another major ceremony, the Sun Dance, was found also among other Plains tribes. For the Cheyenne the central theme of the Sun Dance, like that of Arrow Renewal, was one of world renewal. The Sun Dance was also pledged by an individual for personal reasons, but its performance and meaning were of importance to the whole tribe. Usually there was a Sun Dance in years when no one pledged an Arrow Renewal Ceremony. However both were sometimes given the same year.