"Yesterday you asked me why the Sundance was for the purpose of getting rain when we did not have any crops to care about. I did not know what to answer you but I've thought about it all night. The reason why we asked for rain was so that everything should grow fine and that all things should be well off."
Years ago my first-born son was sick. I tried many medicines and gave away many horses but he was no better. Then one night I dreamed that I was to make a Sundance. When I woke I promised manito that I would make one the next summer. That morning it seemed as though the boy improved and by next morning he is definitely better.

That winter I collected prints for I was supposed to have twelve of them. I called in four old men who know the Sundance. We sing Sundance songs for three months that winter and they tell me how to act. We sing for the last time just before we move camp to go to the dance ground.

The day before I took my horse and rode over to Poundmaker and Little Pine. The people there were all camped together. I took with me an elbow length of twist tobacco tied around with sweetgrass and wrapped in print. I rode around the camp crying for them to help me make my dance. They took me into a tipi with all the chiefs and headmen and they smoked the tobacco. Then they pulled their tipis and came here.

The next morning we went to 13 mile lake (which is two miles east of here) where I was going to make the dance. That was 41 years ago."

Here followed the story of how the agent forbade them to have the dance and later gave them food to eat there. Recorded last year.

"There should be twelve prints for the dance but there must be at least five. One very long white one is for the Thunderer's nest, reaching from the top of the pole to the bottom. Also one print in each of the four directions.

The four old men who taught me were wapeyah "Whitey", paetcin "Thundering", p:muhteacu "Wind Borne", mitcewayic "Mide Worker" (Chicken's father).

This last man was pretty sick when he was a boy and his parents promised to give him to the mide when somebody would make it. They did so and he was given that name in the mide tipi.

I gave these men two yards of print and a bottle of whiskey apiece. They spilled all the whiskey into a pan and let it set until far into the night when they had finished teaching me the songs. Then they sprinkled some of the whiskey in four directions saying first as they sprinkled upward:

"Chief of the Thunder, this is for you". Then to the east, "Red Thunder this is for you". To the south, "White Thunder this is for you".
To the west, "this is for you, Blue Thunder".
To the north, "this if for you, Black Thunder".

"You have been put in the world to look after this Sundance and see there is no trouble during it. Take care that everything
goes smoothly and all those that come to the dance should go home happy and well."

Each of these Thunders had songs. There were ten songs for each. Yes, a print may be offered to one of the Thunders but I'll ask the others not to get tired waiting until I give prints to them too. Called both atay and powat.

Before anything else is mentioned we always mention k:cemanito. But as long as I know we never offered a cloth to him. He has everything and doesn't need it. But he placed the Thunders to look after all the people on earth. Thus we never offer a pipe to k:cemanito and ask him to smoke. We only ask him to look at the stem. But when we offer a pipe to Thunder we are giving them a smoke.

It was when the Sundance was first given to the Indians that it was also given them to smoke. They were told to use a certain plant that was growing. It grew wild.

There are two new Sundance songs that were given to me and that I am saving for my last dance. The Thunderers showed them to me.

Once I was stealing horses from the Blackfeet. There was a big camp of them and the horses were all in the centre of the camp where I could not get at them. Then I promised the Thunder that if I got a good horse and got away safe I'd hang from the pole by my chest in the next Sundance.

I got away with a good horse that belonged to a chief. It was tied to his tipi door. At the next Sundance I cut bits of skin from four places on each thigh. The blood was streaming down. I put the bits of skin that I cut out of myself into a tanned buffalo bladder with sweetgrass and a charcoal (to represent fire). I wrapped this in print and hung it in a bush.

I didn't skewer myself for this reason. There was a man wepayah who was an expert at putting the skewers on. He told me to visit for the crowd to gather at the dance before I did it. But I knew that if I did there would be a lot of women watching and some of them would be bound to have their period then. They would spoil it. I might (faint?) So I went off by myself to a little hill and cut out the eight pieces of skin. That was just as good as hanging. I said, "I promised you Thunder that I would hang from the pole and give you a piece of skin. You know how it happened that I didn't do it. I am now going to fulfill my promise. I think it will be just as well to accept this skin as an offering. So I'll hang it in the bush for you."

That was done to all the Thunders and to the Sun (?). The Sun was the one who was put to look after the Sundance for he likes to work and give light to people. The Sun is next to k:cemanito in importance. Next comes the Chief of the Thunders who is important and is looking after everything around.
The Sundance just held at Mopomin was given by a young man. This was his first one. He came here in February and filled a pipe and asked me to teach him. I did so four times, once at every new moon. They must sing three times in the winter before they make the dance. After the fourth sing it starts. The singing may be either at the new moon or full moon.

There was a Stony called (in Cree transl.) n:pin:w:htigo "summer w:tigo" who gave his first Sundance. It was very hot. You could feel a hot wind and some of the dancers fainted. N:p. went into his place and sat down. We couldn't see him for a while. When he stood up we saw that he had a lot of feathers stuck on. He said "kiccinento, you give me Thunder to be my father and my mother. If they don't wash these feathers off of me they will be left to dry there." Then he sang.

"Thunder, my father, give me water."
"Thunder, my mother, give me water."

He sang this a number of times so that the singers could catch it. When they heard it they beat time only with their sticks, not with the drum. When they learned the song, they yelled and beat the drums.

When they sang the song first you could hear the Thunder and a little cloud appeared. The second time they sang it a larger cloud came. The third time thunder and lightning. The fourth time and a heavy rain fell. You could see this man still dancing in the rain until all his feathers were washed off. When he stood up his skin was painted black with charcoal.

At another Sundance given by p:etciiu "Little Thunder" he cut off the tips of the two smallest fingers on each hand. He put this in a bladder with sweetgrass, tied them with prints and hung them in the Sundance lodge.

As they were dancing heavy rolling clouds came up and a strong wind. The old man looking after the dance came in. "I think the wind will blow down the lodge." P:etciiu took his buffalo robe and went out. He stood facing the storm. He swung his left arm (with the robe around his shoulders and arms) and the storm split in half. There was no rain over the camp though you could see rain on both sides.

In the Sundance the sun is the most important of all. Yes, the sun is an atayohkan too. The sun's place is in the hole (excavation) in back of the lodge. Also they sometimes make the sign of the sun on the centre pole in order to ask the sun not to be too hot.

Nowadays when they make a Sundance there is a buffalo skull in the excavation. But when the first Sundance was made by aok:win, a buffalo bull stood there. When the last song was sung, the people parted and the bull walked out. They were told that henceforth they could substitute the skull. That hole is called tawatawahtigan, "Open Place". It is about six
inches deep. Five peeled sticks are planted there, one in each corner and one in the middle. They represent the thunders.

Sometimes the raven -- kekkek:w (not the crow) represents the sun. These birds never go south. They winter in the north in the mountains. The man that makes the Sundance may wear a raven skin cap or he may hang it in front of him. I had one when I was a young man. I took good care of it, and kept it wrapped in cloth. Recently a fellow shot a raven for me but I could not use it to make such a cap because one of its legs was shot off. The hide must be whole before it can be used. The only ceremony in which this cap was used was in the Sundance. Yes, I would take it along on raids, but I would carry it slung over one shoulder. On such occasions I would wear my buffalo horn cap with weasel skins.

All kinds of skins and bird hides were used in that way for war. Even a wolf or coyote hide could be used (worn) in a Sundance just as long as it was given to some person to dream about it. All the birds that fly, all the things that run may be called stuyonkanuk. Their power is sometimes used in this way. Should one of the dancers in the Sundance become played out and be unable to continue, he will give a print to one of his relatives who has such a skin. This relative will offer the print to the bird or animal to help the dancer keep on.

Wolf skins were used by scouts as camouflage. So when they go out to scout for the Sundance centre pole, they sometimes wear wolf skins on their backs. Kicemanitou told Ask:win "that 'chief pole' (centre pole) represents me and when you go to spy out the pole wear a wolf skin." I myself wore a wolf skin many times but the one I had got rotten and so I hung it on a bush.

The raven, wolf, and North Wind are always ready to help a Sundance.

When I make a Sundance I always have two bowls ready, one containing water mixed with white mud; in the other water mixed with charcoal. When a dancer faints I go and scrape the buffalo skull and then I take a piece of bark from the centre pole to use as a spoon. In the bark I put the bone scrapings mixed into the two waters and give it to the dancer to drink. Soon they are ready to dance again. When a man faints I scrape the right side of the head. For a woman I scrape the left side of the skull. At the last dance I gave, Mrs. Swindler fainted. I gave it to her and she was all right. (Pooyak here remarked that he had seen the old man give something to exhausted dancers but up until then he had not known what it was).

Fine Day brought out the bundle containing the buffalo horn cap. He had given it to his brother at Rocky Boy to keep many years ago. Last year when he was there it was given back to him. The reason was that the bundle must have a wrapping of braided sweetgrass and they didn't have any down there. This was the first time Fine Day had unwrapped it. It had evidently been very wet for the various wrappers were rotten and stuck
There were seven wrappings, in this order:

1. Large piece of canvas, fastened with wire, one end open, the other folded over.
2. Black oilcloth bound with twine near both ends.
3. Red cloth.
4. Braid mat of sweetgrass with red cloth binding.
5. Flag -- according to Fine Day this flag was given to him by Chief Poundmaker at the time of the rebellion. But it had a coat of arms on it containing the provincial arms of the provinces. I don't think it was that old.
6. Another red cloth.
7. White cloth with stripes.
8. The cap itself.

The cap was made of weasel skins sewn into a felt crown. Fine Day said that this was formerly a piece of leather. The buffalo horns had become brittle so that they could not be fastened on any more, so new ones carved of wood and painted blue had been substituted. There was a band of beading at the front four inches high, ten inches wide, a blue design representing mountains on a white background. Below the beading was a row of little bells. Bells were also strung between the tips of the horns. Weasel skins were pendant from each side of the cap. Falling down the back was a long strip of red cloth 1 inch by 5 inches. There were eight rows of bells sewn in with a row of pheasant feathers below each row of bells and feathers attached all along the side. (See original for diagram)

This cap is called w:ckwehpituigan, "kept in a clean place". There was an old man, k:ceniwactim, "Old Horse" who had the dream about that cap. Whoever wears it in battle will never get killed. When he was an old man I gave him horses and prints to buy it from him. Four men have used it besides myself. "Old Horse", his two sons, and one of his grandsons. It might be used for doctoring, but only by the man who dreamed of it, not by the one who bought it. The Cree didn't use it much for doctoring.

Inside the oilcloth wrapping of the bundle was a small black stone tied in a green cloth. It had a perfect circle around and a dome in the middle (see diagram). The reverse side was flat.

When I was a boy I used to dream about this stone but it was a person. He told me, "I will be with you until life's end. You will find me later. And there is nothing sharp that will go through you. I will be with you right along." He showed me a song, the words are:

I'll be with the stone
I'll be with the atayohkan.

That means this stone will be with all the other at:yohkauok.
When a person is sick and I doctor him that is the time I sing this song. When the at. appeared to me he was short and fat. He led me to the stone. There it was. Many old people used to have such stones. I never carried that stone around but use it for doctoring persons.

When I found the stone I put it under my pillow when I slept. My mother would find it and throw it away. Then I would look for it and find it again. This happened four times. Then my father told her not to throw it away any more.

The stone is not used in a dance. The Blackfeet have a stone which looks like a buffalo. They use it in the Sundance. The Blackfeet use them for doctoring. They use no medicine in doctoring but only blow.

Once when I made a Sundance it was very hot. Joe Mistiyinu from Red Pheasant had a stone which looked like a pig's head. He told me if I wanted rain to unwrap the stone and smoke in four directions. I did so and it did rain.

It happened this way. There was no rain at that dance. It seems that I talk but no one listens. One of the four old men that led the dance are bound to bring rain. But they didn't, so Joe gave me that stone. I unwrapped it and then a pretty heavy rain fell. But there was no thunder. Each stone has a different way of pointing and different songs as well. Joe's father was a c:p:wi:yiuu, his mother was yahigoniskwan.

Here Pooyak said, "Yes, I saw that stone myself. I was a Lone Singer and Joe was there. Mrs. Lone Singer is his daughter. We were talking about stones. She told me about her father's and he showed it to me. He always carries it with him."

Each stone has a name. The name of that stone was given to me in a dream. It is asin:hkak:tut "yelling on a stone". I gave that name to Archie Fine Day. The stone is good for curing any sickness except syphilis -- that sickness is too dirty.

The stones were never carried around. They leave them at home. Sometimes when they get a new print they unwrap the stone and find a little stone there. We say the stone has a child and we put the little stone in a bag and hang it around the neck. This is called tapiskagan, "neck piece".

I have a big stone also. It was given to me by an old man. He was my father's uncle, and he pitied me. His name was ohguna: ("Liver" in Soto?). This big stone must always be in my house. It had a little one. I put it in a bag and gave it to my adopted daughter. I still have that big stone.

They used to buy those stones with a lot of prints and a pipe to smoke. These prints are left by the former owner wherever he found the stone.

No I don't know of any stones used for painting. There is a yellow mud we used to get near Battleford. We baked it in the
fire and it turned red. Then we use it for paint.

There are two kinds of stones; k:cenapewacin:, "old man stone" you see on top of the ground; tc:pa:yucin:, "ghost stone" are down in the earth. Here Pooyak said, "I have heard them pray to these two many times during doctoring and in the round dance. They must have a lot of power for they live forever. They bring the prayer up to k:cemano.

(Note: Pooyak is one of the pillars of the Anglican Church. Carries a new testament with him for odd reading. Takes a weekly newspaper. Yet is pretty tenacious of old customs).

When Old Man Stone is called upon in the dance, not all the stones that are lying around are meant. They mean only those stones kept by persons. The ghost stones are always under the ground. At the feast for the dead they pray to ghost stones to act as an interpreter to k:cem. (See original for diagram)

In my time there was hardly any sickness -- we didn't know syphilis. Since the white man came we began to know all kinds of sickness. The only thing we knew then were colds and hemorrhage -- spitting blood.

In the old days the stones used to pound meat were grooved by pecking it out with a sharp hard stone. I never saw this done. He used files from the H.B. for this. The large one is called takwah:ganagan, "pounder". The stone is takwah:genapisk, "pounding stone". It is used to split bones.

For arrowheads a yellow stone similar to flint was used. Bone and jumping deer horn were also used. I made some of elk horn. I cut it with a knife and smoothed it with a stone -- no heating. The shape was (see original for diagram). The tongue was inserted into the split head of the arrow and tightly bound with sinew.

Arrows were made of dried saskatoon sticks. They were long or short according to what a man was accustomed to. At the butt there was a groove for the bowstring. Three feathers were bound on with sinew. For arrow straighteners we drilled a hole through the shoulder blade of any animal.

Fishing

In the old days no matter how well fixed we were for beef, we would want fish for a change. We would usually fish toward spring when the leaves were just budding out.

In the wintertime there are always open places in the ice of the Battle River where springs come in. We would light a fire of birch bark on the shore over these places. We would take a straight saskatoon or willow or chokecherry stick about 5 feet long which was forked at the end. We sharpened the fork into two points. No there were no barbs. The fish would be attracted by the light and would come to the open space. We would hold the stick near the top with both hands and plunge it
in. We would get two fish each time anyway. There was no ownership of these holes. A man would be only too glad for a big bunch of people to come together. I don't know of breaking the ice to fish through.

On a hot day in the summer you can sometimes see a sturgeon fin sticking out of the water. We would shoot at it with a gun.

I saw a Soto drill a hole at the end of a stick and tie a double pointed bone on so it lay flat against the stick. It was baited with a piece of meat. When a jackfish snapped at the meat, the bone straightens out and gets stuck in the fish. This is done on the lakes. The Soto had only the lakes and had to fish this way. The Cree had rivers and didn't fish that way. We never used a hook and line until the H.B. brought them in. Then we bought them and used them to fish. We would never spear fish in the summer.

The whole camp would go to use a fish basket. There might be only two tipis or up to fifty or sixty. The fish basket was called mitcskan in the old days. Now it is called as.konan. There were some places on the river that we came back to time after time. A man does not have to dream to make a fish basket.

At this juncture I tried to ascertain whether there was any native or private ownership of the baskets or of the fish caught therein. But try as I might I would get no such concept. The makers of the basket evidently had no particular priority to the fish and everybody camped nearby had rights to an equal share. Baptiste told me that he made a basket several years and had given out the fish to anyone that came along -- even white men. But his reason for not withholding any was that he had no right to make a basket -- it being against the game laws. He said he thought that it was not fair for everybody to share but he daren't protest.

Names of fish
oka.wuk -- "Sharp Points" -- pike
nip:gamegosuk -- "gold eyes" -- flat fish
nime.p:uk -- "Sturgeon Like" -- suckers
cocko nime.p:ok -- "Sucker with small scales"
umewuk -- Sturgeon
mayu:megwuk -- "Ugly Fish" -- catfish?
nona.tcigeciauk -- Little Sucker
osawaskwapesuk -- "Yellow Head" -- jackfish
ininuceuk -- "Bigger Fish" -- bigger than jackfish
kawayunucitik -- "Hump back" -- mallock

m:ayuk

ukimawkinoseu -- "Wing Fish" -- Large black fish

kam:hkwaskwane.tcik -- "Red tail" -- like mallock with bigger scales

e.cuk -- oysters (clams?). I never ate these but my grandmother did. Some other old people used to eat them. We never ate them but I guess away back in the old times they did.

The bow was held horizontally when shot from horseback at buffalo. Otherwise it was held almost vertically. The arrow was held between the index and second fingers. The little finger and thumb were off the string entirely. Wrist guards, acpacte.picona, "protectors" were made of a piece of rawhide 4" wide with two strings attached. This term was also used for finger guards which were made of a piece of hide with holes cut out for the three fingers and a slit between the first and second hole for the bowstring. Both eyes are kept open when aiming a bow. One is not closed as when aiming a gun.

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