

ASPECTS OF CEREMONIAL LIFE AMONG THE INDIAN SHAKERS
OF SMITH RIVER, CALIFORNIA

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Accounts of the founding and history of the Indian Shaker Church of the Northwest Coast as well as general descriptions of ceremonies and beliefs of this religion have appeared in several places (Mooney 1896; Spier 1935; Waterman 1922; Gunther 1948; Smith 1954; Barnett 1957), and it is not the aim of this paper to recapitulate what has already been said with great detail and completeness in these sources. Rather, this study was undertaken with the idea of providing a detailed description of the ceremonies and beliefs of a particular Indian Shaker congregation, that of the Smith River Indian Rancheria on the extreme northwestern coast of California.

The data for this study were gathered during the course of fieldwork among the Tolowa Indians of this region, with the most information being gathered during Easter week of 1964. A total of twenty-one Shaker services were observed, three of them during Easter week and three during the "big doin's" in August 1964, and eighteen informants were interviewed, seven of them intensively. Several of these people had served as informants before, and we found the Indians here were highly cooperative throughout our work.

History

Accounts of the founding of the Indian Shaker Church are to be found in all of the sources mentioned above. Nevertheless, since our informants made constant reference to events in the life of the founder and his relatives, it will be useful here to summarize briefly these events:

In 1881 an illiterate Squaxin Indian named John Slocum presumably died near Olympia, Washington, and, after a period of time, revived. His resurrection, he claimed, was granted so that he might carry the Christian way of life to the Indian people. A year later a second illness struck Slocum, and he was not expected to live. During this crisis Mrs. Mary Slocum was suddenly taken with a ". . . hysterical seizure in the course of which she approached Slocum's prostrate body, praying, sobbing, and trembling uncontrollably. When her convulsion had passed, it was observed that Slocum had recovered slightly. This improvement Mary attributed to her seizure, which she interpreted as a manifestation of divine power. That was the beginning of "shaking." The incident also provoked a renewal of interest in Slocum's message and marked its rebirth as the Indian Shaker Religion (Barnett 1957:7).

The movement entered California near the turn of the century. A group of Tolowa Indians assisted by Jimmy Jack and other interested Indians from Klamath, California, constructed a church-house at Smith River in 1930. The Shakers whom we visited held their meetings in this same building.

Both in terms of history and location the position of the Smith River Shaker Church is peripheral to the principal center of Shaker activity in western Washington. So it is not surprising to find some differences between the ceremonies of our California Shakers and those described for Washington.

Thus we hope to provide a body of information about a little-studied region of Shaker activity. The ceremonies and beliefs of the Smith River Shakers and the neighboring congregations in northwestern California and southwestern Oregon, to our knowledge, have never been described in detail.

The Church Building

Because the structure of this building figures importantly in both the ceremonies and beliefs of the Shakers, a detailed description is regarded as essential. A plan and photograph of this building appear as Figures 1 and 2, respectively. Immediately next to the church building is the "Mess Hall." This term, which the Indians have for the building, is quite appropriate, since the resemblance in plan to the standard army mess hall is very close. Regular participants as well as visitors are fed here. Close behind the church and mess hall there is a small bunkhouse under construction which is intended to house visitors who come down for the "big doin's" at Easter and other times.

The floor of the church is usually kept bare except when chairs or a rollaway bed are brought out during the course of curing exercises. A wooden bench extends along the wall completely around the interior of the church, and it is here that spectators and some participants sit during the service. During services we sat on this bench near the wood stove in one corner of the building. The walls and ceiling are painted white, and over each window there is a small white cloth curtain with a blue cross sewn on it. At one end there is an altar. This consists of a recessed arch with a table in it. On the table there is a wooden cross with seven candles in a row in front of it. Arranged around the cross and candles there are numerous brass handbells which are used during the ceremony. During a ceremony the interior of the church is lighted exclusively with candles, 49 in all, located in cross-shaped holders suspended from the ceiling and in holders along the walls and even the floor near the altar. On the wall to either side of the altar is a photographic portrait in an oval frame--the one to the left of the altar is of John Slocum while the one on the right is of Mud Bay Louie, another important figure in the early history of the Shaker Church.

The Informants

Our principal informants were the "minister," Charlie Bighead, his wife, and two of his daughters, Karen and Nora. Charlie is of Oklahoma Seminole background, while Mrs. Bighead is Yurok. Another important informant was Amelia Brown, one of the very few native Tolowa Indians left alive in California (she is 94 years old!). There are other Indians of Tolowa background who also participate regularly here, especially Lyda George, Ellen Lafountain, Ida Bensel, Frank Moorehead, and Eddie Richards. Several Yurok Indians also attend here whenever they can make the trip, and among these, Maggie Pilgum, Nellie and Seely Griffin, and Ollie James were particularly helpful. Lulu Lang, an elderly Klamath (Oregon) woman, was also present. She and Mrs. Lafountain were both important figures in the early founding of the Smith River Church and gave us much valuable information in this regard. Of course we had many conversations with other Indians who were present, some of whom were of Klamath (Oregon) and Chinook background. Helpful, too, were some other Indians who are no longer regular participants in the Shaker Church,

particularly Sam and Mandy Lopez, of Crescent City, California. Sam is of Tolowa background while Mandy is Tututni (Oregon).

From this quick (and incomplete) resumé it should be obvious that a tremendous diversity of background exists among the Indians who participate in the Shaker Church at Smith River. Most of the groups mentioned--Tolowa, Tututni, Yurok, Chinook, Klamath, Seminole--as well as some other groups not mentioned before (Hupa, Karok, Nisqually) who also participate at times are fragmentary remnants of formerly living cultures. None of these groups can be regarded today as living societies in the aboriginal sense. Most of these people are extremely old and represent the last speakers of their respective languages.

During our Easter and August visits we had an unique opportunity to see the congregation interact in two different ways. On our first weekend visits, only the regular participants were on hand for the ceremonies, but on Easter weekend and in mid-August there were "big doin's" which included several "big feeds" and extra ceremonies. During these times many additional Shakers were there who had journeyed from Oregon, Washington, British Columbia, and other parts of California to be present. Then we were able to observe some Shaker ceremonies on a larger scale than usual as well as to interview some new people. Despite this influx of new people, the sequence of events during the ceremonies remained fundamentally the same as before, though much new individual behavior was apparent. During most of the year, however, the regular participants of the Shaker Church here all live within hearing distance of the church bell.

The Shaker Ceremony

While we do not wish to give the impression that there is a highly standardized Shaker ceremony, nevertheless it will be useful here to summarize what takes place during these ceremonies. What we are describing here is only a sequence of events. This sequence is one of the most routinized aspects of Shaker ritual behavior, but the content within this sequence can often vary considerably. It is within the content of the different events in a Shaker ceremony that individual interpretations appear and have their freest play:

About twenty minutes before the ceremony begins the bell outside is rung. It is rung a second time and the ceremony begins. The bell is rung a third time later on, between the first part of the ceremony--which consists mainly of testimonials--and the second part--when the curing takes place, marking a definite pause in the activities.

Sometimes the "minister," Charlie Bighead, leads the activities himself; at other times he will ask another participant to lead. The participants stand facing the front wall (where the altar is), the men on the left and the women on the right. The leader crosses himself three times, saying "In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, Amen" each time. He is joined in this by the other participants. This element of the ceremony is obviously of Roman Catholic origin, and such Catholic as well as Protestant features of the Shaker religion have been fully discussed in Barnett 1957:285-307 and in Gunther 1949:37. The leader then starts to sing, leading off with the first lines of some hymn, which the others pick up after the first line. Some of the other

participants take handbells from the altar and ring them in a heavy rhythm which is accompanied with a loud stamping on the floor. Once this rhythm is established, the words of the hymn are lost and the song becomes a chant. The chants are wordless but contain an unmistakable quality which we here will call "Indian."

When we asked Charlie Bighead later about this chanting, he told us that when he first became interested in the Shaker Church he was strongly attracted by the singing, which he said ". . . sounded just like the old Indian dances." Since Charlie's background is Oklahoma Seminole, we would caution against attributing all of these songs to any one particular Indian group, but their generally "Indian" character is acknowledged by the participants themselves.

It is of interest to note, too, that while we were recording native music from this area at a later time, two songs were heard and recorded which were clearly antecedents for a couple of Shaker songs. One was a Tolowa 10-night dance and Flower dance song (nextox čéynéy) which we are told was frequently used in the context of public or communal curing (i.e. "when you hear sickness is coming from the south"). The other was a Yurok song sung by Maggie Billy (now deceased) and used frequently at Requa and Klamath, though never in ceremonial contexts. In each case the melody to the song has remained unchanged while the Indian words have been replaced by a repetitious "hoi-hoi" sound. The Shaker repertory contains at least twenty (and probably many more) distinct melodies, though the same "hoi-hoi" sound is present with all of them. Indeed, one of the most interesting features of Shaker ceremonies when large numbers of visitors from other areas are present is the way in which new melodies are introduced and fitted into the local repertory. Also of unusual interest is the lively competitiveness which often develops between good singers (these Indians do have definite opinions concerning who the good singers are and why, and they express their opinions on this subject without hesitation)--all suggestive of a living artistic tradition. So far only two actual native antecedents for such songs have been traced, but we strongly suspect that similar native antecedents exist for all or most of the others. A detailed study of Shaker music by a trained observer would seem to offer an excellent opportunity for acculturation study in native American music.

This singing is followed by crossing and a prayer led by the leader. Sometimes the prayer is accompanied by other prayers given by other participants. The people are all saying different things during these prayers, usually in English, but sometimes also in an Indian language, and the cumulative result for the observer is a din of voices, though often with the rhythmic overtones of a particularly dominant voice. After this, the people cross themselves again and the leader gives a testimonial, followed once more by two sets of three crossings. More or less this same cycle is repeated for each person present who wants to give a testimonial. The testimonials are roughly similar to those heard at Protestant fundamentalist services and rallies (though, again, there is often considerable verbal art present in the delivery, and, as with the music, this is clearly an aspect of Shaker activity which could stand some detailed investigation). Frequently the speaker in one of these testimonials becomes so intent on the expression of his emotional attitude (usually an attitude expressing feelings of inspiration) that his utterances become noticeably less coherent, and the referential content of the message becomes progressively less clear. Usually such

testimonials are accompanied by increased perspiration, closed eyes, outstretched arms, and pronounced swaying of the body or staggering about on the floor. These physical activities also serve clearly to convey the intense emotionality of the speaker. The testimonial service is followed by a short break, the end of which is signalled by the third ringing of the bell. The total duration of this part of the ceremony rarely exceeds an hour.

The testimonial service is so distinct from the rest of the service in the minds of the participants that it is sometimes possible for them to hold this part as a single entity, without any curing afterwards. They can also hold a curing ceremony as a unit, without this part--as is often common on Saturday and Sunday nights. Otherwise, Sunday morning is the time when most of these ceremonies occur.

The curing ceremony is much longer--usually two to three hours--and involves much more physical exertion. Again, Charlie can lead or may turn the leadership over to another participant.

The leader asks, "Who's going to be cured tonight?" These people come forward and sit on chairs in the center of the floor. If the person to be cured is bedridden, then he is wheeled out on a rollaway bed which is kept at the church for this purpose. The "patients" are seated in rows of three if possible. The other participants face the front wall as before, with the men on the left and the women on the right. They cross themselves three times. The leader begins a hymn which is taken up by the others. As before, handbells are rung to provide rhythm. After a short time the song ends and individuals utter "Praise Jesus, Praise the Lord," but not in unison. Another song is started, with loud rhythmic bell-ringing and stamping. The singers, led by a woman near the front of the church who carries a lighted candle in her left hand, march counter-clockwise around the interior of the church three times. Each time a singer passes before the altar and across the center of the floor directly opposite the altar, he rotates counter-clockwise once and crosses himself once. When this is done, the singers return to their original positions on the floor. This song is a chant, and, with the conclusion of the chant, the curing begins in earnest.

Each singer approaches a "patient," circling counter-clockwise three times, and performs a series of hand gestures over the "patient" (see Figure 3). Each singer then passes on to the next "patient" for a total of three times around. A patient can indicate his reaction to all this by various moans and gestures, such as stretching the hands out forward and looking upward, perhaps even getting up and walking or staggering toward the altar. Whenever people move toward the altar in this way they pass their hands across the candles there and then hold out their hands toward the cross (Figure 4). While this is an extremely specific set of gestures, later interviewing indicated that the participants here, without exception, have very little specific symbolic interpretation to go with it. While the singing and stamping continue, individuals who "get power" attempt to cure particular patients. The outward manifestations of a person's "getting power" are usually marked by a sharp increase in physical activity (such as louder stamping, shaking of the hands and body, a taut facial expression with the eyes closed, and much perspiration). This hand shaking, while no more common than any of the other physical activities occurring here, has given the name "Shakers" to this church.

Other participants who do not show any evidence of "getting power" may at this time be singing and dancing elsewhere in the room, not necessarily anywhere near the "patients." But when one does "get power" he inevitably directs his attention to a particular patient and begins to go to work. This involves distinctive gestures such as were described above. (No participant that we observed ever tried to perform both "throwing" and "pulling" motions at the same time.) This activity continues throughout most of the ceremony until all of the patients either respond favorably (by getting up and joining in the singing and dancing) or retire from the activity (by leaving and walking to the bench at the side of the room or out of the building altogether, a signal that the cure has not worked). With three or four patients present, this part of the ceremony can last well over an hour.

As one might expect, the participants become winded after a couple of hours, and the dancing and singing tapers off and is stopped when the leader raises his bells, giving a higher pitch and signalling the end. They stand and puff for a few minutes--at this time someone may give a testimonial while the rest catch their breath. Then another song is started and the group lines up as before with the men ringing bells at the front and the women at the rear. The column is led by a woman carrying a candle. The group marches around the room three times in this manner and on the fourth time around each member of the group shakes hands with the nonparticipants at the side (Figure 5). They return to their positions at the front of the room, and the leader initiates a prayer. Again, each individual prays aloud, each praying differently, until a halt is reached. Then they cross themselves three times, terminating the ceremony.

In addition to the sequence of events described above, several other ingredients are necessary for a Shaker ceremony. Once the singing gets under way, for example, there must be constant bell-ringing for rhythm. This may be performed either by men or by women, though it is the men who most commonly do this. Ringing of the handbells is essential, and if there is only one person ringing bells and it becomes necessary to change candles or add wood to the stove, then another person will take up the ringing while this is done. Candles, too, are essential. During a ceremony, the electric lights are turned off and all the candles are lighted for illumination. If a candle shows signs of burning out during a ceremony it is changed immediately by one of the participants (usually Charlie Bighead), even at the risk of interrupting some part of the proceedings for a moment. These elements as well as the loud stamping (also for rhythm) do much to give character to the ceremonies and provide the setting, but do not seem to represent any consistent symbolic attitudes held by the entire community. They have a long history in the Shaker Church and were clearly adopted from earlier Shaker and, ultimately, Christian practices.

Nevertheless, the singing, with its rhythmic bell-ringing and stamping, is regarded as very pleasant and satisfying by all the participants. In telling us about how he first came into the Shaker Church, Charlie Bighead emphasized how it was the singing and dancing which first attracted him and how he would stand for hours in the field close to the church just to be able to listen. Amelia Brown, Eddie Richards, and Ida BenseI expressed similar sentiments, making it clear that this was one aspect of Shaker activity which they very much enjoyed.

Shared Categories of Shaker Belief

Our observations and interviews indicate that Shakers clearly possess shared categories of notions as to what is allowed. Within this framework of shared beliefs, however, there is considerable individual variation, and distinguishing between shared and individual practices and beliefs is not always easy. In watching a ceremony one sees much variety in hand gestures, dancing, spontaneous utterances (sometimes words, but often grunts, sighs and other vocalizations) and notes that the singers themselves display individual styles.

All our informants agree that when participants enter the church building they are safe in the "Lord's power." Acknowledged also is the idea that the success of each service depends upon the ability of each participant to "concentrate on the Lord's power," or, stated another way, "to make one true mind with the Lord." If just one participant fails to concentrate in this manner, the others all feel "heavy" during the service; that is, "it's difficult to dance and ring bell," and they feel "tired." All of this points to an emphasis on likemindedness during the ceremony. This emphasis, in the minds of the participants, completely explains why a particular ceremony did or did not achieve its desired results. If the cure is a success, it was because everybody was concentrating properly; but if the cure fails, it was because someone was distracted and failed to concentrate on the Lord's power.

This principle of "likemindedness" and its role as the framework for individual variations in practices and beliefs can best be demonstrated with reference to (1) curing; (2) Bible-usage; and (3) language-usage.

1. Curing.---Shakers individually consult medical doctors and chiropractors. Most of our informants acknowledged that they had been treated by a "white doctor" and that other Shakers had also. All stressed that white doctors must believe in their cure before it will work. Likewise, the ailing person must also believe in the power of the cure. As Karen Bighead stated concerning the relationship of white doctors to Indian patients: ". . . if they truly and honestly believe in the Lord, they will be heal. But if the healer has no faith the sick person will not receive his healing." If a Shaker is not healed to his satisfaction after visiting a white doctor, he attends the next Indian Shaker curing ceremony. Our informants, in explaining this, did not stress the white doctor's lack of belief but emphasized that there is a kind of residual category of sicknesses which cannot be cured by whites. Amelia Brown calls these "Indian Sicknesses."

There is a rather vaguely-formed but nevertheless real notion, too, that Shaker ceremonies are useful for preventing sicknesses and other "evils" such as wars. Charlie Bighead pointed out that sometimes there was more evil around than at other times, for instance when there are big wars and "lots of blood." But, he added, the Lord gives "special gifts" at those times to people "who believe in His power." As an example of such "gifts" Charlie told of how, during World War II, he heard of a bunch of Indian boys in the Army who were sent out in the first wave of an amphibious landing in the Pacific. As their boat approached the beachhead the boys got together and called on the Lord's power. The landing boat developed engine trouble, stalled, and floated back out to sea while the main assault went on! This was interpreted by those Indian boys (and by Charlie) that when you believe in the Lord's power He will give you "special gifts"---in this case it was the

Lord's power which brought these boys safely out of a dangerous situation. As final proof for this line of argument, Charlie pointed out how, when there are no wars or sicknesses around, people "forget about the Lord and go back to their old ways."

As a further illustration of the notion of "likemindedness" as applied to curing, it is worth noting the reaction of Karen Bighead when she was asked about what would happen to anyone who ridiculed the Shaker belief in the Lord's power: "If they [outsiders] criticize that person who is working, they'll be punished . . . hurt or sick--otherwise He'll punish you in a way you don't want to be punished." This comment and others like it suggest that belief in the efficacy of the Lord's power was not only incumbent on anyone who wished to be cured, but that anyone who mocked this power of the Lord would risk serious misfortune or illness. The logic of this principle could not be better demonstrated than in the story which Karen provided at this time to support her claim: "A man came into the church during a service and began to criticize what was going on. He did this openly in front of the members. Then he left. A few days later he shot himself." The moral of this story, Karen insisted, was that the man exhibited individual behavior in the context of the church ceremony which was excessive and emphatically not fitting to the notion of "likemindedness" upon which the entire ceremony is based. His open repudiation of this principle of likemindedness had to be punished severely, at least in the story, for the entire basis of the Shaker religion was being challenged by his actions. He received capital punishment for his offense!

Some of the older participants see a direct connection between the activities of the old "Indian Doctor" (that is, shaman) and the Shaker Church. Amelia Brown is convinced of the efficacy of the methods used by these "Indian Doctors" because as a child she was once cured by a shaman:

One time I was coming back from someplace. I got so sick I thought I was going to die. My father went ahead--he asked me what was the matter. He picked me up and packed me home on his back and got the doctor [shaman]. She and my aunt, who was a kind of doctor herself [who used herbal cures], made me take stuff, some slax [a variety of Angelica root], blow on me. [Amelia's recollections were quite vivid at this time, for her description became increasingly animated as she continued.] She danced, all came and danced. I shouldn't tell these things--they used to vomit in sweat house, oh! used to vomit blood. Would suck blood, would take pain out that way--you could see it! She put pain in her hand, some kind of lizard or thing like that. I felt fine after that.

Amelia told us that the last real "Indian Doctor" to come to the Smith River area was a man from Humboldt Bay. Although she couldn't understand his language, she concluded by his actions that "he knew his stuff." His visit was about "thirty years ago." This coincides pretty well with the date of the founding of the Smith River church, and when we asked Amelia if she saw any connection between the earlier "Indian Doctors" and the Shakers today, she provided the following account:

He [the first Shaker in the area] used to heal people. All sick people used to come to church. They would work on 'em--walk out healed. I was cut once huckleberrying with my brothers. We were starting back--I had tennis shoes on. I stepped on a spike, couldn't pull it out. That night I went up there. The big spike went right between my toes--oh Lord, talk about hurt! They had a hard time pulling it out, couldn't get shoe off. He worked on my foot, pulled and prayed, it worked. I went up there with

crutches, but I didn't need them to come down. Swelling went down-- there must be something in it. Was just like Indian Doctors.

In concluding this account, Amelia's expression showed clearly that she felt at this time a certain sense of satisfaction at perceiving this connection. Because of her age, Amelia is a person who has lived in two worlds. In thinking retrospectively about this event she saw a clear relationship between them--a conscious recognition which helps mightily to support the conclusion that at least some of the Indians see the Shaker Church as a way of carrying on older and more native practices.

2. Bible-usage.--There is presently some disagreement among the participants of the Shaker Church at Smith River concerning the use of the Bible in actual ceremonies. Mrs. Lafountain, the leader of one faction, claims that Charlie Bighead is trying to use the Bible in the ceremonies, and Charlie, the central figure in the other faction, has made the same claim concerning Mrs. Lafountain! Obviously there is some disagreement here, but the disagreement does not rest on the matter of Bible-usage. It points, rather, to the deeper factionalism of the community as a whole. Factionalism is present in the Shaker community at Smith River, and, while this subject lies outside the scope of our paper, our information concerning this is detailed enough to warrant its use in any future discussion of the social context of Shaker activities here.

Actually there appears to be considerable agreement among all informants concerning the role of the Bible in the Shaker religion. Actual Bibles are currently not used in ceremonies, but individual members do own copies which they keep at home. There is a general familiarity with the Bible (King James Version) on the part of the participants, but we hasten to add that this familiarity is only very general indeed. Biblical phrases, or rather utterances which have an obviously Biblical reference, are common in ceremonies. This is perfectly in keeping with the commonly-shared belief that when one has the "Lord's power" he will be moved to make inspired utterances which are perfectly in agreement with the Bible. Yet, in fact, these utterances often bear only a very superficial resemblance to the actual content of the Bible.

In asking further about this matter, we tended to receive a highly stereotyped reply. This was in the form of a story about John Slocum, the founder of the Shaker religion. Amelia told the story as follows:

He [John Slocum] kept on preaching, went to people's houses, would testify. Would ring bell, dance. He testified how he was wrong in what he had done to his people [before he was converted]. A lot of people thought he was crazy, but he kept up. They did everything to him, but he just kept going. Put him in jail. They brought a preacher to him, he started praying. He opened the Bible and preached; it was just like he was reading [according to this and other accounts John Slocum could not read]. The preacher said, "He's not crazy," so they let him go. Can't stop him now, he's got all these papers in Washington, D.C., says he can go preach anywhere.

This story and other identical ones collected from Charlie Bighead, Lulu Lang and Mrs. Lafountain exemplify the attitude shared by all the participants that if one had the "power," one could not help but give utterances which agree with the Bible. But, of course, here, as in other aspects of the movement, there was a considerable variation in the actual utterances used, and no one was ever effectively in a position to check on the accuracy of these utterances. Thus again we see the principle of "likemindedness" in operation.

3. Language-usage.--At Shaker ceremonies one often hears exotic languages being used in testimonials, prayers, and in making the sign of the cross. To the newcomer this can be one of the most confusing aspects of the ceremony, and it was not until we had interviewed some of our informants and learned about what we have been calling here the principle of "likemindedness" that this matter becomes clear.

At the conclusion of testimonials, songs and prayers, the sign of the cross is made three times in succession, accompanied by the phrase: "In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, Amen." This, of course, closely parallels Roman Catholic practice and is not in itself particularly unusual. However, interchangeable with this one hears the phrase: "Thwaks naksmans seytun seytunan santo splay, oh my sistern." We heard Charlie Bighead use this phrase during one ceremony and asked him about it. He told us that it was Chinook and meant the same thing as, "In the name of the Father, . . ." except for the English "oh my sistern," which was added on and referred to the other people present. Charlie does not speak Chinook.

By comparison, Barnett has also noted for the Nisqually Shakers of Washington the phrase: "Thwasnaksmans, titumunas, titusantosple, qu:musistu." For the Chehalis: "Twaksnaksmans, teumunus, tetusantosple, qo:busistu." And for the Snohomish: "Dwulksnakuman, etamenas, etasantospli, tlomasista." Barnett comments that: "These are but variants of the same original translation of the sign of the cross made by the early Catholic priests" (Barnett 1957:234). Waterman has also commented on this utterance among the Nisqually Shakers of Puget Sound, rendering it: "Tu wa'lks nas kuma'ns tihl ta'mnas, tihl Santu Splay, tlob mas i'sta." Waterman suggests that the "Santu Splay" was originally the French "Saint Esprit" used by early missionaries in the area, though he thought it may have diffused among the Indians ahead of the actual missionaries (Waterman 1922:501-502).

Another area of Shaker ceremonialism where linguistic variation is apparent is in prayers. Here the participants all offer different prayers, sometimes in English but often in various Indian languages as well, simultaneously--aloud! What the observer hears is a din of voices, though at times a particularly strong voice will stand out above the rest.

Most testimonials are in English, but occasionally one hears utterances in Indian languages. Our informants assure us that this can happen quite often and is not at all unusual. Testimonials generally consist of Biblical references, personal experiences, parables and, when the speaker is very excited, random though often rhythmical utterances.

Once again the principle of "likemindedness" is evident. Charlie and others have told us that one may speak in any language during a Shaker service. It is assumed by all on such occasions that the speaker is expressing his heightened awareness of the Lord's power.

We asked about the different languages being spoken during the ceremony. Charlie said that any language was okay--that when the Lord's power came to him, a person could pray in his native language, and that he spoke in Seminole this way all the time. "When the Lord's power takes you, you just can't help it." Charlie had heard "Klamath" (the local term for Yurok), "Indian spoken here" (Tolowa), Snohomish, Hupa, and other languages

used this way. He mentioned the way he had heard that people "spoke in tongues" in the Bible, and he told a story of what had happened to him once in this connection. He went to a Foursquare service one time where the people were speaking in tongues. After a while he noticed how some people were actually speaking German, Filipino, and Chinese--he noticed this because he had heard many of these languages spoken in the Pacific during World War II. He mentioned this to the minister there--and the minister was irate at the suggestion! But Charlie emphasized the idea that although they were speaking in different languages they were still thinking and praying about the same thing.

Keeping the sentiment of "likemindedness" in mind, it is not hard to understand the use of different Indian languages during Shaker ceremonies. Whether in the context of a prayer, testimonial, or when making the sign of the cross, these languages serve to express the vigorous feelings of inspiration which the speakers feel. These utterances are highly expressive and lack much in the way of specific referential content. Thus accurate translation is not a prerequisite for comprehending what is going on. As was mentioned before, the Indians who participate at the Smith River church are all the survivors of their native cultures. There are very few people left who can still speak or understand any one of these Indian languages. But the mere fact of using an Indian language in this ceremonial context is a signal to the rest of the participants that the speaker "has power" even though they may not understand exactly what he is saying. As in the case of concepts of curing and Bible-usage, linguistic variation during ceremonies further demonstrates the importance of "likemindedness" in Shaker affairs.

Perhaps the most tangible way in which the notion of "likemindedness" receives expression is with regard to keeping windows and doors closed during a ceremony. We learned about this matter quite by accident in two ways. The first came when we asked permission to make photographs and recordings within the church. We were refused this permission--not so much because the Shakers objected to being photographed or recorded (many of these same people have in fact been photographed and recorded in other contexts), but because such activities by us or anyone within the church during a ceremony would distract the participants and show clearly that we were not, in fact, concentrating in the proper manner. When we suggested that it would be possible to make photographs and recordings through an open window we were still refused permission, though it was not clear why at the time. Later, at another ceremony, the reason for this refusal became clear. During a Sunday ceremony at the August "big doin's" it became so hot inside the building that one of us quietly suggested that a couple of windows be opened. Seely Griffin, a long-time Yurok Shaker, said that they couldn't possibly do such a thing, and his strong reaction suggested to us that this matter might have symbolic significance. Later interviewing indicated that indeed any attempt to open the windows would spoil the ceremony by breaking down the separation between the activities inside the building and the world outside. The same applied to the door, and several elderly Shaker women from Yakima were overheard one day complaining about how upsetting it was to have children running in and out through the door during ceremonies. It "just didn't seem right" to them, though they found it hard to explain why. But an Indian from Mud Bay and a married couple from Siletz were more articulate and pointed with some pride to the way the "Big Shakers up north keep the doors and windows shut, even in the middle of summer," and Mrs. Lafountain added, "And they don't let the

kids run back and forth that way--they keep the place closed." These people (Mrs. Lafountain included) felt strongly that ". . . the folks from up north are real Shakers" and that the Smith River church had been backsliding in recent years; they used these comments to support their position.

This inside versus outside dichotomy is basic to any understanding of Shaker belief and behavior. Given the importance of this dichotomy, one would expect some expression of out behavior to occur as well. So far this paper has described mostly in behavior, but complementary out behavior does receive expression in testimonials, prayers, and conversations. Here one constantly encounters the phrase "out in the world" when the speaker is referring to non-members (particularly relatives who are not Shakers). It would follow from the above that a non-member would, almost by definition, be someone who is not physically present inside the church building--and, in fact, this is very nearly the case! On several occasions reference was made in testimonials to individuals (usually teenagers) who were actually present in the immediate area--such as the mess hall, in a car in the parking area, etc. These were generally relatives of the speaker (usually children or grandchildren) who came along to the meeting but did not come to the actual ceremonies, and, because of their non-attendance within the church they were immediately classified as "out in the world."

The phrase "out in the world" also occurs in the context of a speaker describing his past life before he became a Shaker. Shaker testimonials often relate how they were "out in the world" until some dramatic event changed their lives and caused them to come to the Shaker meetings. Conversion of this sort is a common theme in Shaker testimonials, and the key event in the tale always comes when the convert first steps inside the church and begins to participate in a ceremony. Thus one can see how the phrase "out in the world" expresses for the Shakers part of a dichotomy which is basic to their religious experience, both past and present.

Lest this dichotomy seems overdrawn, it should be mentioned that a participant in a ceremony may leave the building for a time and return, and this in no way detracts from his "inside" position as a participant. Such movement in and out of the building is fairly common and normally does not disturb the ceremony unless a door is left open.

Gestures in Curing

When a sick person is present to be cured he is subjected to a series of different gestures performed by the curer. Anyone who "has power" can cure, and the outward signs of a person's getting power in this way are his shut eyes, perspiration, and increased physical activity (singing, dancing). But the most striking signs are to be found in the intense gesturing over the "patient" by the curer.

A repertory of Shaker curing gestures is described in Barnett 1957: 222-226. Such gestures are also common at Smith River, though the meanings ascribed to some of them are perhaps a little less specific than as indicated by Barnett.

All agree that when a person "has power" his eyes are shut and it is the power which leads him directly to the "pain" (sickness). Eddie told us

how a person once got power this way and threaded his way completely across a crowded church floor to the "patient," then located the "pain" with his hand and cured the patient--all with his eyes completely shut. As mentioned earlier, the patient, too, must believe fully in the Lord's power, or else this kind of activity cannot occur. The curer begins by brushing with the hands over the back, neck, and shoulders of the patient (who is seated facing the front of the church). This is generally followed by the curer's drawing his hands down over the head and shoulders of the patient. This is done slowly and by exerting considerable pressure. The curer dances continuously while performing these acts. After drawing his hands down to the waist level of the patient (occasionally even down to the floor!), the curer stands, claps his hands softly three times (cupping them slightly in the manner in which one might mold a snowball), and raises his arms out before him in the direction of the altar, uttering "Praise Jesus" and "Praise the Lord." With the arms outstretched in this way, the hands are fluttered in a gesture resembling a wave. This whole sequence of gestures is generally interpreted as a kind of casting off of evils, though it would be incorrect to attribute much specific symbolic content to it. The climax of this gesturing comes when the curer allows his hand to be directed by the "power" to the particular place where the "pain" is located. Sometimes this is done with one hand; at other times, with both hands clasped together. When the hand stops, the "pain" is located and drawn off with a kind of pulling motion. During this sequence of events the curer's hands may shake--either before or after the "pain" is located--the famous "shaking" after which the religion is named. Other parts of the body may shake in this way as well, though generally not in the context of curing. Charlie described this sequence of events:

When the Lord shuts their eyes, this means they are in His power and He would lead them. If there was a sick person present, the Lord would lead them in this way to the pain. For the person being cured, the hands of the healer felt "red hot, right through the body." But you must believe in order to be cured.

During the August "big doin's" a group of men from Yakima were observed in a variation of this sequence of gestures. In performing a cure these men (five in all) worked together on a single patient, and, when the time came to extract the "pain" they all joined hands and cupped them together--pulling the pain out together and carrying it together to the altar, where it was thrown out toward the cross. This was all done with visible signs of great physical strain and dramatically conveyed the impression to all present of a "pain" being drawn out of and carried away from the patient. The Smith River Shakers saw this sequence of gestures performed many times by these Yakima men at the "big doin's," but they have never adopted the practice themselves.

In summarizing Smith River Shaker notions of gestures in curing, it might be most useful to point out that not only do these gestures express the general awareness on the part of the curer that he "has power," but they also serve the more specific function of indicating the particular part of the body where the "pain" is located and further indicating specifically how the "pain" is being removed. In this sense there is a greater degree of referential exactness in the gestures used in curing among the Shakers than there is in the use of languages or the Bible.¹

Conclusions

It is our tentative hypothesis that a pan-Indian tradition is emerging out of the Indian Shaker Church at Smith River, in which it is possible for Indians to come together and express their common "Indian-ness" without the limitations imposed by their particular tribal backgrounds. A diversity of speech is encouraged within the setting provided by the shared concept that, once one steps inside the church building, one's thoughts are only of the Lord's power. This appears even to be true of curing practices, where it is evident that some earlier, traditional and even shamanistic beliefs about curing are clearly and explicitly present; yet these are sufficiently generalized under the heading of "belief in power" to enable each Indian to see something meaningful in these activities, regardless of his particular background.

Were the Shakers entirely dependent on any one Indian tradition to express their attitudes the whole enterprise would soon collapse, since no one native tradition has many members left to sustain it. The Indian Shaker Church at Smith River has, perhaps unconsciously, succeeded in reaching a delicate balance between, on the one hand, a religious form with recognizably Indian elements such as the rhythm of bellringing, native melodies for songs, the use of various Indian languages, and in the concept of "power" and its quasi-shamanistic role in curing, and, on the other hand, a flexibility which enables Indians of diverse backgrounds to unite successfully. Thus one finds much individual variation in the midst of a regular sequence of events, and we would suggest that this flexibility has served to prevent the severe tribal factionalism which has so often disrupted pan-Indian movements elsewhere. Perhaps it is this balance between form and flexibility which accounts for the Shaker Church's remarkable longevity, and it is our tentative prediction here that the Indian Shaker Church will provide the most tangible focus for the identity of the "Indian" in the face of white American culture in this area of northwestern California.

NOTE

¹For further details concerning the distinction drawn here between "expressive" and "referential" activities, the reader is referred to Hymes 1962:15-21.

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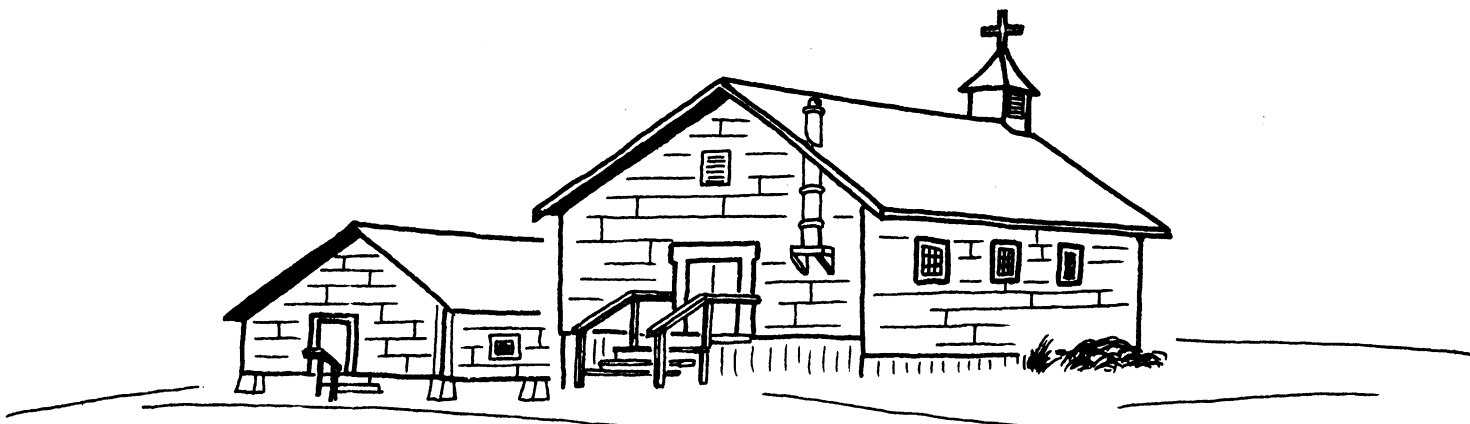
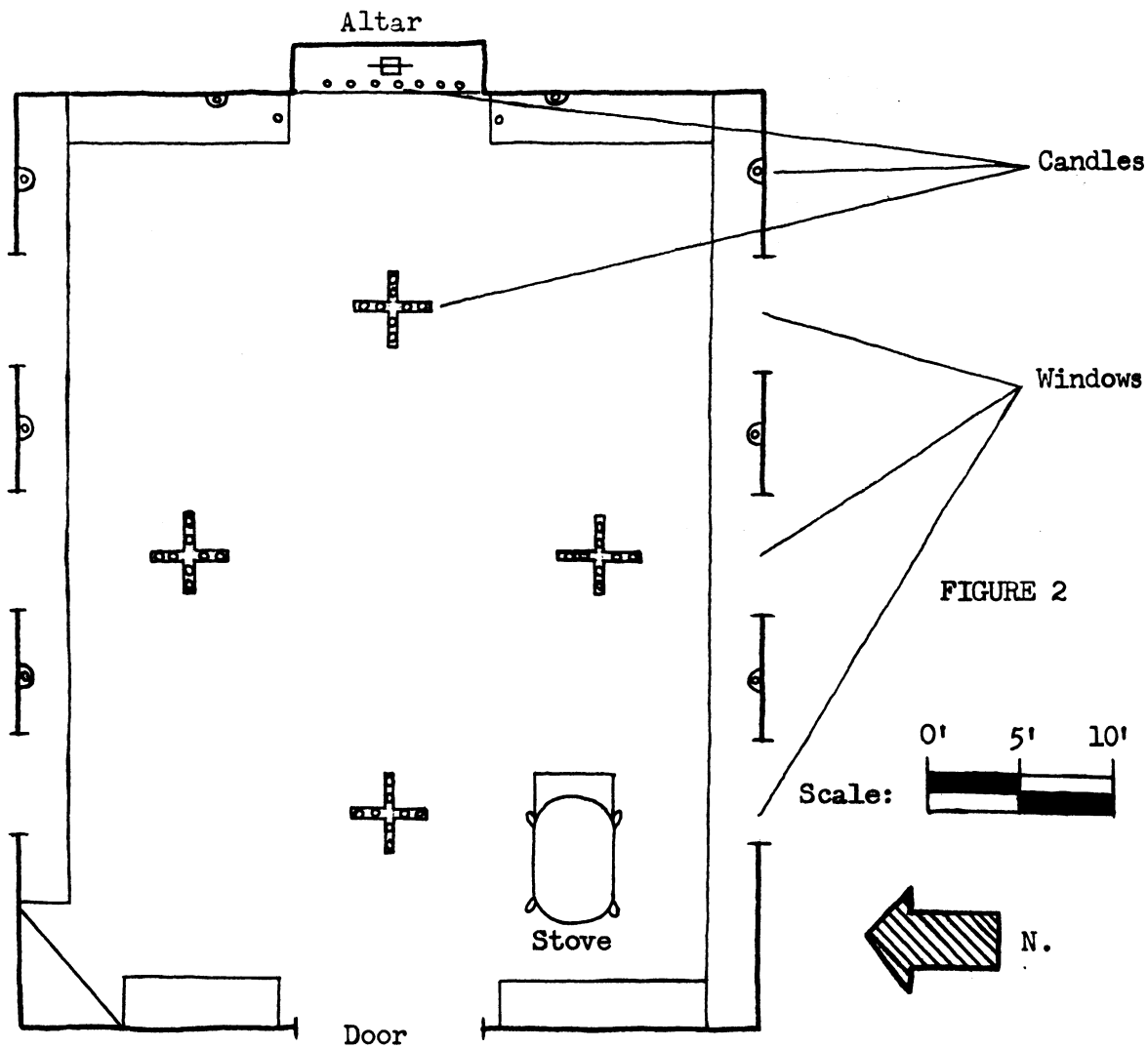


FIGURE 1 (from a photograph taken by the authors)



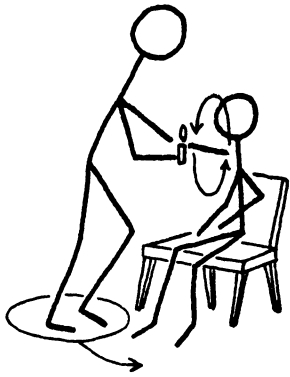


FIGURE 3

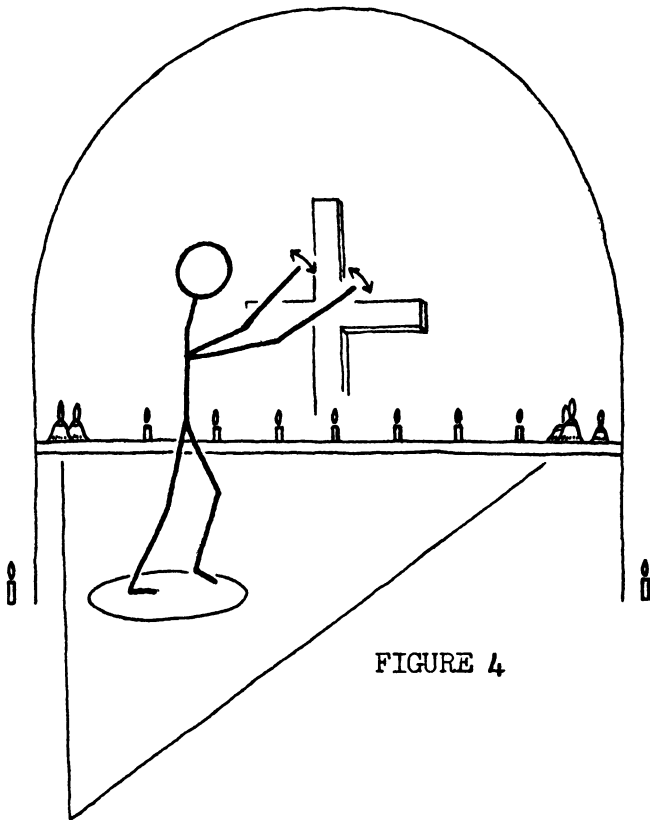
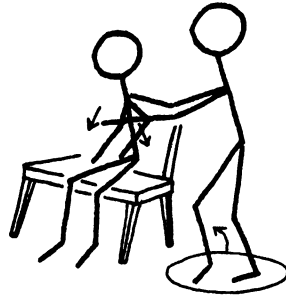


FIGURE 4

Handbells



FIGURE 5