



INTRODUCTION TO ZUNI CEREMONIALISM

RUTH L. BUNZEL

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BY
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to do with the social status of the individual. Marriage, for instance, does not depend upon it, nor participation in other ceremonies. Although any initiated boy may, if he wishes, take part in masked dances, he does not feel any obligation to do so. It is usually many years before he assumes even the responsibility of making his own prayer sticks. Curiously enough, considering general North American custom, no notice whatever is taken of the advent of maturity in girls.

Initiations into medicine societies are more clearly ceremonial recognition of personal crises. The initiate is a patient who has been snatched from the jaws of death and his initiation into the group that saved him is the ceremonial assumption of his new status. At his initiation he gets a "new heart," and, as a symbol of the new life he has begun, receives a new name.⁹⁴ This name, however, is not usually used and does not ordinarily replace his childhood name or names. The ceremony may be delayed for years--sometimes as long as 20 years--after the cure which it affirms. Like initiation into the Katsina Society, it involves a minimum requirement of attendance, and the privilege of additional participation as the interests and ability of the individual may dictate. Children need not assume any responsibilities upon initiation.

Religious participation starts among children when, as infants on their mother's backs, they are taken to watch the katsinas dance. The summer dances outdoors are largely attended by small children of both sexes. During the morning and early afternoon they constitute the entire audience. Formerly children were not permitted to attend night dances of the katsinas where the katsinas dance unmasked, but this rule is broken among the more lax parts of the population.

Children learn early to share the interest of their elders in the more spectacular phases of religious life. They are keen observers of dances, they know songs, and give accurate and lively accounts of ceremonies which they attend; they are interested in sacerdotal gossip; and they orient their activities about great religious festivals. In early childhood boys and girls are especially interested in religious affairs. Sometime between the ages of 5

⁹⁴ Contrary to custom in other pueblos, and reported information from Zuñi, naming is not a part of the initiation into the Katsina Society.

