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Indian Legend

PEYOTE

An interview of Wilburn Dirt,
age 38, Creek-Shawnee Indian,
Norman, Oklahoma

Billie Byrd, Interviewer
Indian-Pioneer History
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The Shawnees, Sac and Foxes, and Kickapoos have a religious rite that is accompanied by a strong belief in the eating of the peyote. What is known as peyote is found near Oilton, Texas, and is a very thorny plant product.

These Indians eat the peyote in worshipping their god. These particular ceremonies are conducted in the teepees. In the center of the teepee and on the ground is laid a moon shaped mud. It is on the half circle of the moon that a fire, small in its flames is started. Whoever desires to partake of the peyote is privileged to do so, and a sitting circle of the persons joining the rites is formed within the teepee but no one is to speak. This circle is formed about what is called the moon. Only a couple is allowed to sing at a time which can be begun at midnight and the singing is accompanied by men who shake rattlers and beat on the drums or tom toms in time with the singing.

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Then at midnight, a man brings in water which they all drink (those eating the peyote). We take this to signify that the people were dead but with the drinking of the water it signifies a new life.

But, in the early morning, the women bring in the water and all those that had joined in the peyote ceremonies drink the water. The water that was being taken into the body was to signify the real resurrection of new life.

It was after the breakfast hours that the people are at liberty to talk about anything in life that would bring them the greatest benefit in life.

Some of the Indians, especially the Shawnees, have a charter granted through Senator Thomas that privileges and grants the Indians the rights to carry on these rites.

Note: No change is made in the interviews reported by Billie Byrd for the reason that the Indian expression of events and ideas adds, it seems, color to the story. Ed.