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Assorted material about the Pawnee Indians
gathered from several different sources.
By Goldie Turner, Field Worker

The Bundle Scheme.

The basis of the social and political organization of the Skedee band especially was their sacred bundle scheme. The name for a sacred bundle is Chuhripiru but sometimes it is spoken of as a tira, referring to two ears of corn kept in each bundle and symbolically spoken of as the mother of the people. Each bundle had its individualities but they had some things in common. At the sound of the first thunder in Spring the keeper of each bundle must immediately open it with the proper procedure and make an offering of dried buffalo meat to the power in the west which was the Evening Star. This offering was burned, but after the ceremony the remaining meat was cooked and eaten.

The Society of Chiefs.

At one time among the Pitahaurata there was a special organization of chiefs. The first part of the ceremony was held privately by the members of chiefs. The membership was strictly hereditary. In the ceremony the leader had to wear a beaver hat with a red plume. After the secret part of the meeting, the women who were descended from chiefs were called into the lodge. Each woman had to part her hair and tie it back, painting the part red. The men all had their

hair roached and wore feathers through the roach. Some wore leggings bordered with scalp-locks and eagle feathers and on their feet were black moccasins. Each man and woman carried the skin of an eagle. The women formed in a line of two abreast behind the leading men who were their nearest relatives. They all marched out dancing and singing and circled around four times in front of the lodge then back into the lodge and then the women went home. The chiefs feasted and then disbanded.

The War Party

There was a fixed ritual for the war party which was a kind of wolf society. Their God of war was a mythical Wolf and a wolfskin was always placed at the top of a bundle and the Skedee band were to be the wolf people.

The warrior was to follow the way of the wolf. The wolf-skin was always put in the sacred bundle of the war party.

Before starting out on the warpath, a ceremony was held in the village in which an altar was made and the bundle was brought in and placed before the leader. A buffalo skull was also placed upon the altar.

When the enemy had been located the leaders took the

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party into a thicket and held a ceremony. After this they sang songs and then held a council. If the enemy seemed to be numerous they would decide upon what course of action to take; whether they would decide they should steal up and get off with the horses or whether they should make an attack. If they decided to make off with the horses, a few scouts were sent to do this and the rest stayed in camp. The scouts would drive out the horses toward the main body of warriors in camp and they would catch as many horses as they could and would ride away as fast as they could. They would ride almost continuously for three days and then would camp in a sheltered place. Then some would hunt while the others stood guard.

After a good rest they would set out for home. As they approached their village they would set fire to the grass to let their people know that a war party was returning, then when they came near to the village they would paint their faces black or black and white.

The Society of Medicine Men.

At the sound of the first thunder in Spring, the members of the Medicine society, like the keepers of bundles, took out all their regalia and implements, purified them in the smudge of sweet grass and performed a prescribed ceremony.

The next day the regular ceremony began. The altar in the

medicine lodge was prepared and in front of it were placed two sacred loons facing east. Two wooden bowls were filled with blue earth and soot which the members used to paint their faces. Each side had a buffalo rawhide to beat upon and about a dozen gourd rattles were at hand for the use of the dancers. After the dancing the regular smoke offering was made. A herald then went out and invited all who had given presents to come with their pipes. These offering ceremonies were in reality prayers.

More singing and dancing was done and the ceremony was closed and the presents were divided. Kettles of corn were brought in and bowls for the feast. Meat was then brought in and passed around.

A somewhat similar ceremony was held in the autumn but this ceremony was held in a circular shelter of green boughs.