

THE SIO SHALAKO AT THE FIRST MESA, JULY 9, 1916

BY WALTER HOUGH

WITH COMMENTARY BY DR. J. WALTER FEWKES

THE writer, while engaged in work in Tusayan for the United States National Museum, was present during the Katsina ceremonies and made some notes on one of them, which, though fragmentary, are appended. It is evident that shortly many of the Hopi ceremonies will cease, due to the increasing rapidity with which the influence of the white man is progressing.

The Sichomovi Sio Shalako is a Zuñi ceremony adopted by the Indians of Sichomovi, a village on the East Mesa.¹ The history of the adoption of the ceremony appears to be as follows:

Many years ago a delegation of Hopi went to Zuñi to attend the Shalako with the purpose of introducing it into Sichomovi. They are said to have received help from the Zuñi, but no charge was made. The ceremony is held pursuant to previous announcement given two years before but it has been performed in 1914 and 1916. Extensive preparations were necessary for the 1916 ceremony and as there were only two long rooms in Sichomovi sufficiently large, an addition was made to Connor's house and a new room built on another house. This work and the preparation of the costumes entailed great expense. The performers divided into four Shalako parties prepared at a house in the plain, Ushteoki, or Five Houses as it is called, and progressed slowly with many halts and songs across the valley to the mesa, arriving about seven o'clock in the afternoon. A group of Walpi priests awaited to receive them at the shrine below the mesa, having brought there all sorts of things in readiness, as Koyemshi masks, bundles of soapweed, stalks of new corn, rattles and drums. A row of conducting

¹ The first and so far as I know the only description of the Sio Shalako ceremony at Moki is by Dr. J. Walter Fewkes in the *Fifteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, pp. 296-7.

priests made a meal trail on the mesa along their course. One priest, Y'ate, carried a round deep basket, and the others, bags of *homgnumne* or prayer meal. They laid the *puhu*, or a cord with feathers attached, along the meal trail and expectantly awaited the arrival of the procession which they would allow to pass. The Shalako procession was led by Harry, the Snake Chief. First appeared the Fire god, Shulawitzi, an imp of blackness, bearing on his back a rack-shaped bundle of rabbits freshly killed, so that there must have been a rabbit hunt in the valley before the ceremony. Next came eight Shepaquin (Shaiastashas) with feathered and painted helmets with a parroquet feather bundle atop; bearing in one hand a bunch of yucca leaves and in the other a bunch of cedar boughs. On the left wrist hung a rattle of sheep's scapula. These and all other priests were costumed, so far as can be judged, exactly as in the Zuñi ceremony. Some slight crudities in painting and other matters were noted and it is probable that an observer familiar with the Zuñi procedure would have made note of other variations from the Zuñi ceremony. The awe-inspiring Shalako next appeared, each with an attendant (Hakto) and accompanied with a crowd of Koyemshi as chorus. The Shalako danced four times around the plaza squatting four times each round upon a cloud design in prayer meal. The attendant priests in ordinary costume sprinkled the dancers at intervals with prayer meal and shouted directions. At the conclusion of the dance in the plaza the Shalako each went to the room which had been prepared for his reception. The Koyemshi removed their masks and painting, but the other celebrants retained their costume. The night drew on and a feast was brought in by women and laid on the floor of the ceremonial chamber. It was a bounteous spread consisting in the case observed of ten piles of *piki*, sixty loaves of bread, fifteen washbowls of sheep or goat stew, four buckets or pots of coffee, and some dishes of fruit. Some eighty persons, consisting of Navajo, bystanders, etc., sat down to the feast and there were loud sounds of deglutition. This scene was being repeated in the other ceremonial chambers in Sichomovi.

The chorus, consisting of those who had been Koyemshi, had

gathered and in their midst was a big drum. The dirt floor of the room had been covered with muslin and three huge Rochester hanging lamps furnished the light. Deer skins folded to represent the deer, and with basket tray for head, hung on the wall together with blankets, and an especially large Navajo blanket hung back of the Shalako. Some chairs for guests were arranged on the south or left side; the other side was reserved for the women and children, who also filled the back of the room. The remains of the feast were removed but not before some grasping Navajo had filled bags with *piki* for a rainy day. Much smoking ensued until the guests were becoming impatient. Finally at the tap of the drum and sound of gourd rattles the chorus began. The dancers consisting of two Shalako attendants (Hakto), and two Saiastasha (Shepequin) began. At intervals a pair of dancers disappeared through the door and Koyemshi took their places but the Hakto remained. After a while one of the Hakto crept under the Shalako dress and made the figure move to the dance and gnash its teeth horribly. When guests fell asleep from fatigue the Hakto would strike them with the yucca bundle. The *monkohu* carried by the Hakto was a green rod having four breath feathers attached to it with cotton cords. Their dance kept up all night and in the morning the Shalako danced around the plaza four times and went away to Ushteoki and the Sio Shalako ceremony was over. At least seventy persons took active part in the dance as follows: ten village priests, four Shalako, four Hakto, eight Shepequin, one Shulawitzi or god of fire, and perhaps forty-eight Koyemshi. Dr. J. Walter Fewkes has pointed out the desire of the Hopi to adopt new Katcinas efficacious in bringing blessings. This, in part, explains the adoption of the Zuñi Shalako by the East Mesa Hopi and presents an instance of the transference of ceremonials, as well as giving an opportunity for studying comparative ceremoniology since undoubtedly changes from the Zuñi ritual have been introduced by the fertile genius of the Hopi. The song cycle is a composite of songs learned at Zuñi, songs of the Hopi Shalako, and songs invented for the occasion. The night songs were not counted but I estimated that there were eighty. The Zuñi Shalako number six;

said to represent the four points of the compass and above and below. The Hopi have adopted four in accordance with their quaternary scheme, which seems to have the primacy among this tribe. It is said, also, that the ceremony is announced two years in advance but it was not learned in what manner. The rites concerned with seating the Shalako in the dance room if any were practised were not observed.

Dr. Fewkes kindly drew upon his great store of knowledge of Hopi ceremonial and furnished the following interesting commentary on my observations:

I have read your account of the Sio Shalako at Sichomovi almost literally by the light of my camp fire on the Mesa Verde, and as my time during the day is occupied by strenuous work on the ruin at Mummy Lake, I have little opportunity to comment upon it in a way I might wish to help you. Moreover my notes are all in Washington and I must rely mainly on my memory regarding the ceremony which you have described. I first heard of the Sio Shalako in 1894 and was then informed that it had not been performed for twenty years previously. As I remember the performance and compare it with your manuscript notes, I should judge the ceremony has lost much and gained nothing except by-plays in the interval between the celebration in 1894 and that you witnessed in 1916. I was told that this ceremony was introduced from Zuñi by Pautiwa, a man from Oraibi, who was visiting Zuñi with ten other Hopi. It is interesting to note that no other pueblo of the Hopi, including the native village of Pautiwa, ever presented this ceremony. The reason it is given in Sichomovi is that this pueblo was settled by clans who originally lived in Zuñi, or more accurately speaking, tarried in Zuñi for some time in their migration from the Rio Grande country in early times. Sichomovi is called by the Zuñi, a Zuñi town, on that account; and if you will consult the ritual of this village, published in my papers, you will find that the ceremonial dances there are Zuñi in character and the personators bearing distinctly Zuñi names.

The personators arrayed themselves in a house several miles from the east mesa and marched to the town, costumed, along the old Zuñi trail. This house in the plain is owned by the Badger clan and the four chiefs belong to the Lizard, Badger, Patki and Asa clans or Tewa, in their region. The houses on the Mesa in which the ceremonies were performed belong to the eldest sisters of these four clans.

The ceremony witnessed in 1894 began on July 6, when the chiefs and the majority of the chiefs on the East Mesa assembled in the Badger house in the plain and made prayer sticks or sacrificial offerings of a peculiar shape, numbering over two hundred. The masks used in this ceremony are in the keeping of the owner of this house and here the participants dressed themselves for the ceremony,

which occurred on the following day. At sunset on July 7th a procession composed of the Shalakos and other masked personages marched from this house up the Mesa side to the Badger house in Sichomovi. I have elsewhere described certain episodes of this rite which may be found in my account in the *Fifteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*. There were several masked personages besides the giants in this procession, the most striking of which was, I think, the personator called the Big Head, an ancestral sun god of the Badger clan. There were complicated rites throughout the nights of July 7 and 8, with performances, elsewhere described, in the plaza of Sichomovi. As I remember them they were much more elaborate than those you described. The ceremony culminated on July 9, or rather about midnight of July 8th.

I recall on July 9 a ceremonial race called the Wawash Katcina, in which two large spruce trees, set upright at different ends of the court, were used. The nature of this ceremonial racing, in which many Katcinas appear, you will find in an account of it elsewhere published. One of the interesting episodes was a droll dance in which one of the Katcinas counts one, two, three, etc., during the racing. There were also a few of the mysterious Yaya or fire shamans, who treated a supposed sick man with charcoal. The Yucca Katcinas afforded much amusement to the assembled crowd by endeavoring to climb one of the spruce-trees. The "Delight Makers," as they are sometimes called, or the Tewa clowns, called Paiakayamu, were out in force. They imitated the disgusting habits of the Zuñi clowns and did unbelievable things, for which they were terribly punished by the Yucca Katcinas. I might go on with many details, but perhaps I have given enough to show the general character of this sensational show. Ordinary decency has perhaps eliminated much which was then performed. From your description I judge that the ceremony has lost its real significance and taken on much of the social character of the Zuñi Shalako in December.

There are one or two things, however, which I will add: First the Zuñi characters predominate for the reason of the kinship of the clans of Sichomovi. The whole ceremony, I believe, was like the Zuñi equivalent from which it was derived, a great sun festival; the Shalako Giants representing the sun birds or sky gods of the four cardinal points. As the Hopi have another greatly different sun festival in December, when the Sun drama is elaborately observed, the Badger clan perform their sun festival in the summer solstice month, June-July. I will not burden you with other suggestions about the meaning of the ceremony, but I have many notes which some time I hope to commit to cold type.

My belief is that Sio Shalako at Sichomovi is one of those pageants or show dances of which there are a few in the Tanoan pueblos on the East Mesa when the sensational rather than the serious intention is paramount. I should not for a moment rank it with Soyaluna, the Hopi celebration of the Sun Return, in Walpi at the December solstice, or with the Snake Dance in August, which are so characteristic of the Hopi ritual. The Hopi visitors to Zuñi were impressed with the showiness of the Shalako and brought it to Sichomovi as a festival to add to their already over-burdened system of show dances to amuse the inhabi-

tants, possibly to attract visitors. Naturally they brought the race and to add to its attractiveness they perform it at the pueblo settled by Zuñi clans. It is in a way analogous to the Butterfly K̄atcina, as in both of them the serious kiva rites are absent or minimized.

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