RITUAL AND CEREMONY

Teacher Preparation

Ritual and ceremonial behavior is a formalized display of the spiritual and social forces that operate in the lives of people. To greater or lesser degrees, each of us acknowledges these forces in the course of daily routine. A Tlingit woman briefly thanks the spirits when she enters the rainforest to gather cedar bark for her weaving. A student says a silent prayer before a big exam. A dinner guest presents a bouquet of flowers to reciprocate his host's generosity. Such rituals, often performed as unconscious habits, hint at the fundamental religious and social structures that influence our lives as individuals and as members of a particular community or culture. The more elaborate rituals and ceremonies we hold for special occasions such as weddings, holidays, religious observances, and funerals bring the defining values and beliefs that lie just below the surface of daily life into the foreground. On these occasions, the flow of time is altered. When a Hopi elder retells the story of emergence into the Fourth World during the first winter ceremony or when the story of the deliverance of the Jews from Egypt is told during Passover, the sacred past is given meaning for the present. Our homes or communities or churches become like stages where the past is reenacted, change is acknowledged, and a common future is launched. The drama and formality lent by music, dancing, feasting on special foods, and wearing special clothing intensify the importance of the event. Every person involved is both actor and

audience in a performance that defines the community and the roles of individuals within it.

To look at the rituals and ceremonies of any cultural group is to see its world view intensified. These ceremonies are elaborate exhibitions of the values and beliefs that bring meaning to life. In the ceremonial traditions of the Native American groups presented here, which call out to the spirits and deities that control nature's forces and provide humans with life, you will see how reverence for the natural world demonstrated in everyday subsistence practices is magnified. When the vital balance between humans and nature or between one human and another has been disturbed, the ceremonies of the Southeast Alaskan potlatch restore equilibrium. Among the Aymara and the Hopi, the concept of reciprocity is demonstrated again and again in rituals that symbolically give back to the earth what the earth has given. In each group the importance of community well-being is emphasized in each person's willingness to contribute to the success of an important ceremony.

Community rituals and ceremonies are important markers of individual change. For example, the Hopi ritual for girls who have reached puberty is not only celebration of a new stage in a young woman's life; it is also a way of letting the community know that she can now be expected to accept the increased responsibilities of an adult. Preparation for the ceremony — preparing cornmeal, receiving religious instruction, and learning other Hopi ways — is also preparation for her future life.

Social change is also acknowledged through ritual. Native American cultures are not immune to change. Historical events such as the European conquest, advancements in technology, even the rediscovery of an ancient farming technique such as raised fields bring changes that are reflected in the ceremonial lives of Native Americans. New episodes are added to the clan histories of Southeast Alaska.

Perhaps one day characters representing Alan Kolata and Oswaldo Rivera, the archeologists who reintroduced *suka kollu* technology to the Aymara, will appear in the masked dances performed during fiestas.

It is during ceremonies and rituals that all of the markers of cultural identity are in place. Ceremonial regalia bearing clan symbols are worn, stories that teach children about the natural and spirit worlds are told, and the food harvested from land and water is shared. The weavers', potters', and carvers' arts are represented in ceremonial objects newly made or handed down through generations. Musicians and dancers express ancient beliefs and establish new patterns of celebration.

One characteristic of a subsistence culture is that the people produce all they need to live on from the environment or from trade with other groups. Although each of the Native American groups described here participates in the cash economy to some degree, it is a source of pride that their specialized knowledge of the land affords the power of independence and self-sufficiency. This power is renewed and celebrated in annual ceremonies that enact human and agricultural life cycles. It is reinforced and continued as young people prepare for initiation into adult society. As students look at the ritual and ceremonial lives of Hopi, Aymara, and Southeast Alaskan Natives, they will see how the objects of everyday life — an ear of corn, a cedar hat, a bit of llama fat — become sacred metaphors for the beliefs and values that bind communities in ancient and ongoing reverence for the land.

Suggested Activity

Before students read about and discuss the rituals and ceremonies described below, ask each student to write about a ceremony or ritual he or she has observed or participated in that is important. Be sure students understand that they can describe secular or religious practices. First Communion, initiation into an organization such as Boy or

Girl Scouts, graduation, weddings, and holiday celebrations are some examples. In their writing, students should describe the event and discuss its significance. The following list of questions will help them focus their thinking.

- Who is involved in this event? Do certain people have special roles?
- What takes place at this event? What is done to prepare for it?
- Where does it take place? Are there special reasons for this location?
- When does it take place? Is the event tied to a particular season or a particular time in a person's life?
- Why is this event important? Does the event communicate ideas that are important to the people involved?
- How did witnessing or participating in this event make you feel?
- What did you learn?

After students share their writing with each other, use the concept map suggested on p. 10 to review what they have learned about Native American subsistence practices and beliefs and values regarding the environment. Ask students to think about how the rituals and ceremonies described here are linked to Native American concepts of the land discussed in previous sections. How are ritual and daily life linked?

Focus Questions

- What are rituals? What are the functions of ritual and ceremonial activities in cultures?
- What are the sources and meanings of some of the rituals and ceremonies practiced in Native American cultures?
- What cultural values and beliefs are communicated in these rituals and ceremonies?
- How are these rituals and ceremonies related to subsistence practices?

POTLATCH: HEALING AND CELEBRATION

The long tables and folding chairs have been cleared from the meeting hall and the floor is swept to clear the way for the dancing to come. Outside, guests and clan members compare tonight's feast of salmon, halibut, ooligan, seaweed and salmon eggs, rice, fry bread, and salmon berries with the lavish meals of the three previous evenings. Dance groups dressed in dazzling button blankets and Chilkat robes (see Figure 59) rehearse quietly in the evening shadows. Welcoming voices greet friends and relations of the four Tsimshian clans — Eagle, Wolf, Raven, and Killerwhale — who have come from British Columbian

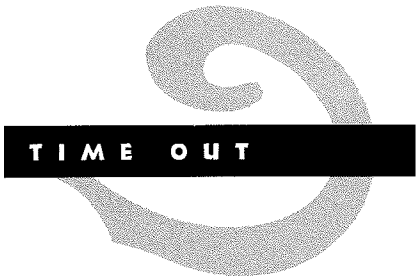
Figure 59

The Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian indicate their ancestry and social identity by wearing clan crests using images of animals. These two young Tlingits perform wearing the hats, wings, and tunics of the Raven moiety and Sockeye Salmon clan. Photo by Richard Dauenhauer, courtesy Smithsonian Institution.

homelands and U.S. cities to Metlakatla to witness tonight's memorial ceremonies. A drummer searches for her mallet, and a speaker adjusts her cedar bark hat. The copper disks attached to the hem of a young mother's ceremonial regalia jingle softly as she sways from side to side to quiet the baby perched on her hip. Latecomers are urged to look at the memorial totem pole raised during a special ceremony earlier today. Its upper portion is visible from the meeting hall steps against a background of sea, sky, and mountains. This is the last of four nights of feasting, dancing, singing, speechmaking, and gift-giving that the Tsimshian community of Metlakatla calls Potlatch '94.

Potlatch is frequently misunderstood to be simply an occasion for distribution of a deceased person's possessions. A potlatch may be that in part, but it is always much more. *Potlatch* is a Chinook word derived from the Nootka word *p'achitl*, and that translates roughly to "gift." Chinook is not really a language. It is an argot, or a specialized vocabulary, used by many different Alaskan language groups to communicate with the traders and settlers who came to Alaska in the 19th century. The word *potlatch* is now used by Natives and non-Natives for a number of different occasions that involve feasts, dances, speeches, and gifts, each of which has a specific Native-language name.

Potlatches are generally structured around specific rituals such as naming ceremonies, weddings, puberty rituals, pole raisings, or memorial ceremonies. Therefore, they function to involve entire communities in witnessing important events.



Throughout the world people recognize important milestones, or changes in status, with ceremonies. What are some of the milestones celebrated in your culture? What ceremonies and rituals are part of these celebrations?

What purpose do witnesses serve at such events? Many legal documents such as marriage certificates and wills must be signed by witnesses. Why is this important?

Historically, potlatches also served to display the material wealth of the individual host and his or her clan. By witnessing the ceremonies and accepting his or her gifts of food, clothing, carvings, or copper, the witnesses acknowledged and accepted the status of their host.

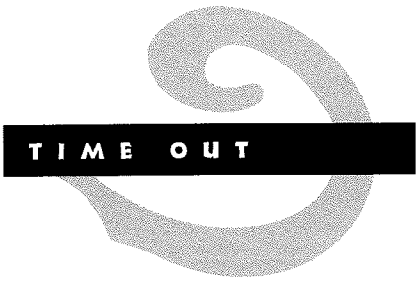
If a potlatch is an opportunity to display wealth, it is also an opportunity to share it in keeping with the most basic principle of social organization — reciprocity. Whatever one clan does for another — share food, grant hunting rights, give an honoring speech, or assist with funeral preparations — will be repaid. The goods distributed as gifts to the guests and as payment to those to whom debts are owed represent a social contract that cannot be broken without bringing dishonor to the family. In this way, material wealth is distributed among clans and communities. By honoring his guests, the potlatch host brings respect to his clan and shares his clan's good fortune with others.

Although a potlatch is usually organized around a ritual or ceremony which focuses on an individual, its function as a public forum is extremely important. The potlatch emphasizes the social impact of individual milestones. These events become part of the public record depicted in totem pole carvings and oratory. For example, when the name of a beloved leader is conferred on a designated heir, the potlatch ceremonies celebrate the heir's individual achievements and heightened status. More importantly, through speeches and dances which honor his lineage, he is publicly given notice of his inherited responsibility to behave honorably according to the ways of his people. The material wealth he inherits is not his alone; it is the clan's. The giving of gifts to the members of other clans in attendance is repayment for their assistance at the time of the deceased leader's death. That debt being publicly paid, the opposite clans are expected to acknowledge the new leader through gift-giving at potlatches they will host in the future. Thus, the potlatch affirms the clan identity of the individual and links clans through a cycle of obligation and repayment.

Potlatches have spiritual functions as well as social ones. At Tlingit memorials, ceremonies are conducted to bring an end to the mourning period so that one's life is not "washed away with tears," making family members "vulnerable to death and the spirit world" (Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1990). When gifts of food, blankets, and clothing are distributed to the guests, the living are comforted and cared for by the spirit of the deceased. Through this process, the spirit of the deceased is comforted as well. The focus of the memorial is healing grief and strengthening community bonds.

A potlatch often requires years of preparation. Planning and saving for a puberty ritual, for example, begin as soon as a child is born. Food must be gathered and preserved to feed hundreds of guests. Special ceremonial robes and masks are created. Artists are commissioned to carve totem poles and paint dance screens. Drums, dance rattles, and ceremonial serving dishes are inventoried and new ones made.

Formal invitations are an important part of potlatch preparations. A century ago, a family representative paddled in a canoe to the villages of invited guests to issue invitations personally. Personal invitations are still important, but they are made via power boat, car, or ferry. Printed invitations are becoming more common.



Why is a special effort made to invite guests of high social status to a potlatch? Special guests such as government officials or celebrities are often invited to recognition ceremonies such as graduations. What does the presence of these guests mean to the honoree? To the other guests? Are you more likely to attend an event if an important person will be there?

Careful consideration must be given to gifts. In the 19th century, gifts of wool blankets from the Hudson Bay Company were common. Jewelry, carvings, and slaves were given as gifts. Bundles of food were

placed on the feasting tables for the guests to take home. Today cash is often given along with household items such as blankets, potholders, glassware, and clothing that have been purchased or made by the host family. The most lavish and costly gifts are given to guests of high rank, but each potlatch guest will receive something. Some gifts are determined at the potlatch. At Potlatch '94 a cash gift was given to a visiting dance group from Seattle when it was learned that the group needed financial support.

TIME OUT

It is common for people who are celebrating milestones in their lives to receive gifts. Presents are given for birthdays, graduations, retirement, marriage, etc. At a potlatch, however, the honoree *gives* gifts instead of *receiving* them. Can you think of some reasons for this custom?

Potlatches are expensive, but each clan member contributes what he or she can, and creative ways are found to minimize the financial burden. For example, one family takes pledges from each member, including the children. Some estimate how much money they could save during the five-year period before the potlatch and pledge that amount toward expenses. Others pledge to provide a certain amount of meat or fish for the feast. To prepare for an upcoming potlatch, the grandchildren of a Tlingit woman living in Alaska held car washes to raise money to bring her to their home in California so that she could teach them about their roles in the ceremonies. Esther Shea, a Tlingit elder from Ketchikan, explains that children must learn the strict potlatch protocol and save and work along with the adults. Otherwise, "they are just acting, rather than participating in the meaning of the ceremonies."

In the 19th century, potlatches were held in the long, cedar plank houses where the host lived (see Figure 60). Sometimes new houses were constructed as part of the potlatch preparations. Today's pot-

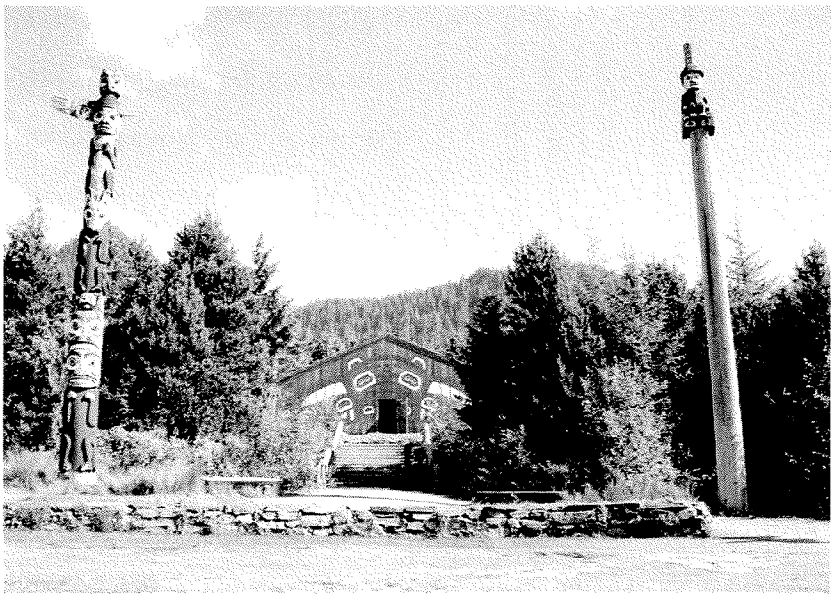


Figure 60

Nineteenth-century potlatches were held in cedar plank houses similar to this model in Saxman. Photo by Donelle Blubaugh.

latches are usually held in community buildings or meeting halls. Potlatch '94 was held in a large meeting hall attached to the Metlakatla Presbyterian Church. As the invited guests enter the building, they are seated according to rank or social position. Once everyone is assembled, a formal speech of welcome is made by a person designated to be the host's speaker. This is a respected and honored position.

Oratories, or eloquent public speeches, are an important feature of potlatches. Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian oratory is a dynamic art form. A speaker must know family histories and relationships, the meanings of family crests and symbols seen on totem poles, masks, and blankets, and the spiritual and social traditions of the group. He or she must be able to weave history and symbols together to bring them to life for the audience. And the speaker must give the speech with the emotion and dignity appropriate to the occasion.

At a memorial, the speaker may display an object owned by the deceased person, such as a ceremonial robe or hat, to evoke the spirits of that person or his/her ancestors. The Tlingit name for these objects is *at.óow*, which translates to "the thing purchased or owned." In this

case, *thing* can refer to land, a personal name, an artistic design, a story or song about an ancestor, even the spirit of the ancestor. *Purchase* refers to what the ancestor did to acquire ownership. Ownership may be acquired through exchange of money, trade, or payment of a debt. Most often it is achieved through personal sacrifice. For example, if a person is killed by a bear, the hunter's relatives may take ownership of the bear's image in payment. The descendants of the hunter eventually inherit ownership of the image and become the caretakers of art objects, regalia, stories, and places related to the event. Thus these objects and the actions they represent become very important in the spiritual, ceremonial, and social lives of the people (Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1990).

In a memorial speech, the speaker skillfully uses words to bring these images to life in a way that brings comfort and peace to the mourners. An example of this is a memorial speech given by Jessie Dalton at a memorial for Jim Marks in 1968. She used a ceremonial blanket decorated with images of terns to connect the mourners with their ancestors and take away their grief. Terns are sea birds common in Southeast Alaska, and their image is the crest belonging to Jim Marks' sisters. Down is a symbol of peace used here to bring spiritual peace to the grieving.

These Terns I haven't yet explained,
yes,
these Terns.
Your fathers' sisters would fly
out over the person who is feeling grief.
Then
they would let their down fall
like snow

over the person who is feeling grief.
That's when their down
isn't felt.
That's when
I feel it's as if your fathers' sisters are flying
back to their nests
with your grief.

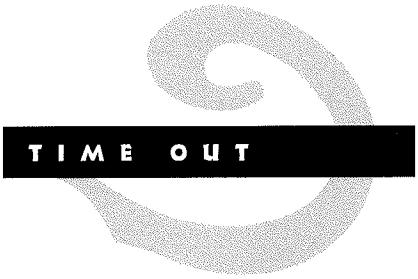
Another segment of her speech refers to a mask carved from cedar with an image of the sun. She evokes a natural world in which a fallen tree feels pain and the sun brings warmth and comfort.

And here,
yes,
is the one this brother of mine explained a while ago:
how that tree rolled for a while on the waves.
Then when it drifted to shore,
the sun would put its rays on it.
Yes.
It would dry its grief
to the core.
At this moment this sun is coming out over you,

my grandparents'
mask.
At this moment
my hope is that your grief
be like it's drying to your core.

From Nora Marks Dauenhauer and Richard Dauenhauer, *Haa Tuwunáagu Yís, For Healing Our Spirit* (1990).

With these words, Jessie Dalton brings the ancestral lands, the ancestors, the trees and sun into the presence of the mourners to heal their spirits and release their grief.



For an earlier activity you were asked to bring an object from home that is meaningful to you. Examine that object again, this time thinking about the action or deed you or its original owner performed to obtain it. Does the object now represent a particular feeling or emotion? If you inherited the object, does it help you remember the person who handed it down? If you were to give the object to someone who had reached an important milestone, what feelings would you want your gift to symbolize? Write a speech, essay, or poem about your object that describes those feelings.

In addition to oratory, dance is an important part of potlatch ceremonies (see Figure 61). Each of the four evenings of Potlatch '94 began with a welcome dance performed by members of that night's host clan. On the fourth night, four Eagle Clan dancers dressed in regalia decorated with the Eagle crest enacted the soaring movement of eagles in flight to the accompaniment of voices, drums, and rattles. They were soon joined by other members of the Eagle Clan, each waving a cluster of white feathers. When the dance floor was full, members of the Eagle Clan in the audience were asked to stand. Each received a feather from one of the dancers, and eventually hundreds of participants held the feathers high in celebration of their shared identity. Eventually, every guest was called to the floor through an invitational dance known as Ad'm Nak. First, guests who are married to members of the Eagle Clan were called, then those whose fathers are Eagle, and so on until each person present was recognized and given a gift.

Like oratory, dance is a way of bringing to life the history and mythology of the Southeast Coast people. Traditionally, dancing was

Figure 61

Tlingit Raven guests sing and dance during the joyous part of a potlatch held in memory of Willie Marks. Photo by Richard Dauenhauer, courtesy Smithsonian Institution.

an important part of social activity during the winter months when people were able to rest up from the seasonal food gathering and storing activities. The Haida consider dancing a vital aspect of a happy life. At potlatches, dances are performed as gifts or payments.

Learning traditional dances is part of renewed interest in reclaiming and perpetuating knowledge of Native culture. Until recently, U.S. Government policy discouraged Native ceremonial practices, including potlatch. Today, potlatches and cultural celebrations provide opportunities for elders to train young people to participate in the social and spiritual meaning of these traditions.

TIME OUT

Plan an event to honor a special person in your life who has achieved an important milestone. That person could be a family member, a friend, or a mentor. What special guests will be invited to this event? Why? Who will be master or mistress of ceremonies? What will you do to display or symbolize this person's change in status? What foods will be served and why? What gifts will be given to each person who attends? Why are these gifts appropriate?

Present your plans to your classmates in the form of an essay or speech.

OR

Join your classmates in making plans to honor an individual whose achievements deserve special recognition. This person could be a local figure who has contributed to your community or an historical figure you admire. Do research to learn all you can about the life of this person. Plan speeches and/or skits that honor this person's contributions. Make posters or other artwork to represent his or her life. Whom will you invite to witness this celebration? Will you distribute gifts? Who will receive them?

OR

Use the following chart to compare a celebration with which you are familiar — such as Christmas, Chinese New Year, Hanukkah, or Kwaanza — to potlatch.

	Potlatch	*Other Celebration*
Significance *What is the purpose of this celebration?*		
Duration *How long does it last?*		
Invitations *Who attends and how are they invited?*		
Events *What activities are part of the celebration?* *What is their meaning?*		
Food *Are any special foods served?*		
Entertainment *Are there music, dance, stories, or other types of entertainment?*		

Much of the information and many of the activities in this section are based on materials prepared by the American Museum of Natural History in New York to accompany the exhibition "Chiefly Feasts" in 1991.

AYMARA RITUAL: CALLING THE SPIRITS

For peasant farmers in the cold, dry, Andean highlands of Bolivia and Peru, daily life is governed by natural and spiritual forces. Seasonal shifts in rainfall and temperature determine times for planting and harvest, tending and trade. The Aymara of Bolivia, like the Hopi and Southeast Alaskan Natives, believe that the deities reside both in the natural and the spirit worlds. In this region where hail, wind, and frost constantly threaten healthy crops, the deities are called upon to protect homes and crops against these threats. In Aymara communities, the agricultural cycle is accompanied by a ritual cycle that acts on the principle of reciprocity — Pachamama (Mother Earth) and Achachila (the lake and mountain spirit) feed the people when the spirits are ritually fed through ceremonies of sacrifice and respect.

These spirits are called upon daily to protect crops, bring rain, and prevent sickness. According to Tomás Huanca Laura, "every social, cultural, economic, and political event is marked by religious-ritual behavior" (in Heth 1992). While these daily invocations link routine activity and spiritual life, special fiestas occur throughout the year which involve entire communities in sacred ceremonies and celebration. Some fiestas are organized to recognize life-cycle events such as births, marriages, and house building. During these fiestas changes in status and social relationships are witnessed by the entire community. Seasonal fiestas, which have become linked to the Catholic cycle of holy days and saints' days, involve the community in honoring the spirits and enlisting their help during times of planting, maturation, and harvest of crops.

Whether fiestas are associated with the agricultural cycle or life-cycle events, they serve to reinforce cultural identity and community values. During a fiesta, the people set aside their individual concerns and take time to consider the community's connections to the spirits

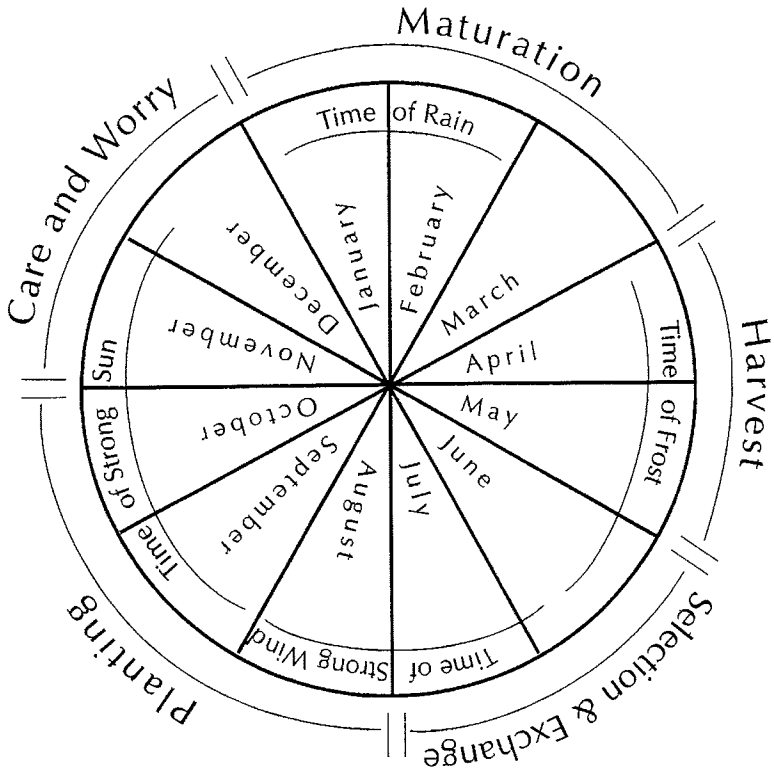
Figure 62

Residents of Lakaya Baja, Bolivia, dance during fiesta celebrations in 1993. Photo by Nancy Rosoff, courtesy Smithsonian Institution.

and to nature and fulfill their sacred obligations. The farmers of the *altiplano* live in isolated family compounds rather than in village clusters. Therefore, fiestas are opportunities to visit with friends and relatives, settle disputes, and plan for community projects. Fiestas are joyous occasions. Sacred ceremonies are performed with reverent formality, but these are inevitably followed by days of feasting and dancing. The sturdy physical characteristics that give Andean people the ability to work their fields and follow their herds in the high mountain air provide the energy and endurance they need to dance for hours without stopping (see Figure 62).

Like Southeast Alaskan potlatches, fiestas require a great deal of preparation. Each fiesta is organized by a sponsor who is responsible for all expenses associated with the event. The sponsor provides the food for all the participants and arranges for dancers and musicians. Because this is an expensive undertaking, the sponsor relies on aid in the form of *ayni* (reciprocated exchange of goods and services), *apxata* (voluntary contribution of goods for a special event which incurs a reciprocal obligation), and *yanapa* (aid given to kin that does not have to be reciprocated). A person who provides aid to a fiesta sponsor can

Figure 63



expect to receive similar assistance for a future fiesta. Although sponsorship brings prestige, financial cooperation and reciprocity are the primary goals. In this way, the fiesta promotes community solidarity.

TIME OUT

What do a fiesta sponsor and a potlatch host have in common? What community values do these events promote?

The Aymara agricultural cycle is divided roughly into five types of activity coinciding with seasonal changes on the *altiplano*. Figure 63 illustrates the agricultural and seasonal cycles. Most planting is done during the dry period from August through October. Additional planting is done during the "Time of Care and Worry," when young plants require constant attention in the strong Andean sun. The months of December, January, and February usually bring the rainy season. This is the time of maturation. During this time, crops achieve their full growth and bear fruit. It is also when they are most vulnerable to sudden nighttime frosts. Harvest takes place as temperatures become con-

sistently colder in April and May. June and July bring strong, cold winds. During this time, the "Time of Selection and Interchange," food is freeze-dried and stored, trade with neighboring communities increases, and seeds are selected for the next season's planting.

TIME OUT

Design a similar chart to illustrate the agricultural and seasonal cycles for other cultures and regions you have learned about.

Each of these agricultural activities is initiated with some ceremonial event to show respect for the earth and invoke the aid of the spirits who control the forces of nature. During the rainy season, for example, a fiesta marks the time of ripening, or *maduración*. This fiesta period begins on February 2. This is the Catholic feast day known as Candlemas or the fiesta of the Virgin of Candelaria. When Christianity was introduced among the Aymara, the people expanded the idea of the Catholic Virgin to include Pachamama, or Mother Earth. Therefore, the Christian observance of the purification of Mary became a celebration of the earth and the maturing crops for the Bolivian Aymara. At the 1994 Festival of American Folklife, Manuel

Figure 64

Community ritual specialists beseech the potato spirits during a Quwachiri ritual in Lakaya Baja, Bolivia, in 1992. Photo by Nancy Rosoff, courtesy Smithsonian Institution.

Calizaya Mendoza, a raised field farmer from Tiwanaku, Bolivia, described February 2 as "the most holy day in the *altiplano*." The fiesta lasts until Carnival, which occurs at the end of February.

The ceremonies begin with preparation of a burnt offering for the Quwachiri (kwa-chee-ree) ritual. Only Native high priests present such offerings. According to Bonifacia Quispe Fernández, an Aymara participant in the 1991 Festival, and Tomás Huanca Laura, an anthropologist, these priests are "our cultural guardians. They determine what belongs to our culture and what is intrusive, foreign. For example, sheep are not native; therefore, they are not part of our ritual culture. Llama, yes — llama is at the heart of our cultural existence" (in Winch 1994).

The offering contains various elements that are symbolic of the earth. Green coca leaves represent the growing plants. Llama fat is emblematic of the fertility of the land. Rock candies resemble the mountain peaks. These items are sprinkled with a special red wine reserved for offerings to Pachamama, combined with *copal* (resin) incense, and placed in an incense burner (see Figure 64).

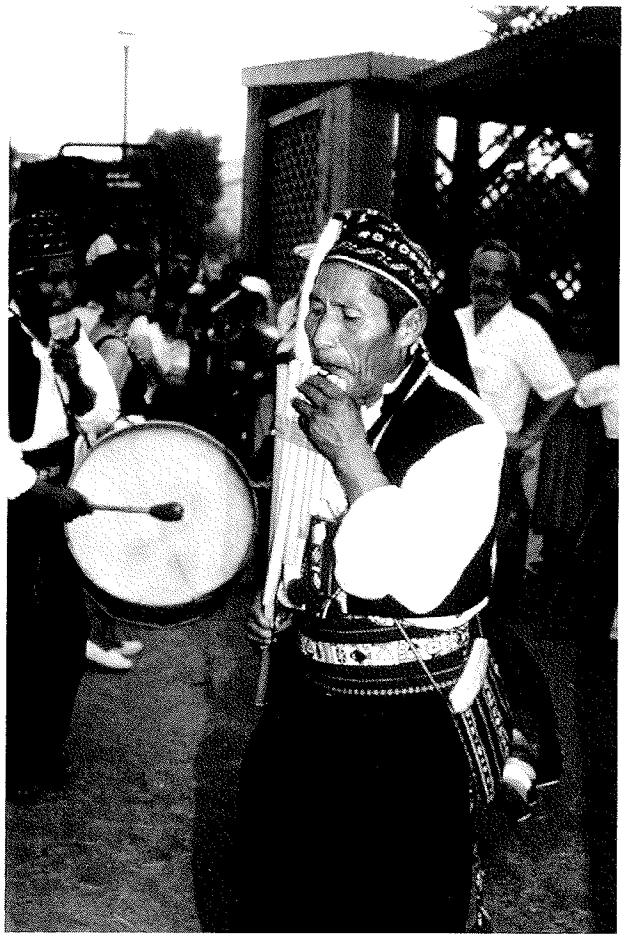
As the offering burns, it is first lifted toward the sky, then it is buried in a field to symbolize the fertility the spirits bring to the land. The participants then call down the spirit of Ispallamama, the spirit of the seeds or fertility of all plants. As they move in a tight circle, dancers wave white cloths toward the sky and sing "*jawilla, jawilla*," or "come, come," to call down the potato spirits to honor them and implore them to keep frost and hail away.

Initially only the single women dance, but later the whole community joins in. The dancers are accompanied by music from flutes, panpipes, and drums. As they dance, the members of the community pour wine on the ground, symbolically feeding Mother Earth, who feeds the people in return.

After the dance, women who have borne children go to the fields

Figure 65

Music and dance are important aspects of Andean festivals and rituals. Men from Taquile, Peru, perform with a panpipe and a goat-hide drum during the 1991 Festival of American Folklife. Photo by Richard Strauss, courtesy Smithsonian Institution.



to dig up a few potato plants. The potato plants are replaced with a large bundle of coca leaves and a quince in the hope that the potatoes will mature to large size. Ritual specialists examine the plants to predict the size of the year's crop. A few immature potatoes are also gathered. Llama fat and coca leaves are pushed into the eyes of the potatoes to make them appear very fertile and powerful. The potatoes may be dressed as if they were human relatives to show gratitude and care to the potato spirits. Again, the symbolic feeding of the potato is done to reciprocate the generosity of the spirits.

While the dances and songs for different occasions may seem quite similar to outsiders, the performers follow strict patterns that are full of symbolic meaning for the Aymara. For example, most dances follow a circular pattern, but the specific occasion — whether the dance

is for planting or harvest, for example — determines whether the dancers will move in a clockwise or counterclockwise direction. The songs sung at the time of planting are sung at a higher pitch than those performed at the time of harvest.

Music and dance are important aspects of all Andean festivals and rituals. Every occasion has specific songs and dances that serve as a way of communicating directly with the spirits. Dances are also performed as dramas that reenact historical events and stories of the spirit world. Musicians and dancers are honored members of Andean communities, and their work is viewed as an important contribution to the well-being of the people (see Figure 65).

TIME OUT

The rituals and ceremonies of any culture are one way that group traditions are preserved. Rituals and ceremonies also function to acknowledge social change. For example, Aymara ceremonies and rituals are based on ancient traditions, but they also incorporate some of the Christian observances of Spanish missionaries and settlers. Do some research to find out how a ritual or ceremony observed in your family or community has changed over time. What caused these changes? Your librarian can help you find information about the history of holiday celebrations such as Valentine's Day or Kwaanza and milestone ceremonies such as weddings and funerals.

OR

Traditional Andean music is becoming more popular in the United States. Listen to recordings of traditional Andean music. Prepare an audio presentation for your class in which you introduce traditional Andean songs. Your music teacher may be able to help you locate Andean instruments such as the panpipe, wooden flute, or goat-hide drum that you can use as part of your demonstration. The recordings listed below will help you get started:

Anthology of Central and South American Indian Music
Smithsonian Folkways #4542 (2 cassettes)
Smithsonian Folkways
414 Hungerford Dr., Suite 444
Rockville, MD 20850

Creation's Journey: Native American Music Presented by the National Museum of the American Indian
Smithsonian Folkways #SF 40410 (cassette or CD)

Mountain Music of Peru, Vol. 1
Smithsonian Folkways #SF 40020 (cassette or CD)
Mountain Music of Peru, Vol. 2
Smithsonian Folkways #SF 40406 (cassette or CD)

OR

There may by civic or religious organizations in your community that are aware of Andean immigrants living in your community. By contacting these groups you may find Andean musicians who are eager to perform for your class.

THE HOPI CEREMONIAL CYCLE

Hopi ritual life revolves around a series of ceremonies which occur throughout the year. Like many Aymara fiestas, these ceremonies overlap the agricultural cycle and are performed to bring rain and fertility to the crops. The ceremonies also enact the emergence of the Hopi people into the Fourth World and reinforce their role as caretakers of the earth.

The Hopi have fought hard to retain the right to practice their religion without interference from outsiders. In the past, traditional ceremonies were banned by Christian missionaries and government officials. Hopi were physically punished for practicing their religion and speaking their language. Children sent to government boarding schools far from home were forced to learn Christian doctrine. Leigh Jenkins, director of the Hopi Cultural Preservation Office, remembers the pain of being forced to "choose" a Christian sect on the enrollment forms for a residential school he attended. He was confused because "Hopi was not even an option."

TIME OUT

What do you suppose government and religious agencies hoped to accomplish by banning Native American religious practices such as potlatch and Hopi ceremonies? Discuss how you think these cultures have been affected by these policies.

In recent years, the Hopi have grown wary of tourists and other outsiders who have disrupted ceremonies with noise, video equipment, and recorders. It is not surprising, then, that today the Hopi have closed most of their ceremonies to outsiders.

Another reason many of the ceremonies are private is that they serve as initiation rituals. Initiations are performed when a person demonstrates through his or her achievements that special status and recognition are deserved. Children participate in ceremonies in limited ways until they are old enough to fully understand Hopi traditions, beliefs, and responsibilities. As they mature in skill and knowledge, they will be included in adult activities and given opportunities to earn positions in a number of religious and social groups.

Throughout their adult lives, the spiritual achievements of Hopi men and women are recognized in initiations that empower them with increasing respect and authority. By keeping these ceremonies private, the Hopi make sure that those who participate understand their sacred meaning.

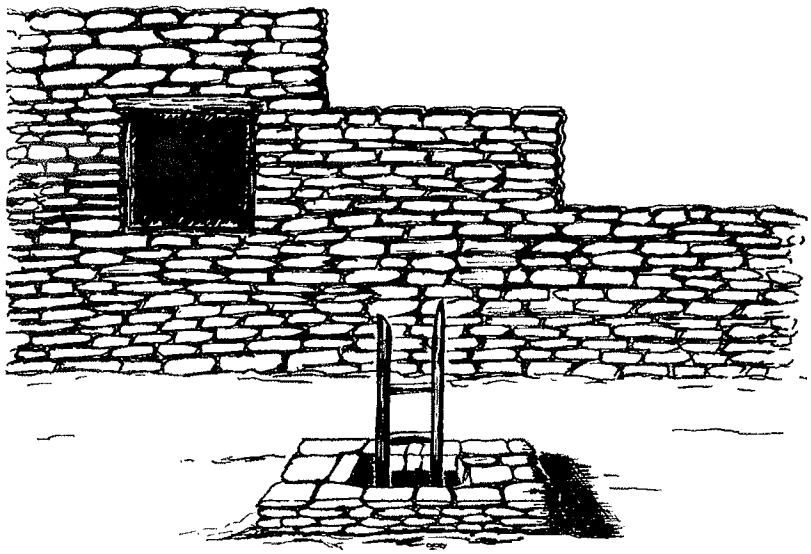
TIME OUT

Can you think of any groups that require prospective members to prove knowledge and skill? Are there specific age or training requirements? Why are such requirements important? Do these groups hold ceremonies for initiates?

The Hopi ceremonial cycle is an annual reenactment of the people's relationship with their deities and the land. It reinforces social structures and gives ceremonial significance to values of interdependence, reciprocity, and respect that are central to Hopi daily life. The descriptions below give general information about several ceremonies without pro-

Figure 66

Many Hopi ceremonies are performed in kivas, *underground ceremonial chambers. Think about what you have learned about Hopi beliefs. What is the significance of conducting ceremonies below ground?*



viding details that interfere with the religious training young people receive from the initiated adults in their communities.

The first ceremony of the ritual cycle is Wuwuchim. This ceremony takes place in November and is dedicated to Masauwu, the caretaker of this world who promised the Hopi that he would provide for them if they followed his instructions. According to Hopi tradition, Masauwu derives his power from the sun and projects its warmth to the earth, thereby germinating the seeds that lie below the soil. Many Hopi ceremonies are conducted in underground ceremonial chambers called *kivas* (see Figure 66).

The second winter ceremony is Soyal, among the most important ceremonies in the cycle. It takes place at the time of the winter solstice in December. The sun has reached the end of its southward journey and is ready to return to the Hopi world, giving strength and warmth to the people and their crops. Soyal marks the first appearance of the Kachinas (spirits), who are present among the Hopi for six months of the year. The Soyal Kachina (see Figure 67), dressed in a turquoise helmet (which represents his emergence from the Southwest) and a white cotton blanket, wobbles unsteadily through the village mimick-

ing the steps of a child learning to walk. This performance represents new life coming to the Hopi mesas with the end of winter. Mastop Kachina (see Figure 68) represents male fertility. His black mask signals his journey from above, and the bag of cornmeal he carries is a symbol of fertility.

TIME OUT

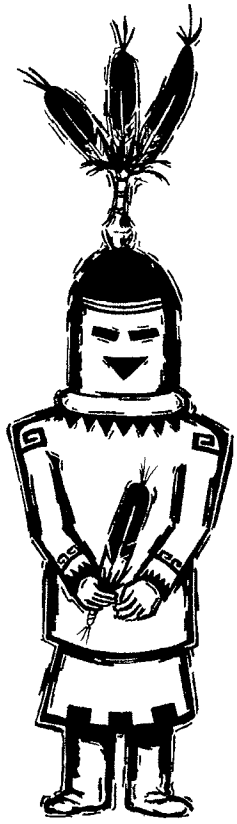
Throughout the world, cultures conduct special ceremonies during the winter solstice. Like Christmas and Hanukkah, many have origins connected to the end of darkness and the return of life-giving light. What significance does the winter solstice have for other cultures?

During Soyal, the patterns of Hopi life for the coming year are laid out in the *kiva*. The solemn ceremonies performed at the *kiva* altars eventually give way to entertaining dances and dramas performed in the village plazas. Dancers tease the members of the audience and give gifts of watermelon and sweet corn to the children.

The final activity of this three-week-long ceremony is also lighthearted. Women emerge from their homes and throw water on the men to bring snow and rain to moisten the crops that will be planted in the early spring. Then *somiviki*, sweet blue cornmeal tied in cornhusk packages, is distributed to everyone as a final wish for bounty and happiness.

February brings the final winter ceremony, Powamu. Bean plants are distributed to each household by the Kachinas. Ceremonial activity decreases during the busy planting months of March, April, and May, but the Kachinas are still present in the Hopi world. Later, during the July Niman ceremony, the people will reciprocate the Kachinas' February gifts by giving the Kachinas the first harvest from the ripening fields. The Kachinas then return to their home in the underworld.

There are several hundred Kachinas recognized by the Hopi. In addition to their symbolic function at ceremonies, they are involved in the discipline of children. During Powamu, for example, Kachinas



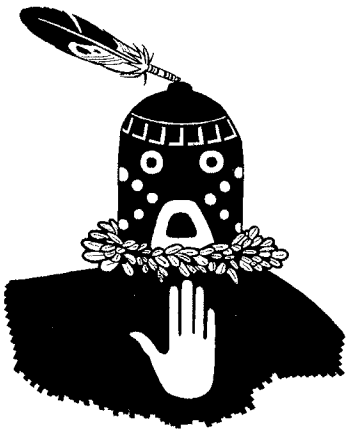


Figure 67

The Soyal, or Solstice, Kachina brings new life to the Hopi mesas at winter's end.

Figure 68

Mastop Kachina's black mask signals his journey from above. He carries a bag of cornmeal as a symbol of fertility.

visit children who have misbehaved to scold and threaten them. The children offer gifts to the spirits and make promises to behave in the future. The Kachina dances are opportunities for young people to learn about the expectations of their elders and their responsibilities to the community.

Like Andean and Southeast Alaskan ceremonies, these Hopi rituals require extensive preparation on the part of the clan leaders who organize them. For Niman, for example, relatives clean and paint the leader's house. The daughters-in-law and nieces make huge pots of sweet corn pudding. Corn is ground for *piki* bread and for ceremonial use weeks in advance.

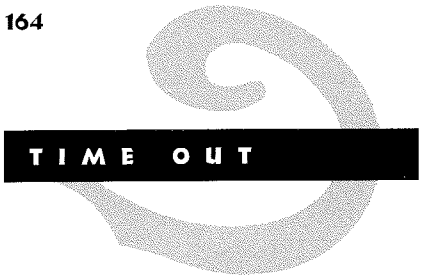
The ceremonies also bring relatives who live far away back to the mesas to participate. These ceremonies preserve and renew the meaning of Hopi life. They dramatically intertwine the agricultural and spiritual identity of the people and renew the covenant Masauwu made at the time of emergence:

My life is simple.
All I have is my planting stick and my corn.

If you are willing to live as I do
and follow my instructions,
the life plan which I shall give you,
you may live here and take care of the land.

Then you shall have a long, happy, fruitful life.

From *Hopi Prophecy* (1995).



Hopi, Aymara, and Southeast Alaskan Native ceremonies are closely related to each group's subsistence practices. How are subsistence foods used in these ceremonies?

Anthropologists, folklorists, and other scholars study the rituals and ceremonies of cultural groups to learn about the values and beliefs of those groups. According to the descriptions above, what are some of the values that Hopi, Andean, and Southeast Alaskan Natives share? What beliefs are unique to each group?

Suggested Resources

General

Native American Dance: Ceremonies and Social Traditions, ed. Charlotte Heth (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press/National Museum of the American Indian, 1992). This lavishly illustrated book contains a series of essays which explore the enduring importance of music and dance in Native life. It is an excellent resource for learning about the relationships among aspects of spiritual, material, and artistic culture.

Hopi Ritual and Ceremony

Hopi Kachinas (New York: National Museum of the American Indian, 1971). The illustrations by Edwin Earle and text by Edward A. Kennard provide information about the Hopi ritual cycle and the role of Kachinas in Hopi life.

Southeast Alaskan Oratory and Potlatch

Haa Tuwunáagu Yís, For Healing Our Spirit: Tlingit Oratory, ed. Nora Marks Dauenhauer and Richard Dauenhauer (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990). This is a detailed examination of Tlingit memorial or potlatch traditions. Students will be interested in seeing the Tlingit-language texts of memorial oratories with English translations on facing pages.

Videotaped highlights of Celebration, the biennial gathering of Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian dance groups in Juneau, Alaska, are available from the Sealaska Heritage Foundation, One Sealaska Plaza, Suite 201, Juneau, Alaska 99801 (Tel. 907-463-4884).

Andean Dance and Music

See "The Fiesta: Rhythm of Life in the Sierras of Mexico and the Altiplano of Bolivia" by Nancy Rosoff and Olivia Cadaval in *Native American Dance: Ceremonies and Social Traditions,* cited above.