

AM. ARCH + ETH. 28 1930-31

THE GHOST DANCE OF 1870 IN SOUTH-CENTRAL
CALIFORNIA

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INTRODUCTION

During the latter part of the nineteenth century a messianic cult known as the Ghost Dance Religion and emanating from the Northern Paiute, was diffused among the Indians of the western United States in two distinct waves, one about 1870, the second about 1890. That the dead would return and peaceful and prosperous conditions be reestablished if the Ghost Dance were performed was the essential doctrine of both movements. The second movement, that of 1890, instigated by Jack Wilson (Wovoka), is well known for its far-reaching political and psychological effects upon native life.¹ Of the earlier movement which began in 1870, little is known save that it was originated by an older relative of Jack Wilson, who instituted the doctrine, dreams, and dances occurring in both phases of the cult, that its diffusion was largely westward into southeastern Oregon and California, that it sur-

¹ James Mooney, The Ghost Dance Religion, B.A.E. 14th Ann. Rept., pt. 2, 1896.

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lived but four or five years at most, and was responsible for the revitalization of the Kuksú cult in north-central California. A large gap in our knowledge concerning the Ghost Dance of 1870 has been filled by Spier's detailed account of the movement among the Klamath of Oregon.²

The present paper deals with the Ghost Dance of 1870 among the Yokuts and Western Mono tribes of south-central California, a region for which the dance has heretofore not been recorded. The material presented here was collected during field investigations for the Department of Anthropology of the University of California in the years 1925-1926. Conclusion of the work has been made possible through a Fellowship of the National Research Council and funds provided by the Department of Anthropology, University of California, for further field work during 1929.

During these field investigations it was disclosed that the Ghost Dance cult was known to all the peoples dwelling in the western foothills of the Sierra Nevada from Fresno river in the north to Kern river in the south and westward to and including the Tulare Lake area in the floor of the San Joaquin valley. The plains and eastern foothills of this great interior valley are occupied by peoples of one linguistic stock, Yokuts. A habitable strip of mountain territory bordering on the foothills is held by the Shoshonean speaking Western Mono.³

The purpose of this paper is threefold: (1) to record the occurrence of the dance in south-central California; (2) to trace the progress of its diffusion in the San Joaquin valley and probable diffusion to Pleasanton; and (3) to indicate the relation of the elements of the new cult to establish cultural forms.

The background of culture into which the 1870 Ghost Dance was introduced was fundamentally the same throughout the valley and foothills for both Yokuts and Western Mono: the special aspects of their culture which had a bearing upon the Ghost Dance rituals will be discussed in a later section. The inhabitants tended to group them-

selves about major watercourses and their affluents in loosely organized tribal units each having a distinguishing name, one to three chiefs, one or two major village sites, and speaking varying individual dialects. The social and political relationship between the majority of these tribes was a peaceful one. Some small wars or feuds went on among the tribes dwelling around Tulare lake and their valley neighbors to the north on the lower San Joaquin river. But by and large the normal life of all valley tribes was one of friendly social intercourse. Family feuds arising from a murder or the activities of a malicious shaman were as frequently intra-tribal as without the political unit.

The relationship between the Yokuts and the adjacent Western Mono tribes was no less friendly than among the Yokuts themselves. Along the entire line of cleavage between Yokuts and Mono, social events were attended by peoples of both linguistic stocks. Though cultural differences existed they had no bearing upon political and social affairs. A few tribes were actually composed of both Yokuts and Mono: such were the Michahai and Entimpich with the balance in favor of Yokuts, and the Waksachi and Patwisha with a heavier admixture of Mono.

The relationship between the Yokuts and Eastern Mono was not friendly, neither was it openly hostile. It would seem that each people tolerated the other from economic necessity. The intercourse which existed was for commercial purposes only. The Monachi or Yo'otc as the Eastern Mono were called by the Yokuts⁴ yearly came west over the Sierra Nevada from Owens valley by established trade routes bringing salt, red paint, tanned deer skins, and other articles for trade, and receiving baskets, rabbit-skin blankets, acorn meal, and shell money in exchange. The Monachi traders, seldom remained longer than was actually necessary for the transaction of business, and never ventured west of the foothills where they would meet with a frankly hostile attitude. Thus the relation between Yokuts and Eastern Mono was merely one of toleration. It is said that at one of the large Ghost Dances which was attended by some Eastern Mono, the latter would feel the wrists of their partners. If the wrists were hard they knew they were Western Mono, but if soft, they belonged to Yokuts whom

² Leslie Spier, *The Ghost Dance of 1870 among the Klamath of Oregon*, Univ. Wash. Publ. Anthropology, 2:39-56, 1927. See also A. L. Kroeber, *Handbook of the Indians of California*, B.A.E., Bull. 78: 868-873, 1925; *A Ghost Dance in California*, Jour. Am. Folklore, 17:32-35, 1904. The relation of the 1870 Ghost Dance movement to the Kuksu cult of north-central California has been pointed out by E. W. Gifford in his *Southern Maidu Religious Ceremonies* (Am. Anthr., n.s., 29:214-236, 252-257, 1927) and *Miwok Cults* (this series, 18:393, 399, 400-402, 1926).

³ See Kroeber, *Handbook*, pl. 47.

⁴ The Yokuts did not refer to their Western Mono neighbors as Monachi but used their tribal names, Woponuch, Waksachi, etc., as they did for themselves. In speaking of them to me they would add "they talk like the Monachi; they sound just like Chinamen."

the Eastern Mono would try to heckle into a fight unless they proved to be friends of Western Mono people.

The Western and Eastern Mono, however, were on definitely friendly terms. Yet the numbers of ultra-montane Mono at Ghost Dances were few: even this was unusual as no Eastern Mono were ever present even among the Western Mono for other rituals or social events. Genealogies bear out the statements of informants that there was practically no intermarriage between the peoples of the east and west sides of the Sierra Nevada.

Such were the intertribal social and political conditions in south-central California at the time of the introduction of the Ghost Dance of 1870.

THE GHOST DANCE IN THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY

News of a new religious movement first came to the Western Mono and foothill Yokuts via the trans-Sierra Nevada trade routes. Little attention was paid to it. It was just news. There was no attempt at conversion of the valley people by the Eastern Mono traders, probably because of the non-social nature of the intercourse between them. Somewhat later, perhaps early in 1871, the Ghost Dance made its real entry into the San Joaquin valley directly from the Northern Paiute. A Paiute missionary came to a Western Mono group living on the North Fork of the San Joaquin river and preached the messianic doctrine. He found a receptive person in Joiioi, one of the North Fork chiefs to whose zeal was largely due the diffusion of the dance throughout the foothills to the south. On several successive occasions Joiioi went east into Nevada to learn the new songs and dances that were being made there by a Paiute named Mōman, who kept himself decorated with red paint.

After the introduction of the new faith among the North Fork Mono, Joiioi himself traveled about with one or two singers or sent messengers to the foothill Mono and Yokuts tribes as far south as Mill creek and Kings river to spread the news of the new cult. It was announced that a big dance would be held at Saganiu, a site in Joiioi's territory. Everyone was urged to attend. On this apostolic tour Joiioi visited the Kechayi and had with him there a Paiute who may well have been the original proselytizer of the North Fork Mono.

The first dance was held at Saganiu, in May presumably of 1871, for the last large dance north of the Kaweah river was that at Eshom

valley in the fall of 1872. The date of the Eshom valley dance is accurately fixed in the minds of the Indians as occurring during the same year as the most violent earthquake in their memories.⁵

The tribes which attended the dance at Saganiu were the Chukchansi, Kechayi, Gashowu, Dumna, Entimbich Yokuts and perhaps others from Kings river, and Posgisa, Holkuma, and Woponuch (Wobonuch) Western Mono. Apparently people from the Kaweah river basin and south did not go to this dance *en masse* nor did they become interested in the new cult until its later diffusion by Woponuch converts:

From this introductory dance sponsored by Joiioi the Woponuch took up the messianic faith with enthusiasm. In the following weeks a group of Woponuch and Entimbich singers frequently went up to North Fork to learn the new songs and dances which Joiioi was getting from the Paiute. These singers then started on a tour. They made little dances in central sites among all the foothill tribes as far south as Tule river and among the plains tribes around Tulare lake. One of these dances was at Uplinao; people of Choinimni, Toihichai, Aiticha, and Wechihit tribes went to it. The next was at Diapnusha, attended by Waksachi, Wukchumni, Gawia, and Yokod. Another at Tule river introduced the cult to the Yaudanchi, Koyeti, Bankalachi and perhaps others.

News of this dance was brought to the Bankalachi by Inolva, a Yaudanchi messenger; he went on to Bakersfield and Poso creek with his news. The Koyeti first heard of the faith through Wateilala, a Wukchumni messenger. The Tulare lake tribes, Wowol, Chunot, Telamni, and Tachi, went to a little dance made by the singers at Telweyit. The culmination of this diffusion of the Ghost Dance was the large dance held in Eshom valley in 1872. People from all the above tribes were present and former converts as well.

The visitors from the southern end of the valley were so imbued with the new faith that upon their return another large dance was planned and eventually held at Tule.⁶ Attendants at this dance came from as far north as the Kaweah river and from Fort Tejon in the south. Another dance was made a few months later at Kolpopo, a

⁵ This earthquake occurred March 26, 1872. Spier suggests that the earthquake mentioned in his account of the Klamath dance (*op. cit.*, 49) is the same. The context of his information was that it occurred in the winter of 1871-72.

⁶ Tule was a reservation established by the whites and was the popular center of the southern foothills for Indian gatherings at this time.

Paleuyami village. These dances occurred during the winter and spring of 1872-73.

My only informant from Fort Tejon moved to Tule along with several other families immediately after the big dance at Tule and so does not know of subsequent happenings in his old home. Since people from Fort Tejon attended the dance at Tule it is probable that news of the new religion eventually reached the Tokya (Chumash); but the fate of the cult beyond this point cannot now be determined.

Telamni on Pierce's rancharia near Visalia made a large dance after the Eshom valley dance but it ended in a drunken brawl. It was their only attempt.

News of the Ghost Dance may have penetrated to the Pitanisha and Kawaiisu, but no informant of the present day recalls anything about it.⁷

Apparently the messianic cult did not reach the Salinan⁸ west of the Tulare lake tribes. Friendly relations existed between them and the Tachi Yokuts, though perhaps for commercial rather than social purposes.

Local Ghost Dances were held every month or so at the more important villages throughout the foothills and valley for about two years after the first introduction of the cult; after this they were made with less and less frequency; finally only a few individuals continued to sing the songs in the privacy of their homes; by 1875 the Ghost Dance religion was completely abandoned. Ceaseless effort with the dancing and diligent adherence to rules of conduct had failed to bring back the dead. Disillusionment and discontent with disrupted social conditions brought the movement to a rapid decline.

It was perhaps due to this disillusionment that the Ghost Dance of 1890 failed to penetrate the same region as its predecessor. The 1890 wave must have had equal opportunities for diffusion into south-central California. It was taken up by Eastern Mono tribes⁹ who communicated to some extent with their linguistic relatives in the San Joaquin valley. No Yokuts or Western Mono informant recalls anything like a revival of the Ghost Dance at any time subsequent to the first wave. Apparently these tribes acquired an immunity to the Ghost Dance through their experience with the original messianic cult of 1870.

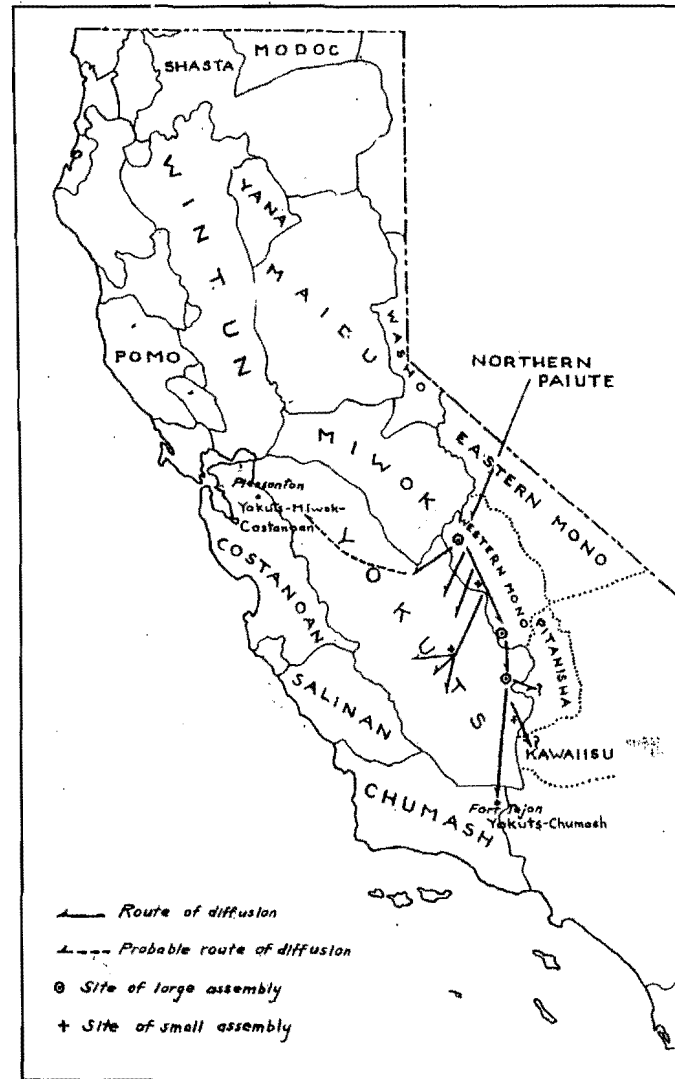


Fig. 1. Map. Diffusion of Ghost Dance in south-central California.

⁷ Theodore McGown, field notes, 1929.

⁸ J. Alden Mason, *Ethnology of the Salinan Indians*, this series, 10:97-240, 1912.

⁹ J. H. Steward, field notes, 1927.

PROBABLE DIFFUSION TO PLEASANTON

A word should be said in regard to the possible relation of the Ghost Dance movement of 1870 in south-central California to the revivification of the Kuksu cult at Pleasanton, California. About 1872 the dances of the old Kuksu or God-impersonating cult were revived at Pleasanton and diffused to the Southern Maidu and the Northern and Central Miwok by three native teachers. The sources and results of this movement have been fully analyzed by Gifford,¹⁰ and attributed by him to the Ghost Dance movement of 1870. There is no evidence in published material, however, to indicate how the Ghost Dance was diffused to this coast settlement.

Heretofore the only known entry of the cult into California was in the extreme northeastern part of California via the Modoc. The spread of the Kuksu form of the Ghost Dance in north-central California is known to have been from south to north, that is, from Pleasanton to Miwok, Maidu, Wintun, and Pomo. The presence of the 1870 Ghost Dance (which presumably gave rise to the Kuksu form) at Pleasanton has heretofore been explicable only by means of two conjectures, (1) that a wave of the dance progressed southward from the Klamath, Modoc, Shasta, etc., through the Wintun to Pleasanton and returned northward after being remodeled on the old Kuksu cult pattern; or (2) that the dance had a separate and more direct entry across the central Sierra Nevada via the Washo, Southern Maidu, or Northern Miwok.¹¹

The first conjecture seems not to be borne out by recent information from the field. Miss Cora DuBois finds that the Northern Wintun had two forms of the Ghost Dance, the earlier one (1870) having been introduced from the south by apostles from the Clear Lake Pomo.

That the Washo acted as transmitters of the Ghost Dance cult to middle California seems unlikely in the opinion of Dr. R. H. Lowie, who reports that though the cult was known to the Washo it made no impression upon them.

The occurrence of the Ghost Dance among the northern foothill Yokuts offers a third and equally plausible explanation of its presence at Pleasanton, that is, that the messianic doctrine was introduced at

¹⁰ Gifford, works cited.

¹¹ Kroeber, *Handbook*, 371, 372, fig. 71.

the coast settlement by northern valley Yokuts or Southern Miwok who had relatives and friends in the missionized Yokuts-Miwok-Costanome group of Indians there. Since the original form of the Ghost Dance was known to all the Yokuts of the San Joaquin valley and perhaps to the Miwok as well, it seems unlikely that news of the cult should fail to reach their relatives at Pleasanton.¹²

Though we have no recent data on the matter it seems possible that the Miwok were as important a link in the diffusion of the Ghost Dance to Pleasanton as were the Yokuts. Stephen Powers who traveled among the California tribes during the years 1871-72 and 1875 mentions the presence of a "great orator and prophet," Old Sam, at Jackson, Calaveras county (Northern Miwok territory).¹³ The likelihood that this man was a Ghost Dance missionary is suggested by his "reforms," namely, painting the face instead of pitching the hair at mourning, implying that mourning was not necessary since the dead were to return, and substituting dances and dirges for the "cry" ceremony, the dances and dirges perhaps being the Ghost Dance itself. That Powers obtained only superficial information concerning this orator and missed the underlying motivation of his preachings seems not at all strange inasmuch as he was among Yokuts tribes while the dance was rampant and makes no mention of it save that "of late they have adopted from the Mono the grand walk-around, in a single circle, men and women together, and with an entirely different and less violent step."¹⁴ If Powers had at all understood or even heard of the messianic doctrine motivating the "grand walk-around,"¹⁵ he could not well have made his oft reiterated statement that the Miwok and Yokuts believed in annihilation of the soul.

Though the Miwok may not have taken up the cult with the fervor of their neighbors to the south, they must have heard of it, for the first Western Mono to receive and accept the new religion were those of North Fork, directly east of the Southern Miwok.

¹² There are no known living representatives of the northern valley Yokuts tribes, so conjectures concerning these contacts cannot be verified.

¹³ Stephen Powers, *The Tribes of California*, Contr. N. Am. Ethn., 3:352, 353, Washington, 1877: "Shortly before I passed he [Old Sam] had introduced two reforms. . . . One was that the widows no longer tarred their heads but painted their faces. . . . The other was that instead of holding an annual 'cry' in memory of the dead they should dance and chant dirges.

"He . . . counseled them to live at peace with the whites, to treat them kindly, and to avoid quarrels whenever possible, as it was worse than useless to contend against their conquerors." He also advised economy with food.

¹⁴ Powers, *op. cit.*, 381.

We have then some reason to believe that the Ghost Dance of 1870, which revived the Kuksu cult at Pleasanton, was diffused there by Yokuts-Miwok transmitters.

THE DANCE AT SAGANIU¹⁵

The first Ghost Dance on the western slope of the Sierras, the one initiated by Joijoi, was held about May, 1871. The site selected, a high flat-topped hill overlooking the North Fork of the San Joaquin river was called Saganiu. People came from all around. Those from south of the San Joaquin river had much difficulty in getting across: both Kechayi and Woponuch informants speak of this hardship.

The families of each tribal group camped together. The chiefs' messengers (winatum) looked after the organization of the camps and the food supply, announced the time for sleeping, cooking, eating, and dancing, and kept up the fires. It had been expected that Joijoi who was sponsoring the dance would provide food but the supply was not adequate for the crowds.¹⁶

Joijoi and a man named Kaka'i, whose tribal affiliation is not remembered by informants, walked about the camps preaching as they went. They said that the "father," Tuwawiya (a big spotted cat), who was the creator of the first world and brother of Coyote, was going to return, bringing with him all the dead. Those who had been cremated would be especially notable for they would be black. The people now living would soon again see all their dead relatives. Along with these predictions the preachers gave injunctions on behavior. They told everyone to have a good time but not to get angry with one another, not to indulge in flirtations, to be always amiable and forbearing, or they could not go to the father when he came. They said that the heedless would not be able to cross the shaking bridge on the road to the land of the dead but would fall off and be taken by a water monster. Those unwilling to dance would turn into a log of wood. There were doubtless other injunctions but these are all that the informants recall.

The dancing took place in the evening after supper, about six o'clock. First, Joijoi and a few men who had learned the dances gave a demonstration; then the assemblage joined. The ritual continued for six nights; the dancing took place at about the hours of seven, ten,

¹⁵As described by Ellen Murphy, Kechayi Yokuts, and 'Merican Joe, Woponuch Western Mono.

¹⁶See anecdote: First and last eating of dog meat, p. 72.

and midnight with intervals for rest. After midnight all went to sleep and rose in the early morning to bathe. The eating of meat was not proscribed during the week of the ritual.

The dancers formed a circle, at times two or three concentric circles, depending on the number of participants, with men and women alternating. Each person clasped the hands of his neighbor, but without the fingers interlocked, and with forearms held upright so the hands

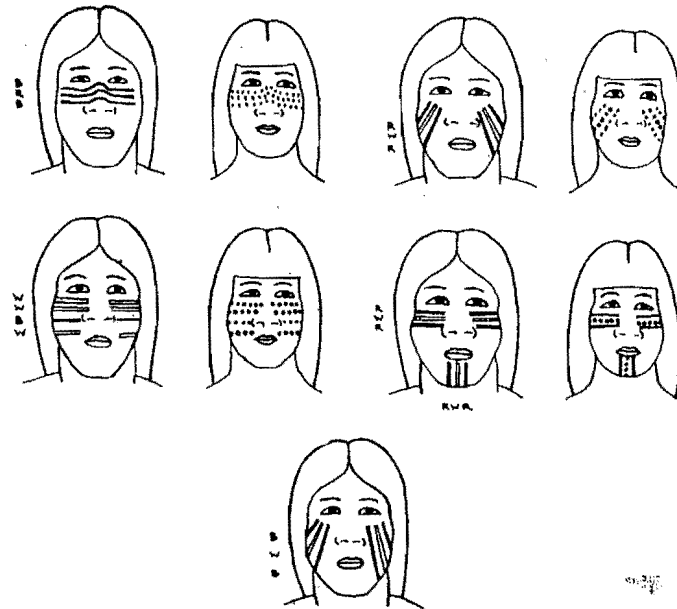


Fig. 2. Paint patterns worn by men and women at Ghost Dances as described by informants, a, Waksachi, b, Wukchumni, c, Choiniumi, d, Hometwoli, e, Woponuch. Symbols: B = black, R = red, W = white.

were at shoulder level. The progress of movement was clockwise, with short steps to the left. The dress of the dancers differed: some wore "American" clothes, some women wore the old grass skirts or deer-skin aprons, some men wore cloth or deer-skin breech clouts. Everyone had his face painted. A new paint called wawun (Western Mono) of a bluish green color was brought to this dance by the Paiute. The Paiute also brought red paint but it was not new at this time. There were no special paint designs associated with the Ghost Dance cult: those persons who had totemic or moiety patterns used them, others put on any design they wished. The face paint patterns remembered by informants for this and other Ghost Dances in the valley are shown in figure 2.

A group of singers sat within the circle of dancers. They wore their customary feather headdresses (sema and teu, Yokuts) and used the elderwood hand-clapper for accompaniment.

The whole scene was illuminated by large fires within and without the circle.

At this dance at Saganiu, but not at subsequent dances, a pole was set up in the center of the dance space. A large bead-trimmed basket was fastened to the top of the pole: the "power" of the dancers was in the basket. The pole had power in curing those persons who were rendered unconscious because of their failure to heed the rules of good conduct. Thus a man who got angry because his wife was dancing next other men fell over in a rigid condition. If a person sat outside as a spectator and thought disapprovingly of the affair he was overtaken by the same rigidity. Such people were carried over to the pole and laid beside it. There Joijoi rubbed them with sage (kosidabi, Western Mono) until they regained consciousness. The pole was not climbed. Many people fell down from complete exhaustion. Although it was taught and believed that those who did not dance would die, no informant claims that any actual deaths occurred from non-participation.

On the sixth and last night of the Ghost Dance ritual at Saganiu, Joijoi, accompanied by two men and three women, disappeared while the multitude was dancing. Presently they reappeared dressed in much finery, intending to make the assemblage believe that they were the returning dead. Joijoi carried arrows in his hands. They all danced in a peculiar manner and took care not to come too near the camp fires. As they approached, the watchers became awe-stricken until one old woman whispered to her neighbor that she thought it was Joijoi. The word soon spread about and the company relaxed and resumed its dancing. There seems to have been no immediate displeasure when Joijoi's performance was disclosed as a hoax. The dancing continued throughout the sixth day. Then all the visitors returned to their homes.

THE DANCE AT ESHOM VALLEY¹⁷

The Ghost Dance held at Eshom valley in the fall of 1872 was instigated by the group of Woponuch and Entimbich singers who learned the songs of the cult from Joijoi after his dance at Saganiu.

¹⁷ As described by Sam Osborn, Michahai-Waksachi; Jim Britches, Wukhumni Yokuts; and Josie Alonzo, Chunut Yokuts.

The members of this group were: Tapunatei (Woponuch), who was their leader, Samson Dick, Yaki (Woponuch), Laotcu'i (Entimbich), Abawite (Woponuch), and Koiyewa (Woponuch). Tapunatei and Mōmue (Entimbich) both preached the messianic doctrine. These men had a preliminary meeting at an Entimbich village, Kicheyu (now Dunlap, Fresno county), where they told the Entimbich chief, Takac (Captain Little George), and his brother Kocowi, a powerful shaman,¹⁸ that they wanted to hold a Ghost Dance to which all neighboring tribes would be asked. The chief was agreeable and Eshom valley was chosen as the place for the meeting. This spot was selected because of its central location in the lower mountains and its seclusion from the white settlers: the valley is deep, but with a level floor perhaps a mile long and a quarter of a mile wide, and has an excellent water supply and well timbered slopes abounding in game. A Waksachi village, Chitatu, occupied a low crest of ground at one end of the valley. After making these decisions, the Entimbich chief sent out his messengers to neighboring tribes, who in turn relayed the announcement of the coming dance to practically all the tribes living within the San Joaquin valley. In the meantime the group of singers went about spreading word of the returning dead and exhorting young and old to attend the forthcoming dance.

The Eshom valley Ghost Dance impressed all informants as a stupendous affair: in numbers of attendants and unflagging energy of prosecution it had never been equaled in this region. There were four or five hundred people present, most of them from tribes living between Kings and Tule rivers, but there were many representatives of tribes in the plains, as mentioned above. The visitors disposed themselves in the usual camp groups. Brush shades were erected for shelter. The messengers of the various chiefs looked after the food supply, not necessarily obtaining it themselves but seeing to it that hunters were dispatched and that their women relatives continued with the cooking. A Waksachi, Palaha (Bob Osborn) who owned some cattle, killed his steers and sold the meat in small portions under the direction of the messengers. But this source of food was soon exhausted and the multitude had to depend entirely on game and acorn meal.

¹⁸ Shamans ordinarily were not consulted in such matters; this case may be due to the fact that he was the chief's brother, that is, belonged to the chief's lineage. The position of chief was hereditary on the paternal side; but all members of a chief's family were addressed as chief (tiya, Yokuts, peginape, Western Mono) though only one man in a given lineage was recognized as a functioning chief at any particular time.

The first evening that the encampment was organized and the ritual was to begin the assemblage was addressed by the Entimbich chief, Takac. He told the people why the meeting had been called, that certain men had come with important news which they wanted everyone to know about. Then Tapunatci spoke as follows:

"We are having this dance, and we want to tell you what we have heard. Where we got these songs and dance one man told us of what is going to come.

"We are having this dance for a dead man. He is where we got these songs.¹⁹ After a few more years this dead man is going to come here from where we got these songs and dance. Right now that man is very far off, he is at Watsataocao pa'a nim (the crack in the world our home, Michahai) to the east. There is a fire there all the time, playing [games] and dancing [go on] all the time. The people there disappear in the daytime. We are making this dance for those ghosts (inil). You must do this all the time. There will be no more getting sick and dying."²⁰

Tapunatci also told the people to go in swimming or to bathe themselves every morning. There was no verbal ritual comparable to baptism at the bathing.

Mōmuc also addressed the people saying:

"God made all this land. The dead people are coming if we dance this dance. They dance this dance all the time where they are now."²¹

The people were also admonished not to sleep during the night but to keep on dancing; only children were allowed to sleep. One girl "died" for about an hour because she fell asleep. She was carried to a fire and laid there; no one knows how she roused from her coma, as no one tried to revive her.

There was no center pole which manifested supernatural power at the Eshom valley dance. A few people "died" and came to life again, but informants do not know by what means. A girl "died" because she fought with her mother. She was restored to life but was regarded as crazy thereafter.

With the exception of the absence of the pole, the dance was practically identical with the earlier one at Saganu. Dancers of both sexes assembled indiscriminately; they joined hands and circled to the

¹⁹ That is, presumably, in the Land of the Dead, presided over by the father Tuwawiya, where the Paiute originator of the cult may have journeyed in his trances and obtained the songs and doctrine of his cult.

²⁰ From Sam Osborn.

²¹ From Jim Britches.

left, facing inward.²² While the major movement of the dancers was to the left, a variation occurred now and then in which three steps to the right, then three to the left, were repeated three times. The dancers kept time with their joined hands, beating them downward from shoulder-level at each step. Some women kept their babies in cradles on their backs while dancing. They did not lock hands but held them back under the base of the cradle to keep it steady. The singing and dancing continued until the participants were exhausted. During intervals of rest, short exhortations would be delivered by Takac (the chief), Kocowi (a powerful shaman), Tapunatci, or some of the singers. There were no solo dances or trance demonstrations.

Shamans did not always take an active part in the dancing. More often they lay down under the shades, calling on their dream helpers. Their assistants would report from time to time on what the shamans heard from the supernatural world.

Within the double circle of dancers sat the singers dressed in their usual dance regalia and shaking elderwood clappers in time to their singing. Of the songs they sang little can be said. Informants remember only three, and the words to these are meaningless to them. They are:

(1) he ba rin he ba ya he na ni (repeated indefinitely).

(2) he na na ni na na ni (said to mean: I'm going to be "anything," snake, crow, stick, water, or anything).

(3) oso oso oso wdiham (repeated indefinitely).

Although the participants were admonished to refrain from anger, fighting, and erotic indulgences, there was no taboo on hilarity. Nor were food taboos observed. During the day people slept or entertained themselves by playing games and gambling. The singers spent most of their time practicing their songs.

The activity continued through six nights. At the close of the dance on the sixth night an additional ritual called the horse dance (kawaiyu kamin) was performed. Persons having horses rode them around inside the ring of dancers "just like a circus";²³ old horses were led about and were miraculously rejuvenated. One of the songs for the horse dance was:

ya a ya e hai ya kawaiyo
↑ horse

²² Dr. Spier reports to me that his statement (*op. cit.*, 48) that among the Klamath "a circle was formed of men, women, and children holding hands, moving in a counter clockwise direction with a short step to the left" is incorrect. The direction was counter clockwise stepping to the right.

²³ From Josie Alonzo.

After the dance at Eshom valley new converts made dances in their own localities, as the Telumni, Chunut, and Wowol at Pierce's ranchería, the southern foothill tribes at Tule and Kolopopo. The group of singers who sponsored the dance at Eshom valley led subsequent local dances. These were attended by people from near-by villages and tribes, as was normally the case for any dance. In this area between the Kings and Kaweah rivers the local dances continued for about a year, but were finally discouraged by Takac and other captains who had arrived at the conclusion that the efforts of the dancers were futile. Takac called his people together at Kieheyu and spoke to them on the matter: he called attention to the fact that in spite of their efforts people were still sickening and dying, that the people were neglecting their household and hunting duties and were exhausting themselves with over-exertion, that the dead had not returned, and concluded his speech by saying "if that man is coming, he'll come anyway."

ANECDOTES OF THE GHOST DANCE

The first and last eating of dog meat (told by Ellen Murphy, Kechayi Yokuts): The first Ghost Dance was attended by much hardship. In traveling north it was necessary for the Kechayi to cross the San Joaquin river. The river was high at this time of year (about May) and the people did not know how to cross. Finally a long rope of milkweed twine was made. The able swimmers swam the river and carried one end of the rope with them. The other end, on the south shore, was looped about a person who could not swim and he was pulled across by those already on the opposite shore. A good swimmer would then return with the looped end of the rope for the next person. Ellen had her first baby with her; it was less than a year old. She strapped its cradle tightly to her back and swam holding to the rope. Once the cradle loosened and slipped and the baby nearly drowned. A snake doctor, Chokonik, had rattlesnakes as supernatural helpers: as he crossed the river two rattlesnakes swam behind him all the way.

When they reached Saganiu, crowds of people were already there. The messengers went about telling people to put up some distinctive mark on their shades so they would recognize their own camp. Ellen had a pretty shawl which she hung out on her camp shade, but she got

lost anyway. There was a continual turmoil. A fight was going on over a woman: she had slept with a man just one night and on the second night they were quarreling. Several women attacked the man and mauled him about. The next morning his woman was very ill.

The chiefs exhorted the people not to get mad, because their father was coming. A woman who was skeptical about the prediction that one would die if one fought, quarreled with another woman to discover the effect. This woman did not die but she fainted the following morning and remained unconscious for a long time. Ellen does not remember anyone who turned into a log or actually died because they slept or did not dance, though it was believed that everyone had to dance or he would die.

After they had been at Saganiu two days the food supply began to give out. It had been expected that Joiioi would provide food for the entire week. We had attempted to do so, but the magnitude of the crowd was beyond all expectation. To help out in this difficulty some horses were killed. These did not last long; moreover, horseflesh was taboo to people who belonged to the Nutuwie moiety. The people were getting desperately hungry and angry and it was not yet time to end the dance.

They went two days without food. On the third day the men held a conference. Without telling their purpose they erected a large brush corral and ordered all the women into it. Not one woman was left out. They told them to keep quiet. They did not know what was going to happen. The dance manager (yateite) told them to be very still. Then the messengers ran about the camps catching all the dogs. They told everyone to give up his dog. Ellen's mother had a pretty little black dog in the corral with her; she tried to hide it under her skirt but a messenger saw her and pulled it away from her. One dog named Wu'isu'i²⁴ was smarter than the rest. He saw his companions being shot and piled upon the ground so he ran off to his home. He was the only dog that escaped.

The men took the dead dogs off to a distance so that the women would not see them being skinned. Soon a messenger came around and asked who was willing to eat dog meat. A few women said they could do it, so the messengers brought them pieces of meat from fat dogs. Ellen did not try it as it made her sick to think about it. Those

²⁴ Among the Kechayi all dogs belonging to people of the Tokeluwie moiety were called by this name.

who ate the meat did so after dark. They were so hungry they said it tasted pretty good. This was the first time that anyone had been known to eat dog meat, and it was never eaten again.

The next day the dance ended, and everybody went home.

Kumkum's death (told by 'Merican Joe, Woponuch Western Mono): Kumkum was Samson Dick's paternal grandfather. In his youth he had been an energetic, active man and a great traveler, hence his nickname, Kumkum (hummingbird). At the time Joiioi told them their father was coming to North Fork, the latter was too decrepit to make the trip or go anywhere. Everybody living at Kicheyu wanted to go to Saganiu, so they decided to leave Kumkum behind with plenty of food and water. Kumkum told them that when they returned he would not be there, that he was going to die, that something was going to eat him, and that there would be deer tracks all around the place where he had been. Deer was his supernatural helper.

Over at another village, Pagipu, there was "an old lady who was all wore out." She said she "wasn't good for anything" and wanted to die. She told the boys to go dig a grave and bury her alive "because I'm nearly dead anyway." She told her people not to cry for her, "You are going to see your father and I'll be doing just the same." So they dug her grave, which was the first in the present Indian cemetery at Dunlap, and buried her just as she had directed.

Then all the people from Kicheyu and Pagipu started off for North Fork. When they came to the San Joaquin river it was so high that only the best swimmers dared try to cross. The people camped on the south side of the river while some men made a long rope of milkweed twine. Then one end of the rope was fastened to a tree, while the other end was carried across the river by a strong swimmer. That end was fastened to another tree so the rope swung about a foot above the surface of the water. Those people who could swim across did so or helped themselves with the rope. Those who could not swim had a length of rope looped loosely around them and the suspended rope; thus they pulled themselves hand over hand across the river. Little children and camping paraphernalia were put in large flat-bottomed, water-tight baskets, customarily used for this purpose. They floated on the water and were pushed across by two or three swimmers.

Now after the dance was made at Saganiu the father failed to appear. The people were dissatisfied for they had sacrificed much of their property to make the trip. Some had come from Tule river,

over one hundred and fifty miles to the south. People living along the route traveled had lost goods through maraudings of the pilgrims. Many others had lost their old people, like Kumkum and the old lady at Pagipu. Kumkum was dead when his people returned, and there were deer tracks all around him just as he had predicted.

Then two chiefs, Teakono and Tulin, from Tule river region, got their doctors to make a new kind of poison called tigi'dedan (Western Mono) which they sold to people so they could kill each other almost like shamans. The chiefs up here said that if the persons doing the killing could be discovered they should be killed just like bad shamans, but at the same time they warned their people not to kill a suspect unless they were sure he was guilty.

Then white people and whiskey came and everyone began getting drunk. The poisoning went on worse than ever. The white people have stopped that now.

ANALYSIS OF CULT AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

At the time of the introduction of the Ghost Dance, the existing social organization in Yokuts and Western Mono culture was peculiarly suited to the exigencies of collective ceremonials such as the Ghost Dance demanded. The difficulties which resulted from the huge Ghost Dance gatherings were due to the unprecedented magnitude of the affairs rather than to an inefficient social order. Ceremonies with attendants from various tribes were nothing new. The audience and at least a few performers at all dances were from tribes adjacent to the host tribe. The distance from which visitors came depended entirely upon the size and importance of the affairs.

No public ritual could be given without permission from the local chiefs. Upon their consent announcements were sent out twelve days in advance of the event. The chief's official messengers carried the news; they were paid for their services. Thus it was that the Woponuch singers asked Takac's permission to hold the Ghost Dance at Eshom valley, and news of the cult was spread about by the established messenger system.

At all dances the host group was expected to provide food for the visitors. When a large gathering was planned the guests brought quantities of food with them, but for this they were paid either at the time of invitation or after their arrival at the dance. At the Ghost

Dance at Saganu, Joiioi attempted to supply the food but the people were too many. The selling of steer meat under the supervision of the messengers, which occurred at Eshom valley, was similar to the normal custom of guests bringing venison, ground squirrels, acorn meal, and other foodstuffs to a dance and receiving pay for it.

It was the special duty of the messengers to direct social proceedings throughout a ceremony. They welcomed the arrivals and told them where to camp. Each day they saw to it that wood and water were provided, called out the time to get up and to cook meals, and distributed food where it was needed. They also kept up the fires which illuminated the evening assemblies.

When it was time for the ceremonies to begin the messengers called the people together. Then the captain of the host group addressed them; he told them why the ceremony was being held, what it was to be, and usually concluded by telling them to "have a good time." Thus the usual procedure is evident in informants' descriptions of the Ghost Dances at Saganu and Eshom valley.

The ritual number of both Yokuts and Western Mono groups is six. Mourning, jimsonweed, and girls' puberty ceremonies lasted six days; other ritual and mythological references to the number occur. The Ghost Dance ceremonies were always a six-day affair, whereas the sacred and ritual number of the Northern Paiute is five.²⁶

The practice of bathing every morning was customary with all foothill people. It had a salutary effect, especially in the acquisition of supernatural power by both shamans and laymen. A boy or girl approaching puberty was roused from sleep and made to swim three times during the night for six days, usually in the coldest months. This was supposed to give them a long life as well as harden their characters. Water was venerated and regarded as immortal.

Playing games during the day was customary at dances, but taboo during the mourning ceremony except on the last day, which was one of rejoicing. Games were, of course, an integral part of daily life.

Painted patterns were used as face and body decorations in most dances and rituals. Whether or not all such patterns had totemic reference is not ascertainable; the specifically totemic designs recalled by informants are few; other designs are described as meaningless. Among the Wukchumni Yokuts at least, women dancing with doctors in non-religious dances wore the pattern shown in figure 2b, which

²⁶ R. H. Lowie, Notes on Shoshonean Ethnography, Am. Mus. Nat. Hist. Anthr. Pap., 20:295, 1924.

was one of the common patterns at the Ghost Dances. It may be that this and other patterns were purely decorative and hence were available to any participant in the Ghost Dance without regard to his lineage.

It is seen that thus far the social background and certain ritual elements of the Ghost Dance as executed at Saganu and Eshom valley were entirely in consonance with established procedure at intertribal celebrations. The social system of the Yokuts and Western Mono was a perfect vehicle for the introduction of a new cult demanding collective participation.

Furthermore, there are in the Yokuts-Mono Ghost Dances certain elements which are plainly derived from established concepts concerning the dead and life after death. These concepts are formulated in their tale of a man's trip to the land of the dead, which in brief is as follows:²⁶

A man's good wife dies; he wants to get her back. He waits on her grave for two nights. On the third she rises and starts traveling northwestward. Her man follows her. In the daytime she either disappears or turns into a log of wood. The man waits on the spot and follows her again at night. After traveling three nights they reach a great expanse of water. Over it stretches a narrow, quaking bridge which it is dangerous to cross. If one falls off it one turns into a fish or is taken by a water monster. Only persons of character succeed in crossing. On the other side is the land of the dead. It is ruled by a chief, the "father," called Tipiknits (Yokuts) or Tuwawiya (Western Mono). The dead people are visible and active only at night when they have a fine time gambling, dancing, and playing games. The red clouds of the sunset are their red paint (Chunut Yokuts). When the couple arrives the woman goes to her relatives' camp while the chief interviews her husband. The chief tells the man he may not stay there but may take his wife back home if he can remain awake all night. The couple lie down and spend the night laughing and talking. At daybreak the man is overpowered by sleep. He wakes to find a log of wood in his arms. The chief offers the man a second and last chance. But that night brings the same result. (A favorite variation is that the couple start home at once but break continence on the way, the woman again turning into a log.) Discouraged the man returns home. The chief had told him to hide for six days, then make a dance and tell all that has happened to him. But the man's presence at home is disclosed on the fifth day. He makes the dance anyway, tells all that happened on his journey, and dies immediately after.

²⁶ The tale is ubiquitous in south-central California; versions of it occur among the Southern Maidu and Miwok (A. L. Kroeber, Myths of South Central California, this series, 4:175, 188, 216, 228, 1907), the Luiseño (A. L. Kroeber, Handbook of the Indians of California, B.A.E., Bull. 78:625, 1925), and the Salinan (Mooney, *op. cit.*, 195).

The concepts common to this tale and the Ghost Dance are: (1) a "father" or chief and the host of the dead; (2) the unsteady bridge to the land of the dead; (3) that people of character only may get across or meet the "father"; (4) that one must not sleep; (5) transformation into a log of wood. There seems no reason to doubt that the tale is an old one in the San Joaquin region and that the concepts of the dead and the country of the dead which appear in the Ghost Dance are interpretations from it. The story as it is told, and was learned by informants from their elder relatives, is always localized in their own tribe. The "father" of their folktale, who functions as the messiah in the Ghost Dance, figures elsewhere in Yokuts-Mono mythology as the creator of the present world who departed to make a home for dead people after he had completed this one for the living. In Western Mono versions he is identified as a large, spotted cat (jaguar?, not wild cat), the elder brother of Coyote, in Salinan²⁷ and some Yokuts versions as a person unrelated to the animals. A Home-twoli Yokuts informant identified the "father" of the messianic cult with Tohil, eagle, the most powerful of supernatural beings in Yokuts mythology.

In all versions of the folktale the land of the dead is invariably placed in the northwest, whereas in the Ghost Dance the "father" was said to be in the east. This may be a Northern Paiute conception, or may be due to the eastern provenience of the news of the messiah.²⁸

The notion that one must not sleep when dealing with the supernatural is a precept which appears not only in the Ghost Dance and in this folktale, but also in rules governing the acquisition of supernatural power through dreams. On receiving a dream from an animal helper, one must not go back to sleep that night or the dream and consequent powers would be withdrawn.

There were, however, other features of the Ghost Dance that varied from the San Joaquin norm. The first was the continuance of dancing throughout the night. With the exception of the final night of the annual mourning ceremony, dances ordinarily began about four in the afternoon and lasted until nine or ten, seldom as late as midnight. Secondly, both Yokuts and Mono custom demands strict abstinence from meat during ceremonies that have a religious or emotional significance, such as mourning or jimsonweed rituals, or during the private

²⁷ J. Alden Mason, *loc. cit.*

²⁸ Spier found a similar discrepancy in the Klamath interpretation, *op. cit.*, 54.

ritual for acquiring supernatural power. Yet this taboo was not observed during the Ghost Dances. Thirdly, the restoration of unconscious persons by Joijoi, a chief, rather than by shamans, was quite atypical.

It may be that the first variation mentioned has some reference to beliefs about the Land of the Dead, since the Ghost Dance was so much concerned with the return of its inhabitants. It was believed that the dead were active only during the night; in the daytime they disappeared. Thus a ritual in the real world which would be effective upon the ghosts would logically have to take place during their period of existence, that is, throughout the night.

The absence of the meat taboo leads one to believe that the Ghost Dance did not have a deeply or awesomely religious significance for the Yokuts and Mono in spite of their fervid participation.

Another feature, which was in opposition to established custom, was the non-payment of the singer accompanists. That singers performing at any public function should go unpaid was without precedent. At the Ghost Dance their subsistence was provided, no more. The Woponuch and Entimbich singers who learned the songs of the cult from Joijoi were professional. A group of such singers accompanied all dances and ceremonies, always being invited to perform and often being summoned from a distance if they were especially talented. In the case of the Ghost Dance their services and tour for its introduction must have been due entirely to missionary zeal.

The dream or visionary aspect of the Ghost Dance, as it occurred among the Klamath, Maidu, Miwok, and Pomo,²⁹ was absent or entirely negligible in the San Joaquin valley. No informant mentions the acquisition of songs or supernatural power through visions during the ritual. Though many persons became comatose, as described above, the condition seems to have been attributed entirely to their misdemeanors: the trances were punishments, rather than sublime states sought for religious purposes. The orthodox religious system of both Yokuts and Mono was based upon the acquisition of powers through dreams of animal helpers. Such dreams came during normal sleep; they were not trance-like nor were they comparable to the narcotic visions induced by jimsonweed. Any person who wished to acquire supernatural power could do so by paying attention to his dreams.

²⁹ Spier, Gifford (works cited), and Edwin M. Loeb, Pomo Folkways, this series, 19:149-405, 1926.

Falling into a trance to visit the spirit world of the dead is a practice of Shoshonean shamans³⁰ not indulged in by Yokuts-Mono doctors. Why the visionary aspect of the Ghost Dance was so ignored in the Yokuts-Mono area is not clear. The absence of this esoteric feature is further indicated by the fact that no reference is made to ghosts, spirits, or dreaming in native names for the dance. It is called the "round" or "going round" dance throughout the San Joaquin valley.³¹

Apparently the only persons who entered into contact with the spirit world during the Ghost Dance performances were the shamans. Even they may have been communing with their animal helpers rather than the ghosts of the returning dead.

The political factor involved in the encouragement of the Ghost Dance among the Klamath and Pomo by their chiefs,³² i.e., that chiefs were rising in power and used the new cult as a means of suppressing shamanistic activities, does not occur in south-central California. Though the chiefs in this region had few defined duties and powers, such as they were they went unquestioned. And far from being at odds with shamans the chiefs had their cooperation in many of their political schemes. Evidence of the harmony between chiefs and shamans in the Ghost Dance appears in our account of the dance at Eshom valley: Kocowi took active part in preaching the doctrine; other shamans "listened" for news from the supernatural world. That shamans were not called to restore unconscious Ghost Dance participants was certainly abnormal, but in this case it is merely to be regarded as a feature of the Ghost Dance system without any bearing upon native political conditions.

What the relations were between the Indians of the San Joaquin valley and the white population of 1870 is not clear from native accounts. The statement of one informant that "after that the white man came" leads one to believe that the number of white settlers before that time was negligible. The Indians of the San Joaquin plains were the first to suffer loss of life, lands, and hence economic liberty; those living in the foothills where the Ghost Dance was first introduced were as yet scarcely disturbed. Villages on the upper Kaweah, Kings, and San Joaquin rivers were continuing the old life in the childhood of my older informants, i.e., about 1855-1875. Even

³⁰ Lowie, *op. cit.*, 294, 295.

³¹ See appendix.

³² Spier, *op. cit.*, 44.

so the natives may have been disconcerted by the white man's continued approach. No informant will admit that the messianic faith had any reference to the presence of the white people, much less that hostile intentions toward the whites lurked beneath the Ghost Dance activities. Whether or not this was so can scarcely be proved now. Certain it is that the few local settlers in the region of Eshom valley became hysterical over the large assembly there; they regarded it as of hostile intent and immediately sent alarms to valley towns for armed assistance. It is due to this misinterpretation that the Ghost Dance is referred to in colloquial white and Indian parlance as the "war" dance. Said one informant, "The Paiutes have a war dance and the white people thought this was it, but that dance is called war dance and this [Ghost] is the round dance."

The abandonment of the Ghost Dance was not due to pressure exerted by the white population but rather to disillusionment. The closing words of Takac's address were quite in keeping with the philosophical outlook of the Yokuts-Mono mind. Their past life was a singularly pleasant and placid one. They were not ridden by a mass of superstitious fears as are many primitive peoples. There were few taboos; no religious office or supernatural function was imposed on anyone who did not want it. Individuals went about their daily lives following the simple rules of their religious and social order without burdening themselves with taboos and privations, believing that if the supernatural powers wished to help them they would. The same attitude is expressed in the resolution of their feelings toward the messianic cult. Exhaustive efforts to bring back their "father" and their dead relatives had proved to be futile, hence, give it up—"if that man is coming, he'll come anyway."

SUMMARY

The course and process of the diffusion of the Ghost Dance from the northern Western Mono through the San Joaquin valley has been indicated in the foregoing pages. The messianic cult was introduced on the west slope of the Sierra Nevada at North Fork. Owing to the zeal of one man, Joijoi, the faith was diffused to the south where Woponuch and Entimbich singers in turn transmitted it to Yokuts of the plains and southern valley. The fate of the dance beyond Fort Tejon is unknown at present.

The process of acculturation is evident from our detailed account of Ghost Dances at Saganiu and Eshom valley. Analysis of the social background into which the new cult was thrust indicates that the social process involved in holding the dances, i.e., with the chiefs' permission, supervision of camps by messengers, etc., was entirely in the order of the established system for intertribal ceremonials. Several features of the Ghost Dance doctrine were interpreted in terms of extant cultural forms: the "father" identified as the creator; the land of the dead that of the "Orpheus" myth, bathing in the morning; use of standard paint patterns, six-day duration of ritual, transformation into a log, and taboo on sleep. Analogous acculturations are found among the Klamath and in northwest California.²²

The doctrine of the Ghost Dance which promised the return of dead relatives, absolution from sickness and death, a continuous life of peace and prosperity, is ubiquitous in its human appeal. This, together with the fact that the cult had no complex features of belief or intricate taboos and was open for collective participation, made it uniquely suitable for a rapid diffusion regardless of the type of culture encountered in its travels. The framework and stimulus of the revivalistic cult were supplied, the details were filled in according to the individual taste of varying culture patterns.

APPENDIX: INFORMANTS AND NAMES OF THE DANCE

The tribe, name, and approximate age of informants contributing to this paper are as follows:

Yokuts: Bankalachi: Frank Manuel, 65; Chohnimni: Pony Dick Watun, 70; Chunut: Josie Alonzo, 65; Dumna: Bill Wilson, 90; Hometwoli: Big Jim Alto, 75; Kechayi: Ellen Murphy, 70; Koyeti: Dick Francisco, 80; Paleuyami: Martha Alto, 70; Tachi: Mollie Garcia, 80; Wukhumni: Jim Britches, 70.

Western Mono: Waksachi: Sam Osborn, 65, Bob Osborn, 75; Woponuch: Joe Waley, 80, 'Merican Joe, 80.

Native names for Ghost Dance.—Chunut, Tachi, Telamni, Wowol (?); soto'twi kam, going-around dance.

Chunut: hi'ithi'wi kam, drag-the-feet dance. (This because people got so tired they could not lift their feet.)

Dumna, Gashowu, Kechayi: soi'wic kam, round dance.

Hometwoli, Koyeti: soto'twiya hatim, going-around dance.

Michahal: kaman soi'wic, dancing, round.

Wukhumni, Yaudanchi: soto'towid kam, to be going around dance.

Waksachi: nigat dama, ♀ dance.

Woponuch: naho'a manal'gan, round dance.

ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE YUMA INDIANS

BY

C. DARYLL FORDE

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²² Spier, *loc. cit.*; A. L. Kroeber, A Ghost Dance in California, Jour. Am. Folklore, 17:32-35, 1904.