

# **The Religious Life of the Zuñi Child eBook**

## **The Religious Life of the Zuñi Child by Matilda Coxe Stevenson**

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## BRIEF ACCOUNT OF ZUNI MYTHOLOGY.

The Pueblo of Zuni is situated in Western New Mexico on the Rio Zuni, a tributary of the Little Colorado River. The Zuni have resided in this region for several centuries. The peculiar geologic and geographic character of the country surrounding them, as well as its aridity, furnishes ample sources from which a barbarous people would derive legendary and mythologic history. A brief reference to these features is necessary to understand more fully the religious phases of Zuni child life.

Three miles east of the Pueblo of Zuni is a conspicuously beautiful mesa, of red and white sandstone, t[=o]-w[=a]-yael laen-ne (corn mountain). Upon this mesa are the remains of the old village of Zuni. The Zuni lived during a long period on this mesa, and it was here that Coronado found them in the sixteenth century. Tradition tells that they were driven by a great flood from the site they now occupy, which is in the valley below the mesa, and that they resorted to the mesa for protection from the rising waters. The waters rose to the very summit of the mesa, and to appease the aggressive element a human sacrifice was necessary. A youth and a maiden, son and daughter of two priests, were thrown into this ocean. Two great pinnacles, which have been carved from the main mesa by weathering influences, are looked upon by the Zuni as the actual youth and maiden converted into stone, and are appealed to as "father" and "mother." Many of the Zuni legends and superstitions are associated with this mesa, while over its summit are spread the extensive ruins of the long ago deserted village. There are in many localities, around its precipitous sides and walls, shrines and groups of sacred objects which are constantly resorted to by different orders of the tribe. Some of the most interesting of these are the most inaccessible. When easy of approach they are in such secluded spots that a stranger might pass without dreaming of the treasures within his reach. On the western side of this mesa are several especially interesting shrines. About half way up the acclivity on the west side an overhanging rock forms the base of one of the pinnacles referred to. This rock is literally honeycombed with holes, from one-half to three-fourths of an inch in diameter. I visited the spot in the fall of 1884, with Professors E.B. Tylor and H.N. Moseley, of Oxford, England, and Mr. G.K. Gilbert, of the United States Geological Survey. These gentlemen could not determine whether the tiny excavations were originally made by human hands or by some other agency. The Indian's only answer when questioned was, "They belong to the old; they were made by the gods." Hundreds of these holes contain bits of cotton and wool from garments. In the side of this rock there are larger spaces, in which miniature vases, filled with sand, are placed. The sand is ground by rubbing stones from the same



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rock. The vases of sand, and also the fragments of wool and cotton, are offerings at the feet of the “mother” rock. Here, too, can be seen a quantity of firewood heaped as shown in the right-hand corner of the illustration. Each man and woman deposited a piece, that he or she might always have plenty of wood for heat and light. Some three hundred feet above is another shrine, directly attached to the “father” rock, and to the white man difficult of access. Here I found many offerings of plume sticks (T[=e] l[=i]k-tk[=i]-n[=a]-we).

Before entering upon the purely mythologic phases of Zuni child life I will present a brief sketch of some of the Zuni beliefs. There are thirteen secret orders in Zuni, in many of which women and children are conspicuous, besides the purely mythologic order of the K[=o]k-k[=o]. All boys are initiated into this order, while but few girls enter it. It is optional with a girl; she must never marry if she joins the K[=o]k-k[=o], and she is not requested to enter this order until she has arrived at such age as to fully understand its grave responsibilities and requirements.

Let us follow the Zuni tradition of the ancient time, when these people first came to this world. In journeying hither they passed through four worlds, all in the interior of this, the passageway from darkness into light being through a large reed. From the inner world they were led by the two little war gods [=A]h-ai-[=u]-ta and M[=a]-[=a]-s[=e]-we, twin brothers, sons of the Sun, who were sent by the Sun to bring these people to his presence. They reached this world in early morning, and seeing the morning star they rejoiced and said to the war gods: “We see your father, of whom you have told us.” “No,” said the gods, “this is the warrior who comes before our father;” and when the sun arose the people fell upon the earth and bowed their heads in fear. All their traditions point to the distant land of their appearance in this world as being in the far northwest; from, there they were accompanied by [=A]h-ai-[=u]-ta and M[=a]-[=a]-s[=e]-we. These little gods occupy important positions in Zuni myth and legend. After long journeying, it was decided that the Priest Doctor (K[=a] wi-m[=o] sa) should send his son and his daughter in advance to discover some favorable spot upon which to build a village. The youth and the maiden finally ascended a peak from, which to have an extended view of the country. “Rest here, my sister, for you are tired,” said the youth, “and I will go alone.” From fatigue, the girl soon sank into a slumber, and when the youth returned, he was impressed with the surpassing loveliness of his sister. They remained for a time on this mountain, and at their union they were transformed—the youth into a hideous looking creature, the K[=o]-y[=e]-m[=e]-shi (Plate XX); the maiden into a being with snow white hair, the K[=o]-m[=o]-k[=e]t-si. The [t]K[=o]-thl[=a]-ma (hermaphrodite) is the offspring of this unnatural



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union. The youth said to his sister, "We are no longer like our people; we will therefore make this mountain our home. But it is not well for us to be alone; wait here and I will go and prepare a place for our others." Descending the mountain, he swept his foot through the sands in the plains below, and immediately a river flowed and a lake appeared, and in the depths of this lake a group of houses, and in the center of this group a religious assembly house, or kiva, provided with many windows, through which those not privileged to enter the kiva might view the dance within. After he performed this magic deed, he again joined his sister on the mountain, from which they could see their people approaching. The mountain has since that time borne the name of K[=o]-k[=o]k-shi—k[=o]k-shi meaning good.

The first of the [=A]h-shi-wi, or Zuni, to cross this river were the Aen-shi-i-que, or Bear gens; T[=o]-w[=a]-que, Corn gens; and [t]Ko-[=o]h-l[=o]k-t[=a]-que, Sand Hill Crane gens. When in the middle of the river the children of these gentes were transformed into tortoises, frogs, snakes, ducks, and dragonflies. The children thus transformed, while tightly clinging to their mother's necks, began to bite and pinch. The mothers, trembling with fear, let them fall into the river. [=A]h-ai-[=u]-ta and M[=a]-[=a]-s[=e]-we, missing the children, inquired, "Where are the little ones?" The mothers replied, "We were afraid and dropped them into the water." The war gods then cried out to the remainder of the people, "Wait, wait until we speak with you," and they told the women to be brave and cling tightly to the children until they crossed the river. Obeying the gods' commands, they carried the little ones over, though they were transformed just as the others. Upon reaching the opposite shore, they were again restored to their natural forms, excepting their hands, which were duck-webbed. These webs were cut with [=A]h-ai-[=u]-ta's stone knife and thus restored to perfect hands.

The mothers whose children fell into the waters were grieved and refused to be comforted. The Priest Doctor was also grieved, and said, "Alas, where have the little ones gone?" [=A]h-ai-[=u]-ta and M[=a]-[=a]-s[=e]-we replied, "We will go and learn something of them," and upon descending into the lake they found the beautiful kiva, in which the children were assembled; but again they had been changed; they were no longer reptiles, but were of a similar type to the K[=o]-y[=e]-m[=e]-shi and K[=o]-m[=o]-k[=e]t-si, and since that time they have been worshiped as ancestral gods, bearing the name of K[=o]k-k[=o]; but the little war gods knew them, and addressed them as "My children," and they replied, "Sit down and tell us of our mothers." When they told them that their mothers refused to be comforted at their loss, they said, "Tell our mothers we are not dead, but live and sing in this beautiful place, which is the home for them when they sleep. They will wake here and be always happy. And we are here to intercede with the Sun, our father, that he may give to our people rain, and the fruits of the earth, and all that is good for them." The [=A]h-shi-wi then journeyed on, led by [=A]h-ai-[=u]-ta and M[=a]-[=a]-s[=e]-we, to the present site of Zuni. Many, however, lingered at a



spring some fifteen miles west of Zuni, and there established the village Tk[=a]p-qu[=e]-n[=a] (Hot Spring).



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The K[=o]-y[=e]-m[=e]-shi and K[=o]-m[=o]-k[=o]e)t-si passed down through the interior of the mountain into the depths of the lake, the waters of everlasting happiness. In the passageway are four chambers, where the couple tarried on their way and where at the present time the two priests of the K[=o]k[=o] rest in their journey to the sacred waters. So credulous are the people that the priests delude them into the belief that they actually pass through the mountain to the lake.

Having heard of the wonderful cave in this mountain, our little party visited the place, prepared to explore it. Mr. Stevenson and Mr. H.L. Turner entered the fissure in the rock and squeezed through the crevice for sixteen or eighteen feet to where the rock was so solid that they both determined no human creature could penetrate farther. They examined the place most carefully by means of an artificial light. Through a small aperture stones could be thrown to a depth from which no sound returned, but excepting this solitary opening all was solid, immovable rock. In this cave many plume sticks were gathered. Near the opening of the cave, or fissure, is a shrine to the K[=o]k[=o], which must be very old, and over and around it are hundreds of the plume sticks and turquoise and shell beads.

I would mention here a little incident illustrative of the superstitious dread these Indians entertain of violating the priestly commands. We found it very difficult to persuade an old Zuni guide, who had visited the sacred salt lake, the mountain of the war gods, and other places of interest with us (to these he had gone by special permission of the High Priest), to accompany us to the spirit lake and the mountain of the K[=o]k[=o]. Our persuasive powers were almost exhausted ere we could induce him to guide us to them, but having consented he was willing to go even if he should be punished by death. He was a man renowned for bravery, but he was so overcome by his superstitious fears that his voice sank to a whisper and finally became scarcely audible. The morning of the day on which we reached this place, the old man, who had been riding by my side, ahead of the rest of the party, suddenly halted and said in a half-angry voice, "Why do I go ahead? I am not the chief of this party. Those who belong at the head must go to the head." And he would not move until Mr. Stevenson and I went in advance. By this change he sought to transfer the responsibility to us. Finally he rode up to us and said in a whisper, "We will camp here." The whole expression of the old man's face was that of ghastly terror. I was much annoyed, for I thought that, at the eleventh hour, his fear had overcome his desire to gratify us. Just then a Mexican lad on horseback approached; we were all mounted. I asked the lad, "Is there a lake near by?" He replied, "Yes, a half a mile off." The old Indian said, speaking in a whisper, "And you have seen it?" "Yes." "And you were not afraid?" "No; why afraid?" "And you looked into the waters and you did not die!" With a look of bewilderment the youth rode off. I signaled to the old man to accompany us to the lake. "No, no; I would only die, and you must not go or you will die." "No," said I, "we will not die if our hearts are good, and if you will not go it is because your heart is not good and you are afraid."



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We found the lake so surrounded by marshes that we could not get within an eighth of a mile of the waters. One of our party attempted to reach it on foot, but could get very little nearer. We made a circuit of the lake along the slightly elevated ground and could distinctly see it.

On completing the circle a striking picture met our eyes. Boldly outlined by the setting sun stood the old man, his hair blown by the evening breeze, for he had bared his head of the usual kerchief worn around it, and, with his hand holding the sacred meal extended toward the glorious sunset, he stood repeating a prayer. We halted, and he continued his prayer, wholly unconscious of our presence; as he turned we surprised him. I extended my hand and said, "Now I am happy, for you are again brave and strong." "Yes," said he, "my heart is glad. I have looked into the waters of my departed people. I am alive, but I may die; if I die it is well; my heart is glad." From that moment the gloom was gone and he was bright and happy. We could not induce the old man to ascend the mountain of the K[=o]k-k[=o] with us, as none go there except certain priests; but the lake is visited by those who are designated by these priests.

Several days were consumed by us in exploring this immediate vicinity. On breaking camp, our old Indian guide seemed determined to tarry behind. I remained with him. As the party rode off he took a large quantity of food which he had carefully stored away behind a tree—he having observed an almost absolute fast in order to make a large offering to the spirits of the departed—and heaped this food upon the embers of the camp fire, by the side of which he stood for a long time, supplicating in a most solemn manner the spirits of the departed to receive his offering.

Certain men are selected, who, with bodies nude save the loin skirt and with bare feet, walk from Zuni to the lake, a distance of 45 miles, exposed to the scorching rays of the summer sun, to deposit plume sticks and pray for rain. If the hearts of those sent be pure and good, the clouds will gather and rain will fall, but if evil be in their hearts no rain will fall during the journey and they return with parched lips and blistered skin. The K[=o]k-k[=o] repeat the prayers for rain with their intercessions to the Yae-t[=o]-tka, the Sun, and by them the plume sticks are sent to the same great god. So constantly are the lesser gods employed in offering plumes to the great god that at night the sacred road (the Galaxy) can be seen filled with feathers, though by day they are invisible. They believe that the soul or essence of the plumes travels over this road, just as the soul from the body travels from Zuni to the spirit lake, and in their offerings of food the food itself is not received by the gods, but the spiritual essence of the food.



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One of the most important characters in Zuni mythology, the Kaek-l[=o], finding himself alone in the far Northwest, saw many roads, but could not tell which one led to his people, and he wept bitterly. The tear marks are still to be seen on the Kaek-l[=o]'s face. A duck, hearing some one's cries, appeared and inquired the cause of the trouble. "I wish to go to my people, but the roads are many, and I do not know the right one." The sagacious duck replied, "I know all roads, and I will lead you to your people." Having led the Kaek-l[=o] to the spirit lake, he said, "Here is the home of the K[=o]k-k[=o]; I will guide you to the kiva and open for you the door." After entering the kiva the Kaek-l[=o] viewed all those assembled and said, "Let me see; are all my people here? No; the K[=o]-l[=o]-oo-w[)]i)t-si (plumed serpent) is not here; he must come," and two of the K[=o]k-k[=o] (the Soot-[=i]ke) were dispatched for him. This curious creature is the mythical plumed serpent whose home is in a hot spring not distant from the village of Tk[=a]p-qu[=e]-n[=a], and at all times his voice is to be heard in the depths of this boiling water.

In the days of the old, a young maiden, strolling along, saw a beautiful little baby boy bathing in the waters of this spring; she was so pleased with his beauty that she took him home and told her mother that she had found a lovely little boy. The mother's heart told her it was not a child really, and so she said to the daughter; but the daughter insisted that she would keep the baby for her own. She wrapped it carefully in cotton cloth and went to sleep with it in her arms. In the morning, the mother, wondering at her daughter's absence, sent a second daughter to call her. Upon entering the room where the girl had gone to sleep she was found with a great serpent coiled round and round her body. The parents were summoned, and they said, "This is some god, my daughter; you must take him back to his waters," and the maiden followed the serpent to the hot spring, sprinkling him all the while with sacred meal. Upon reaching the spring the serpent entered it, the maiden following, and she became the wife of the K[=o]-l[=o]-oo-w[)]i)t-si.

The K[=o]-l[=o]-oo-w[)]i)t-si soon appeared with the two Soot-[=i]ke who had been dispatched for him. They did not travel upon the earth, but by the underground waters that pass from the spring to the spirit lake. Upon the arrival of the K[=o]-l[=o]-oo-w[)]i)t-si, the Kaek-l[=o] issued to this assemblage his commands, for he is the great father of the K[=o]k-k[=o]. Those who were to go to the North, West, South, East, to the Heavens, and to the Earth to procure cereals for the [=A]h-shi-wi he designated as the Sae-lae-m[=o]-b[=i]-ya. Previous to this time the [=A]h-shi-wi had subsisted on seeds of a grass. "When the seeds are gathered," he said, addressing the serpent, "you will carry them with water to the [=A]h-shi-wi and tell them what to do with the seeds. I will go



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in advance and prepare them for your coming.” “But,” said his people, “you are our father; you must not walk,” and the ten K[=o]-y[=e]-m[=e]-shi accompanied him, carrying him on their backs, relieving each other when fatigued. The Kaek-l[=o] visited the [=A]h-shi-wi nine days in advance of the Sae-lae-m[=o]-b[=i]-ya and K[=o]-l[=o]-oo-w[=o])i]-si, instructing the people regarding the K[=o]k-k[=o], how they must represent them in the future and hold their ceremonials, and telling them that the boys must be made members of the K[=o]k-k[=o], and that this particular ceremony must occur but once in four years. He also gave to the people the history of himself, how the duck had befriended him and led him to the home of his people.

### **BIRTH CUSTOMS.**

Having now briefly sketched the mythology relating to the ceremonials to be described, I invite your attention to the main subject of the present paper: the Religious Life of the Zuni Child.

First we will notice the birth customs.

Zuni child life may be divided into two parts. One I will call the practical or domestic; the other, the mythologic or religious. The former is fairly exemplified in the habits, customs, games, and experiences of our own domestic child life. The other is essentially different; in it are involved the ceremonials, legends, and myths which surround the Zuni child from its birth.

Previous to the birth of a child, if a daughter be desired, the husband and wife proceed together to the “mother” rock, and at her feet make offerings and prayers, imploring her to intercede with the great father, the Sun, to give to them a daughter, and that this daughter may grow to be all that is good in woman; that she may be endowed with the power of weaving beautifully and may be skilled in the potter’s art. Should a son be desired, the couple repair to the shrine above, and here, at the breast and heart of the “father” rock, prayers and plume sticks are offered that a son may be given them, and that he may have power to conquer his enemies, and that he may become distinguished in the K[=o]k-k[=o] and other orders, and have power over the field to produce abundant crops. In both cases the sacred meal is sprinkled, and, should the prayer not be answered, there is no doubt that the heart of one or the other was not earnest when the prayer was offered.

The Zuni child is born amid ceremony. At its birth only the maternal grandmother and two female doctors are present. After the birth of the child, the paternal grandmother enters, bearing as offerings to the new born babe a large pottery bowl and inside of it a tiny blanket. She then prepares warm suds of yucca root in the bowl, in which she

bathes the infant, at the same time repeating a prayer of thanks for the life that has been given them and praying for the future of the child. She then rubs the entire body of the child, except the head, with warm



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ashes held in the palm of the hand and moistened with water. This process is repeated every morning during infancy and the same paste is put upon the face of the child until it is several years old. I would remark that this paste is seldom noticed upon the older children because it is put on in the morning and drying soon is brushed off by the child. It is asserted by the Zuni that in four days after the birth of a child the first skin is removed by exfoliation and is supplanted by a new one. After applying the ashes, the paternal grandmother places the infant in the arms of the maternal grandparent, who performs other offices for the little one and wraps it in a piece of cotton cloth. The paternal grandmother prepares a bed of warm sand by the right side of the mother (leaving a cool spot for the child's head); she then receives the infant and lays it upon its bed, and over it she arranges the little blanket which she brought; she then places upon the sand and at the right side of the child an ear of white corn; if the child be a girl, the mother, or a three-plumule, corn is selected; if a boy, the father, or single ear, corn. The fourth day after the birth the child is again bathed in the yucca root suds by the same grandmother, who again repeats a long prayer. During the first ten days of the child's life the paternal grandmother remains in the daughter-in-law's house, looking after the mother and helping in the preparation of the feast that is to occur. On the morning of the tenth day the child is taken from its bed of sand, to which it is never to return, and upon the left arm of the paternal grandmother it is carried for the first time into the presence of the rising sun. To the breast of the child the grandmother carrying it presses the ear of corn which lay by its side during the ten days; to her left the mother of the infant walks, carrying in her left hand the ear of corn which lay by her side. Both women sprinkle a line of sacred meal, emblematic of the straight road which the child must follow to win the favor of its gods. Thus the first object which the child is made to behold at the very dawn of its existence is the sun, the great object of their worship; and long ere the little lips can lisp a prayer it is repeated for it by the grandmother.

The Zuni are polytheists; yet, while they have a plurality of gods, many of whom are the spirits of their ancestors, these gods are but mediums through which to reach their one great father of all—the Sun.

[Plate XX: *Zuni masks and* K[=O]-Y[=E]-M[=E]-*shi*.

2 P[=A]-oo-T[=I]-*wa*. 1 K[=O]-Y[=E]-M[=E]-*shi*. 3 *Sai*-[=A]-*hli-A*.]



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Returning to the house, the paternal grandmother again bathes the child in yucca suds; then, for the first time, the little one is put into the cradle. The baby's arms are placed straight by its sides, and in this position it is so strapped in its cradle that it cannot even move a hand. These cradles have hood-shaped tops, and over the whole thick coverings are placed, so that the wonder is the child does not smother. The cradle is usually deposited in some safe corner, and the baby is left to sleep or amuse itself with its infantine thoughts. The cradle is sometimes attached to two ropes to form a swing, and when the mother becomes conscious of the child's awakening she uncovers its head at times and the tiny thing casts its eyes around. On the tenth morning both parents of the child are bathed in suds of yucca, the whole body of the mother but only the head of the father. This office is also performed by the paternal grandmother. The immediate blood relations (female only) then assemble at the infant's home; that is, all the household of the father's house and those of the mother's house. Each woman from the father's house brings to the baby a gift of a little blanket. This select gathering partakes of a feast, which is presided over by the maternal grandmother. At the close of the feast the infant is carried by the oldest sister of the father to the paternal grandmother's house, where it is presented to the paternal grandfather, who prays to the Sun (Yae-t[=o] tka) to send down blessings upon the child.

### **INVOLUNTARY INITIATION INTO THE K[=O]K-K[=O].**

The present ceremonials are in direct obedience to the orders and instructions given at the time of the appearance of the K[=o]k-k[=o] upon the earth, and their masks are counterparts of the original or spiritual K[=o]k-k[=o] (Plate XX). The Kaek-l[=o] rides, as of old, upon the backs of the K[=o]-y[=e]-m[=e]-shi, and he is the herald for the coming of the K[=o]-l[=o]-oo-w[i]t-si. Arriving at the village in the morning, he divides his time between the kivas, there being six of these religious houses in Zuni, one for each of the cardinal points, one for the zenith, and one for the nadir. In each of these kivas he issues to the people assembled the commands of the K[=o]k-k[=o] and gives the history of the Kaek-l[=o] and the gathering of the cereals of the earth by the Sae-lae-m[=o]-b[=i]-ya. At sunrise he is gone. The morning after the arrival of the Kaek-l[=o], those who are to represent the K[=o]k-k[=o] prepare plume sticks, and in the middle of the same day these are planted in the earth. The same night they repair to their respective kivas, where they spend the following eight nights, not looking upon the face of a woman during that period. Each night is spent in smoking and talking and rehearsing for the coming ceremony. The second day all go for wood, bringing it home on their backs, for so the ancients did when beasts of burden were unknown



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to them. The third day is also spent in gathering wood, and the fourth day likewise. On the same day the ten men who are to personate the K[=o]-y[=e]-m[=e]-shi, in company with the [t]S[=i]-[t]s[=i]-[t]ki (great-grandfather of the K[=o]-y[=e]-m[=e]-shi), pass through the village, inquiring for the boys who are to be initiated; before such houses as have boys ready for this ceremonial these men assemble; one of them enters the house and, greeting the mother of the boy with "Good morning," inquires the name of her son. She replies: "He has no name," and requests the K[=o]-y[=e]-m[=e]-shi to give him one. The man then joins the group, repeating the words of the woman. In passing from the kiva through the village the Indian screens his face with a blanket, so as not to see the women as he passes. On the fifth day they go on a rabbit hunt, the capture of but one rabbit being necessary. The rabbit is carried to the He-i-i-que (or Kiva of the North) by the [t]S[=i]-[t]S[=i] [t]ki, who, after skinning the rabbit, fills the skin with cedar bark; a pinch of meal is placed for the heart and the eye sockets are filled with mica; a hollow reed is passed through the inside filling to the mouth. The sixth day the inmates of the kivas again go for wood; the seventh day large T[=e]-l[=i]k-tk[=i]-n[=a]-we are made of eagle plumes; the eighth day is consumed in decorating the masks to be worn. As these people have not the art of mixing their pigments so as to be permanent, masks and altars have to be freshly decorated before using; and, when the masks are completely decorated, they, with the other paraphernalia, are carried on the same day by the men and youths who have to wear them to some secluded nooks among the rocks, a distance from the town, where they put them on, returning to the village by early moonlight.

The impressive ceremonial of initiating the youth into the order of the K[=o]k-k[=o] occurs but once in four years. No male child above the age of four years may, after death, enter the Kiva of the K[=o]k-k[=o] unless he has received the sacred breath of the K[=o]k-k[=o]. Those who personate the K[=o]k-k[=o] are endowed for the time being with their actual breath. Besides the Sae-lae-m[=o]-b[=i]-ya of the North, West, South, East, Heavens, and Earth, and a number of younger brothers who appear on this occasion, there are P[=a]-oo-t[=i]-wa (Plate XX), father of the Sun, ten K[=o]-y[=e]-m[=e]-shi, and the K[=o]-l[=o]-oo-w[=i]t-si.

The Sae-lae-m[=o]-b[=i]-ya of the North wear yellow (hl[=u]p-si-na) masks; those from the West, blue (hli-aen-na); those from the South, red (shi-l[=o]-[=a]); those from the East, white (k[=o]-h[=a]n); those from the Heavens, all colors ([=l]-t[=o]-p[=o]-naen-ni); those from the Earth, black (quin-n[=a]). (Plate XXI.) These colors represent the cardinal points, the zenith, and the nadir:

North.	Yellow.	Hl[=u]p-si-na.
West.	Blue.	Hli-aen-na.
South.	Red.	Shi-l[=o]-[=a].



East.            White.            K[=o]-h[=a]n.  
Heavens.       All colors.       [=I]-t[=o]-p[=o]-naen-ni.  
Earth.          Black.            Quin-n[=a].

[Plate XXI: *Group of SAe-LAe-M[=O]-B[=I]-ya masks.*



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*1 North. 2 West. 3 South. 4 East. 5 Heavens. 6 Earth.]*

They come after sundown to the village. The serpent, made of hide, is about twelve feet long and eighteen inches through the thickest part of the body. The abdomen is painted white, the back black, covered with white stars, which are represented by a kind of semicircle, an entirely conventional design. The neck rests through a finely decorated kind of altar carried by the two Soot-[=i]ke. The tail end of the fetich is held by the priest of the K[=o]-l[=o]-oo-w[=i]t-si, who constantly blows through a large shell, which he carries in the right hand, holding the serpent with the left. The K[=o]k-k[=o] pass through the town and visit each kiva; they put the head of the serpent through the hatchway, that those who are privileged to assemble in the kivas may see the fetich. The K[=o]-l[=o]-oo-w[=i]t-si is then taken to the Kiva of the Earth, H[=e]-tk[=a]-pa-que. The walls of this kiva are decorated with two K[=o]-l[=o]-oo-w[=i]t-si, which extend almost around the entire walls of the room, the heads nearly meeting at the north end of the room. The fetich is placed between the heads. The others of the K[=o]k-k[=o] repair to their respective kivas, the H[=e]-i-i-que or Kiva of the North, the Moo-h[=e]-i-que or Kiva of the West, the Choo-p[=a]-ae-que or Kiva of the South, the [=O]h-h[=e]-i-que or Kiva of the East, and the Oop-ts[=a]n-[=a]-[=a]-que or Kiva of the Heavens. From each of these kivas men and youths from the secret orders to which I have referred are assembled to receive the K[=o]k-k[=o]. When all the K[=o]k-k[=o] have gone to their kivas, the ten K[=o]-y[=e]-m[=e]-shi, who reach the village after the others, go to their house, which is not one of the sacred assembly houses, but chosen from among the S[=u]s-ki-i-que, or people of the Wolf gens.

The K[=o]k-k[=o] sing and dance in their own kivas, then change about, those of the North passing to the West and those of the West going to the South, and so on. This is continuous until the first white streak warns them that day is approaching. At this time the head of the K[=o]-l[=o]-oo-w[=i]t-si is put through the opening in the side wall of the kiva, when all who choose may look upon it. Behind this creature the old priest stands and blows through the body, making the same peculiar noise, representing the roaring of a sea monster, that he has kept up throughout the night. The image is only seen by the uncertain light of the faintest impression of day. P[=a]-oo-t[=i]-wa remains with the K[=o]-l[=o]-oo-w[=i]t-si in the Kiva of the Earth. At sunrise the Sae-lae-m[=o]-b[=i]-ya go to this kiva, each bearing the plume stick made on the sixth day and an ear of corn. The Sae-lae-m[=o]-b[=i]-ya of the North first advances to the priest of the K[=o]-l[=o]-oo-w[=i]t-si and, presenting him with the plumes and ear of yellow corn, prays that the K[=o]-l[=o]-oo-w[=i]t-si will

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give to his people the seeds of the earth; the Sae-lae-m[=o]-b[=i]-ya of the West next approaches, presenting his wand and an ear of blue corn, praying that the K[=o]-l[=o]-oo-w[=i]t-si will bring to his people the seeds of the earth; and so the red corn of the South, the white of the East, the all-color of the Heavens and the black of the Earth are presented with the same prayer. The Sae-lae-m[=o]-b[=i]-ya remove their masks after entering the kiva, when they immediately lose their identity as the K[=o]k-k[=o]. They are merely men now, praying to the K[=o]k-k[=o]. This ceremony over, they return to their respective kivas, having put on their masks before leaving the Kiva of the Earth.

At this time the [t]S[=i]-[t]s[=i]-[t]ki partially ascends the ladder of the Kiva of the North, remaining just inside of the hatchway, and, holding the rabbit to his mouth, calls through the reed: "Your little grandfather is hungry; he wishes something to eat; bring him some stewed meat." The K[=o]-y[=e]-m[=e]-shi, in obedience to the request of the little grandfather, go to the homes of the children to be initiated, calling for food. At the same time the K[=o]-y[=e]-m[=e]-shi give to each novice his name. Previous to this the boy is designated as baby boy, younger boy, older boy, &c. The food is received by the K[=o]-y[=e]-m[=e]-shi and taken to the Kiva of the North, where it is divided and carried to the different kivas. For this occasion the native beans are prepared. There is as great a variety of color in these as in the corn. The yellow beans are carried to the Kiva of the North, the blue beans to the Kiva of the West, the red to the Kiva of the South, the white to the Kiva of the East, the all color to the Kiva of the Heavens, the black to the Kiva of the Earth. A sumptuous meal is now served in each of the kivas.

After this meal the K[=o]k-k[=o] begin their bodily decorations, with their bodies almost nude. Those of the North are painted yellow; those of the West, blue; those of the South, red; those of the East, white; those of the Heavens, all colors on the body and yellow on the neck and upper arms; those of the Earth, black, with some bits of color. This done, the Sae-lae-m[=o]-b[=i]-ya of the North passes through the village and, going for a short distance to the north, deposits a plume stick, the stick to which the plumes are attached being painted yellow. The Sae-lae-m[=o]-b[=i]-ya of the West, South, and East plant their plumes at their respective cardinal points. Those for the zenith and nadir are planted to the west, on the road to the spirit lake, the stick of each one having the cardinal color decorations. This done, all retire to their kivas.



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The Sae-lae-m[=o]-b[=i]-ya of the North, returning to his kiva, drinks the medicine water prepared by the priest of the great fire order (M[=a]-[t]ke-hl[=a]n-[=a] [=a]-que), who, with some of his people, is now busy in the preparation of a sand altar. The Sae-lae-m[=o]-b[=i]-ya again emerge from the kivas, with long bunches of Spanish bayonet in their hands, in the ends of which grains of corn of the respective colors are placed and wrapped with shreds of the bayonet. Any man or youth desiring to raise yellow corn appeals to the Sae-lae-m[=o]-b[=i]-ya of the North, who strikes him a severe blow with his bunch of bayonets. Similar appeals are made to those representing other colors. The sand altar is made in the Kiva of the North. It is first laid in the ordinary yellowish sand, in the center of which the bowl of medicine water is placed. Over the yellow sand a ground of white sand is sprinkled. All the Sae-lae-m[=o]-b[=i]-ya and their brothers are represented on the altar (Plate XXII). The altar is circular in form and some twelve feet in diameter. The K[=o]-l[=o]-oo-w[i]t-si encircles the whole.

Throughout the day the K[=o]k-k[=o] are running around the village whipping such of the people as appeal to them for a rich harvest, while the curious performances of the K[=o]-y[=e]-m[=e]-shi carry one back to the primitive drama.

[Plate XXII: *Zuni sand altar in kiva of the north.*]

Toward evening the ceremony for initiating the children begins. The priest of the Sun, entering the sacred plaza (or square), sprinkles a broad line of sacred meal from the southeast entrance across the south side, thence along the western side to the Kiva of the North, and up the ladderway to the entrance (which is always in the roof), and then passing over the housetops he goes to the Kiva of the Earth and sprinkles the meal upon the K[=o]-l[=o]-oo-w[i]t-si. He then precedes the K[=o]k-k[=o] to the plaza and deposits a small quantity of yellow meal on the white line of meal near the eastern entrance. By this spot the Sae-lae-m[=o]-b[=i]-ya of the North stands, south of the line of meal. The priest, continuing in advance, deposits a quantity of blue meal on the line a short distance from the yellow, which indicates the position for the Sae-lae-m[=o]-b[=i]-ya of the West. In like manner he indicates the position of the respective Sae-lae-m[=o]-b[=i]-ya with red meal for the South, white for the East, meal of all colors for the Heavens, and black meal for the Earth. The remainder of the K[=o]k-k[=o] take their positions successively along the line of meal. The K[=o]-y[=e]-m[=e]-shi group in the plaza. The godfathers then pass along the line of meal, each one holding his godchild on his back by a blanket, which he draws tightly around him. In olden times tanned robes of the buffalo were used for this purpose. As he passes the line of K[=o]k-k[=o] each one strikes the child with his



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large bunch of Spanish bayonets. While the Indian from almost infancy looks upon any exhibition of feeling when undergoing physical suffering as most cowardly and unmanly, the severity of the pain inflicted by the yucca switches in this ceremony is at times such as to force tears from the eyes of the little ones, but a boy over the age of five or six rarely flinches under this ordeal. After passing the line the godparent enters the Kiva of the North, where he is met by a priest of the great fire order, who asks, "Who is your K[=o]k-k[=o]?" When the godfather replies, he is directed to select his boy's plume. The plumes which ornament the heads of the figures have been previously wrapped in corn husks and carried to the priest by the respective godfathers. The godfather attaches the feather, which is a soft, downy feather of the eagle, to the scalp-lock of the child. The godparent is then given a drink of the holy water, which is dipped from the bowl by the medicine man with a shell attached to a long reed. The child also drinks and repeats a prayer after his sponsor. They then leave the kiva, and, taking a position on the north side of the plaza, the child kneels and clasps the bent knee of his godfather, who draws him still closer with the blanket around him. Four new characters of the K[=o]k-k[=o] now appear, the Sai-[=a]-hli-a (see Plate XX). Each one of these strikes the child four times across the back with his yucca blades, having first tested with his foot the thickness of the child's clothing. The child must not have anything over his back but the one blanket, which is a gift from the godfather. This ceremonial over, each child accompanies his godparent to his home, where a choice meal is served.

The night ceremonial is conducted in two kivas, that of the South and that of the East. The K[=o]k-k[=o] for this ceremony divide and enter the two kivas.

The godparents sit upon the stone ledge which passes around the room, whose walls are rectangular, and, spreading his knees, the boy sits on the ledge between them. To the right of the guardian his wife sits, and to his left his sister. In case the wife is not present, the older sister sits on the right and a younger sister on the left. The father of the Sun (P[=a]-oo-t[=i]-wa) enters and sits upon the throne which has been arranged for him at the west end of the room; this has a sacred blanket attached to the wall and one to sit upon, the whole profusely ornamented with white scarfs, woven belts, and many necklaces of turquoise and other precious beads. To his right and left sit the two young priests who prepared the throne; to the left of the priest, on the left of P[=a]-oo-t[=i]-wa, sit the high priest and priestess of the Earth. The remainder of the ledge is filled with the boys and their friends. Nai-[=u]-chi, the living representative of [=A]h-ai-[=u]-ta, the war god, sits to the left of the fire altar as you enter and feeds the sacred flames. The Sae-lae-m[=o]-b[=i]-ya



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enter immediately after P[=a]-oo-t[=i]-wa. All these, including P[=a]-oo-t[=i]-wa, enter head foremost; the head touches the stone slab over the fire, and, completing a somersault, they vault into the room on all fours and in like manner pass to the right of the kiva and around to their places. P[=a]-oo-t[=i]-wa is followed by the Sae-lae-m[=o]-b[=i]-ya of the North and others in proper order and rapid succession, the hind one always hopping into the foot and hand prints of the former. In the two kivas mounds of sand have been laid for the K[=o]k-k[=o] and each one sits upon his mound. These mounds are some eighteen inches in diameter and a foot in height (Plate XXIII). When all have taken their places the Sae-lae-m[=o]-b[=i]-ya of the North arises and taking the wand from his mound walks to the group immediately to the right of the ladder as one enters. Holding the wand between his hands, he goes to each child and blows four times upon the wand, at the same time extending it toward the mouth of the child, who draws from it each time the sacred breath which passes from the mouth of the K[=o]k-k[=o] over the plumes. The [t]S[=i]-[t]s[=i]-[t]ki carries the rabbit in addition to the wand, and over them he passes the sacred breath of the little grandfather. The godparent covers the eyes of the child with his hand, for the children must not look upon the K[=o]k-k[=o] near by. The Sae-lae-m[=o]-b[=i]-ya of the North is followed by the Sae-lae-m[=o]-b[=i]-ya of the West and others, all in turn going to each child; as each one completes the round he places his wand in his belt, stands in the center of the kiva, and turns a somersault over the fire, striking his head on the fire slab as before, and so leaves the kiva feet foremost.

[Plate XXIII: [=O]H-H[=E]-I-*que*, kiva of the east.]

The K[=o]-l[=o]-oo-w[=i]t-si now appears at the hatchways. He is brought by the priest of the K[=o]-l[=o]-oo-w[=i]t-si and the Soot-[=i]ke. The high priest, the priest of the bow, and priestess of the earth advance to the hatchway, each holding a large earthen bowl, and catch the water poured from the mouth of the K[=o]-l[=o]-oo-w[=i]t-si. Each guardian then fills the small bowl which he carries with the holy water and, drinking a portion of it, gives the remainder to the boy to drink. The bowl which contains it is a gift from the godfather. The boy sprinkles the corn stacked in his house with this water. After the water is exhausted from the large bowls a blanket is held by four men to catch the seeds of all the cereals which are sent up from the abdomen of the K[=o]-l[=o]-oo-w[=i]t-si. These are taken from the blankets by three priests and placed in their own blankets, which rest over the left arm, and they, passing around, distribute the seeds to all present. The sand of the fallen mounds is gathered in a blanket and deposited in the river, to be carried to the home of the K[=o]k-k[=o]. The boys now return to their homes, accompanied by



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the guardian and one other of their attendants. In the early morning the sister of the godfather goes for the boy and brings him to her house, where he enjoys a sumptuous breakfast. The godfather then leads the boy to the east for some distance from the village, sprinkling a line of sacred meal, and here he says a prayer, which the boy repeats after him, and the godfather, making a hole in the ground, plants a plume stick which he has made for the child.

From this time the child eats no animal food for four days. The plume which has been placed on the child's head in the kiva during the initiation is not removed till the fourth morning after the planting of the feathers, when he again goes over the road with his guardian, who deposits the plume from the child's head with a prayer, which is repeated by the child.

Thus ends this remarkable initiation of the Zuni male child into the order of the K[=o]k-k[=o]. This is really mainly done by sponsors, and he must personally take the vows as soon as he is old enough.

### **VOLUNTARY INITIATION INTO THE K[=O]K-K[=O].**

After the first initiation of a boy into this order, he is left to decide for himself when he will assume the vows made for him by his sponsors, though the father and the godfather do not fail to impress upon the boy the importance of the second initiation, which occurs at an annual ceremonial; and when the boy has declared his determination to enter the order, if the K[=o]k-k[=o] upon seeing him deem him too young, he is ordered to return to his home and wait awhile till his heart has become more wise. For this ceremonial the godparents and the boys assemble in the Kiva of the North. Each boy in turn takes his position to receive his whipping, which is necessary for initiation. The godfather, standing, bends his right knee, which the boy clasps, bowing his head low. The godfather holds the two ends of the blanket and buckskin tightly around the boy, while each of the four Sai-[=a]-hli-[=a] in turn give him four strokes across the back with a bunch of the yucca blades. Two of the K[=o]-y[=e]-m[=e]-shi stand by and count the strokes; the others are in the plaza outside, indulging in their primitive games, which excite much merriment among the large assemblage of people. After each boy has received the chastisement and all are again seated, the four Sai-[=a]-hli-[=a] pass in turn to each boy. Each one taking off his mask, places it over the head of the boy, handing him his Spanish bayonets. The boy strikes the K[=o]k-k[=o] once across each arm and once across each ankle. The K[=o]k-k[=o] does not speak, but the boy is instructed by his guardian, who talks to him in a whisper, telling him not to be afraid, but to strike hard. The eyes of the boys open wide as the K[=o]k-k[=o] raise their masks and for the first time familiar faces are recognized. The K[=o]k-k[=o] leave the kiva after revealing their



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identity to the children, and running, around the village use their switches indiscriminately, with a few exceptional cases. I saw a woman whipped, she taking the babe from her back and holding it in her arms. This woman requested the whipping that she might be rid of the bad dreams that nightly troubled her. After the Sai-[a]-hli-[a] leave the kiva the children are called by the priest of the K[=o]k-k[=o] and told to sit in front of him and the other priests, including the High Priest of Zuni. This august body sits in the kiva throughout the ceremony. The Priest of the K[=o]k-k[=o] then delivers a lecture to the boys, instructing them in some of the secrets of the order, when they are told if they betray the secrets confided to them they will be punished by death; their heads will be cut off with a stone knife; for so the K[=o]k-k[=o] has ordered. They are told how the K[=o]k-k[=o] appeared upon the earth and instructed the people to represent them. The priest closes by telling the children that in the old some boys betrayed the secret and told that these were not the real gods, but men personating the K[=o]k-k[=o], and when this reached the gods the Sai-[a]-hli-[a] appeared upon the earth and inquired for the boys. The people then lived upon the mesa t[=o]-w[=a]-yael-laen-ne. The mothers declared they knew not where they had fled. The K[=o]k-k[=o] stamped his feet upon the rocky ground and the rocks parted, and away down in the depths of the mountain he found the naughty boys. He ordered them to come to him and he cut off their heads with his stone knife. This story is sufficient to impress the children that there is no escape for them if they betray the confidence reposed in them, for the K[=o]k-k[=o] can compel the rocks to part and reveal the secrets.

A repast is now served to the priests and the boys and others in the kiva. The food is brought by the wives and sisters of the four Sai-[a] hli-[a] to the hatch way and carried in by the K[=o]k-k[=o], who have returned to the kiva. The feast opens with a grace said by the priest of the K[=o]k-k[=o], who immediately after collects upon a piece of H[=e]-wi (a certain kind of bread) bits of all the food served. This he rolls up and places by his side, and at the conclusion of the feast he carries it to a distance from, the village over the road to the spirit lake and making a hole in the ground he deposits it as an offering to the gods. Each child goes to the godfather's house, where his head and hands are bathed in yucca suds by the mother and sisters of the godfather, they repeating prayers that the youth may be true to his vows, &c. The boy then returning to his own home is tested by his father, who says, "You are no longer ignorant; you are no longer a little child, but a young man. Were you pleased with the words of the K[=o]k-k[=o]? What did the priest tell you?" The boy does not forget himself and reveal anything that was said, for the terror overhanging him is too great.



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When a youth is selected to personate the K[=o]k-k[=o] he is instructed in regard to the decorating of the mask he is to wear. When this is done he goes at night to the proper kiva and seated between two instructors he learns the song and prayers. In committing songs and prayers to memory the novice holds a tiny crystal between his thumb and forefinger for a while, then he puts it into his mouth, and at the conclusion of the instruction he swallows it. This insures the remembrance of the prayers and songs, and he awakes the following morning with them indelibly impressed upon his mind. The pupil is then struck across each arm and across each ankle with the yucca blades.

There are very few women belonging to the order of the K[=o]k-k[=o]. I think there are now only five in Zuni. When a woman of the order becomes advanced in age she endeavors to find some maiden who will take upon herself the vows at her death. Selecting some young woman, she appeals to her to be received into the order of the K[=o]k-k[=o]. The maiden replies, "I know nothing concerning the mysteries of the order. You must talk to my father." After the father is spoken to, he in turn spends the night in explaining the duties of the position to his daughter and that the gods would be displeased if she should marry after joining the K[=o]k-k[=o]. Assuming the K[=o]k-k[=o] vows is entirely optional with the girl. It is never her duty, but a special privilege which is rarely accepted. If she accepts she passes through both ceremonials described. She chooses her godfather, who gives her for the first ceremony a woman's blanket and for the second a woman's dress, a white blanket, a quantity of blue yarn, a woman's belt, a buckskin, a sacred blanket, and the mask she is to wear. But even here in Zuni, where the people are so controlled by the priests and have such a superstitious dread of disobeying the commands of the K[=o]k-k[=o], women have been guilty of desecrating their sacred office and marrying. At present there is a woman of the order of the K[=o]k-k[=o] married to a Navajo. She is of course forever afterwards debarred from joining in the ceremonials, but she is permitted to live among her people with no other punishment than their indignation.

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