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MYTH AS HISTORY: THE JIMSON WEED
CYCLE OF THE HUICHOLS OF MEXICO

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Inhabiting the remote and rugged portions of the Sierra Madre Occidental in the states of Jalisco and Nayarit, the 8300 surviving Huichols occupy a unique position among Mexican Indians in several respects, but above all in the area of religion. Their aboriginal religion and world view appear to have remained virtually unchanged throughout the four centuries since the Conquest. Thus the syncretism which typifies other Indians in Middle America is almost wholly absent among the Huichols. Their principal deities are still Tatewari, Our Grandfather (Fire); Ta-yaupá, Our Father (Sun); and numerous water, maize and earth goddesses known collectively as Our Mothers. The Huichol magical world view centers on an intricate philosophical symbol complex unifying deer, maize and peyote.

Considering the remarkable degree to which the Huichols have preserved their traditional way of life, and especially their ideology and

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1 For the past eighteen months the authors have been engaged in recording and analyzing Huichol oral traditions and mythology as part of a larger study of Huichol religion and ideology and their relationship to problems of directed and spontaneous culture change. The authors would like to thank the Chancellor’s Committee on International and Comparative Studies of the University of California at Los Angeles and the UCLA Latin American Center for the allocation of Ford Foundation grants which enabled them to carry on their field research with the Huichols. The present paper is one of a series of studies of Huichol religion, mythology and symbolism resulting from field work in 1966.


3 *Lophophora williamsii*, a small cactus containing eight alkaloids of which the most important is mescaline. Taken in sufficient quantities, peyote produces visions whose content is largely determined by the user’s culture but which almost always appear in or are surrounded by brilliant colors.
religious beliefs and practices, they have been surprisingly neglected by anthropologists. Only two ethnologists have published extensively on field work carried out in the Huichol region. The first were the monographs and travel accounts of the Norwegian ethnographer CARL LUMHOLTZ who worked among the Huichols between 1895 and 1898 under the auspices of the American Museum of Natural History (LUMHOLTZ, 1900, 1902, 1904). The second ethnologist to write about them at any length was the American ROBERT M. ZINGG who in 1934 lived in Tuxpan, one of the five Huichol regions, or "communities," in the Sierra Madre Occidental (ZINGG, 1938). LUMHOLTZ, however, concentrated on Huichol aesthetics and iconography, and ZINGG'S work, though useful for its purely descriptive aspects, leaves much to be desired by contemporary ethnographic standards. Unfortunately, it is particularly deficient in the areas of religion and mythology, which permeate every level of Huichol life.

The French traveller and scholar LEON DIGUET also visited the Huichols and their neighbors and linguistic cousins, the Coras, between 1896 and 1900 (DIGUET, 1911). His interests ranged from the Huichol language to ceremonial art and he gathered an important collection of ritual objects now in the Musée de l'Homme in Paris. The German ethnographer and student of Indian religions KARL THEODOR PREUSS spent some months in the Sierra around the turn of the century and published on Huichol religion and mythology in the early 1900s (PREUSS, 1908). The work resulting from his field studies, however, principally concerns the religion of the Coras (PREUSS, 1912). Though PREUSS collected 69 Huichol texts, including myths and folktales, these were never published and since the bulk of his notes was reportedly destroyed during World War II they are lost to us forever. The extent of this loss can be gauged by PREUSS' own statement (1908:397-8) that

there would seem to be few peoples with so much "living literature" as the tribes visited by me, and even fewer for whom this literature has been preserved for posterity. However, the editing of these texts, which in their rough state fill more than 5000 notebook pages with interlinear Spanish translations, should take at least six years.

In recent years linguistic studies have been carried out among the Huichols by members of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (GRIMES,

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1The material Preuss collected included 49 Cora, 69 Huichol and 178 "Mexicano" (Nahuatl-speakers) myths and tales (PREUSS, 1908:372).
1959, 1964; Grimes and Grimes, 1962; McIntosh, 1945; McIntosh and Grimes, 1954). The Mexican Instituto Nacional Indigenista has also conducted some field work (Fabila, 1959). The few remaining first-hand scholarly studies of Huichol life are confined for the most part to specialized articles in professional journals or are unpublished. In any case, until the present authors began their work with Huichol informants no extensive treatment of Huichol mythology, religion and world view had been undertaken. Indeed, no current comprehensive Huichol ethnography is presently available, although a combined overview of Huichol and Cora culture by Joseph E. Grimes and Thomas B. Hinton will appear in a future volume of the Handbook of Middle American Indians.

Myths and traditions collected by us and translated up to the present include, among others: origin stories such as the birth of the Fire and Sun deities; the theft of fire by the animal people; the deluge and the remaking of the world; the coming of maize to the Huichols; a number of narratives on the sacred role of peyote and the deer-maize-peyote symbol complex; the First Shaman (the God of Fire) and shamanism in general; and the deeds of the culture hero, the Sacred Deer-Person Kāuyūmari. All of these are part of a considerable body of sacred mythology which the mara'akāme chants at the various ceremonies held principally in the spring, before the clearing and planting of the land, and in the fall, before and after the harvest.

It is during the spring (or dry season) ceremonies that the highly sacred hallucinogenic peyote cactus is eaten by all Huichols, young and old, male and female. The peyote is collected in late December and early January by groups of pilgrims who generally walk from the Huichol

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8 An illustrated volume on Huichol ethnology, world view and mythology by the authors has been completed and is scheduled for publication in the near future under the auspices of the Latin American Center and the Museum and Laboratories of Ethnic Arts and Technology, University of California, Los Angeles.

9 The assistance of Dr. Joseph E. Grimes of the Summer Institute of Linguistics in Mexico City is gratefully acknowledged. Dr. Grimes spent many long, hard hours translating the original Huichol texts collected by us and also contributed valuable insights based on his long field experience among the Huichols.

In many respects the Huichol shaman resembles the classical shaman of other primitive peoples, serving as intermediary between the individual (as well as the group) and the supernatural world in times of crisis and performing magical cures by means of the common shamanic techniques of blowing, spitting, and sucking. He is also "called" to his profession by the gods ("divine election") and enters a trancelike state during which his soul journeys to the other world. In other important respects, however, he serves as priest, both in relation to the Huichol temple, or tuki, and in organizing and officiating at the sacred ceremonies during which he sacrifices to the deities and chants the sacred mythology. Because of the significance of the priest-like functions and the predominance of this role over shamanic curing, we prefer to use the Huichol term mara'akāme rather than shaman in the body of this paper.
region to the sacred peyote country (called Wirikúta) in the state of San Luis Potosí in north central Mexico, a distance of approximately five hundred kilometers, as the crow flies. Making the journey on foot is preferred both for aesthetic and religious reasons ("walking is more beautiful and there is more time to purify ourselves"). It is permissible to travel to Wirikúta by any other means as well, so long as all of the sacred places between the Huichol Sierra and the peyote country are visited and acknowledged. These places are named and located precisely on a kind of subjective territorial map which every Huichol acquires from childhood through hearing the sacred mythology. This pilgrimage, central to Huichol religion and world view, was briefly described by Lumholtz on the basis of statements made to him by his informant but the trip was not observed by anthropologists until the authors were permitted to participate in a sacred peyote journey in December 1966. The observations made and data obtained during this experience were indispensable to an understanding of Huichol Weltanschauung and Lebensanschauung and will be discussed in future publications.

It is obvious that in the collection of oral literature allowance has to be made for the creative imagination of individual narrators and for variations and changes which naturally occur in oral traditions over time. This is especially true for the Huichols, who place a high value on creative story-telling and esteem the ability of the narrator, that is, the mará'akáme, to embellish the basic theme with literary flourishes. This tendency was noted also by Preuss who collected four variants of the same myth from four different mará'akáte (pl.) in four different districts (Preuss, 1908:386). Nevertheless, wherever comparative material was available to us, we were struck by the remarkable persistence not only of the basic themes of the sacred mythology but even of many seemingly minor details. For example, a lengthy myth of the deluge recorded by us differed neither in its major nor many of its subsidiary features from one collected by Lumholtz more than seventy years ago (Lumholtz, 1900:169-170). This striking conservatism is evident also in art; many of the designs described and illustrated by Lumholtz are still used without variation, and their interpretation by modern artists often exactly parallels those given to Lumholtz by his informants. This is so even though it is precisely in the past half century, and especially in the past decade, that the Huichols have been subjected to greater pressures of acculturation on almost every level than at any time since the Sierra Madre was brought under control by the Spaniards in the second decade of the 18th Century.
In the course of our work we found that there was one subject the Huichols were strikingly reticent to discuss: datura, or, as it is known in México, *toloáche*. Many Huichols will not even acknowledge that they have ever heard of it. In fact, it is called *kiéri* in Huichol and in the mythology it is personified as *Kiéri Téwiyári*, or Datura Person, who is considered to be the supernatural chief of the sorcerers. ZINGG (1938: 212-213) collected fragments of a *kiéri* myth and it was this reference which first led us to ask our informant, RAMON, himself an apprentice *mara'akáme*, about the use of *toloáche* among the Huichols. However, it was not until we had worked with him for over a year that he agreed to tell us stories about *kiéri*, and to illustrate them with "paintings" in colored wool yarn, as he had been doing with other myths he related for us. By this time, his early reservations about our motives in asking questions about his religion had disappeared and we had gained his full confidence.8

The *kiéri* stories recorded below represent a true cycle — an epic prose-poem describing the birth, life and violent death of *Kiéri Téwiyári*, the evil Datura Person, also known as the "Tree of the Wind," who seeks through his juices and by means of sorcery to lure the Huichols away from using peyote to the use of datura instead. *Kiéri Téwiyári* is finally vanquished by the horned culture hero Káwyúmari (in his form as the anthropomorphized sacred deer) with the aid of peyote, but even after his physical destruction he continues to pose a serious threat to the psychic integrity of the community.

1. HOW *KIÉRI TÉWÍYARI* WAS BORN

The first story of the cycle relates the magical birth of *Kiéri Téwiyári*. He is not born from a mother and father but "from the wind," and even while he is still a small child, bats, wolves, poisonous vipers and other creatures identified with sorcery, illness and death come flying out of his mouth accompanied by brilliant flashes of color. Sorcerers await his coming, for he is destined to be their teacher and chief.

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8These early reservations were understandable since our first contact with RAMON came through the assistance of a missionary whose liking and sympathy for the Huichols he acknowledged but whom he nevertheless regarded as a potential threat to his own religious traditions. In the presence of this missionary he once fielded one of our questions about *kiéri* by stating seriously that *kiéri* was "the sacred flower of the mara'akáme." This, he later explained to us, was a device to protect his religion because he felt missionaries "only want to learn about our religion so that they can change it." For further discussion of "Datura Person" see p. 56.
This is how it was. We must know it well. We must be able to know everything. Because the symbols say all that is sacred to us, and the stories I tell you are our stories, our history. What they say, what they carry in their wisdom, that is our history, and that is what must be fully understood. So I tell these things to you, as it was with us in ancient times, as it is now.

This is the story of the Tree of the Wind, the evil Tree of the Wind who is called Kiéři. Kiéři Téwyáři, that Kiéři Person. He who is known as Tutákúri, whom one called Tutákúri. Kiéři and Tutákúri, they are the same. How he was born. How he came up, wanting to be more than Káuyúṃari.

How was it when he was born, that Tree of the Wind Person? He was bad, evil, when he was born. He was born from the wind, he was born on the wind. He was not born from his mother, his father. He came from the wind, on the wind, an evil wind. The wind was his father. When he was born sorcerers waited. Five sorcerers waited, seated in a circle. They waited for him. Something happened, something went on there. Something went on inside him when he was born. It moved in him. Something moved inside him. He was transformed.

Bats came out of his mouth. He was just a small child, a nunútsi. Yet bats came out of his mouth. They flew out.

Wolves came out of his mouth. He opened his mouth and wolves came out of his mouth. Crawling things came out of his mouth. He saw how he was. He said to himself, "If that is what I am like, that is what I will be."

He said, "That is what I am going to spend my life doing. I will be a collector of vipers, of poisonous snakes. I will be a master of snakes, of crawling things. I am going to control them. That is what I am going to do."

From then on he grew. He was afflicted with an illness, right then, from then on. An illness of the wind. He has a madness in him, as one says. When he was small, dark things came out of his mouth. Blue things came out of his mouth. Crimson things. That is how he was. He was like that.

What on earth happened there? He came on the wind. He

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9There is no explanation for the use of this proper name by which Kiéři Téwyáři is also known. It is not impossible that the two protagonists whose struggle is recorded in the myth cycle are historical figures, perhaps the leaders of two rival cults. Káuyúṃari (which literally means "one who does not know himself" or "one who makes others crazy") might have been a historical mara'akámé who as a culture hero merged with an original Master of the Species (the sacred deer), while Tutákúri might have been another mara'akámé who, as leader of a datura cult, merged with the mythological personification of the datura plant as the chief of the sorcerers (cf.p. 55).
came, he was born. He was evil, the chief of sorcerers. That is how he was born.

It was seen how he was. Our Mothers saw how he was. They said, "We are going to watch over what Kiéri is saying. What he does. We are worried about it somewhat. We hope it turns out well."

2. HOW THE SORCERERS LEARNED FROM Kiéri

In the second myth of the cycle, Kiéri Téviyári deceives the people by acting like a true mara'akáme. He uses the shamanic drum, sacred ceremonial arrows and chants to gain their trust and then feeds them datura. Drunk with his magic some of his victims become demented to the point of self-destruction; others learn the arts of sorcery: how to send illness and death, how to control dangerous creatures such as poisonous snakes and vampire bats, how to make people, especially women, lose all self-control, how to maim and kill by magical means and how to transform themselves into various animals.

There were others there. They saw how he was. They said, "Ah, we will copy what he does." Even when he was small they saw that. They went around copying him. What Kiéri said, what he did. They copied that.

They sat in a circle, copying him. He was their chief. Some people are like that, they learn from him. They follow his trail. They get dizzy and cough. It makes them drunk, it makes them trip all over their feet. They fall writhing.

He sings to them. He uses his arrows, he deceives them. He says, "I am the mara'akáme, follow me." He influences them in this way. He causes them to roll around. So that they are seized by a desire to climb the high cliffs, to fly, to jump down, down, down below. As though they were flying. They think they can fly, those people. Learning from him they become sorcerers. They were doing this thing without taking heed. They were acting under enchantment.

Others in those times were not like that. They have the heart of Our Father in them. They have the heart of Our Grandfather in them. They have the heart of Our Mothers in them. They see this thing. One says, "Ah, no, if I were to follow that one, if I were to listen as he sings, if I were to eat those things, it would be bad."

If I am to eat in safety, with a good heart, if I am to have my life, if I am to have my power, I will have to take my place in the
tükí, I have to take my place in the xiríki.10 I have to cross over there, five times, to Wirikúta, there where one hunts the peyote. I have to put their offerings in their places. It that not right? I say this to you here, as I sit here telling it to you.

Ah, no, he is not like that. Look, this comes to be that there were many from the time that he was born. He made them like that. He tells them, "Look, catch that viper. That animal there that comes and goes, it is good. It is good to paralyze that person. So that he will fall, from this side to that side. So that he will have sickness. So that he will die." Those others, those crawling things, as he went telling them. He was starting them out slowly. "Go catch that little snake there," he said, "it is good, it will heed your words, your command." He started them on that road. First there is that little snake. Then there are others. More things, evil.

He starts to make sounds, he teaches them. They make sounds even like the deer, from far away. They start to call from far away, as someone is dying. They call him, "tsiu, tsiu, tsiu, tsiu." They call like deer to him who is dying. They start to make sounds like owls, "whooo, whoooo, whoooo, whoooo." They go, "swish, swish, swish," through the night. And that sick person over here starts to moan, "áyi, áyi, áyi, that animal has come to eat me, it has come to kill me." Because Kiéri teaches them these things. He is transformed. He is transformed. He transforms them. And then is heard a níse made by the fox. Kiéri commands him. He starts to say, "cau-u, cau-u, cau-au." It is the fox. When the fox comes up to you and bites, you must die. There is no help for that. It is the spirit of Kiéri that wanders about. It means death. It is when Tukákame11 wanders about. The fox is there.

Bats, they arrive where there is one who is sick. It is as Kiéri commands them, as he taught them, there in ancient times. When he was born. The sick person is lying there, he is asleep. And that bat comes. He moans, in his sleep, "áyi, áyi, áyi." He moans, "here comes that animal, here comes another. It will kill me, áyi, it takes my heart out. Ayi," he cries, "that animal is killing me, it is the Tree of the Wind that is killing me." That is how he teaches them, to do these things.

That person is sick. He starts to have visions, he sees things. "Oh," he says, "here comes this, here goes that, ah, take it away, take it away." He makes him arise, that Tree of the Wind, he makes him

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10 The tükí is a temple devoted to the major Huichol deities, with Tatewari, Our Grandfather (Fire), residing in the sacred cavity in the center. The xiríki is a smaller structure erected as an oratory for a specific deity or as a residing place for the soul or souls of ancestors which have rejoined the living in the form of rock crystals. Although exact figures are not known, there are probably not more than 20-25 temples in the entire Huichol region, whereas almost every Huichol ranch has at least one xiríki, and sometimes several.
11 A cannibalistic ogre who wears the bones of his human victims as clothing.
go out into the wind, hot, sick, into the cold out there. He is killing him. Then they find him there, lying. Dying. Because the Tree of the Wind has it against him. The sorcerers are trying to kill him. Some with knives, others with axes, others with stones, others with those animals. Where the soul is, they try to grab it as it travels at night, when one is asleep, they grab it, eat it. They throw him down, they kill him. "Oh my head, oh, oh." That is how this thing is, that is what they learn from him, all his power, from that chief of the sorcerers. He transforms them, he transforms people. They learn from him.

Many people he transforms. He makes them how he wants them to be. Some into burros, others into birds, others into butterflies, flying, flying with a heart. Everything is done by that Kíeri Person. He sends them this way and that, from one place to another. In a demented state, crazy. They go to one side, and they return and go to the other. Some laughing, like contented persons, sane persons. But it is because of the sorcerer. Because he started all this. Ah, that one, he learns to deceive.

He learns how everything is. The proper forms of speech. What one says. As one speaks, "Ah, my older brother, my younger brother, how are you? My younger sister, how are you?" He learned well. He comes upon you in no recognizable form. One does not know how he is inside. The way he is inside his mouth. As we full well know. The vipers are in there, the crawling things are in there. The sicknesses are in there. The wolves are in there.

He sings to them, he beats his drum, he uses his arrows. He says to them, "I am the mara'akéme." He says to them, "As I play the drum for you, as I sing the chant, you listen. You heed me. I tell you how it is." He said, "I am greater than Kăuyūmari." But can that one be so? Can one be greater than he who has the heart of Our Father, Our Grandfather, Our Mothers? No, it cannot be so. Can one be greater than he who has the heart of our Father, Our Grandfather, Our Mothers? No, it cannot be so.

So he speaks, deceiving them, lying to those people. He went around eating up vipers. He speaks with dark things, he speaks with crimson things, he speaks with intense colors, really intense. He speaks in a drunken way. As they see this, he says, "Oh, I am just a little drunk. I am fine. I know how to do it." There he sits, feeling fine, as they say. They do not see how it is, they do not see the sap running out. They do not see him as he is. There he sits, he has a fine reputation. He sings to them,

This is me, Kíeri drunk,
I am down below here,
I have been commanded,
I have been commanded,
To be at Tuitari.
Why am I crazy?
That's why I'm crazy
I chase after girls,
That's why I'm crazy.

Singing that song of his own composition he goes around, all by himself. He takes hold of them, he grabs them, he bites them, he makes them lose control of themselves. He goes around singing, shouting, "Oh, am I drunk, oh, oh, I am getting around these days, that's how I am." He shouts, "Ah, that is how I am, I am drunk, I feel fine, oh can I dance!" So he sings, making them lose control of themselves.

He teaches those others. They sit with him, they learn from him. They become sorcerers, witches. He speaks to them, "Oh my brothers, I will treat you fine. You are going to make out fine with me." He says, "If they are like that, I am going to treat them fine. I will treat them according to how they go." He sings, "I go around dancing, I vomit as I dance, I go around dancing." He does this so as to receive the proper offerings. "Ah," he says, "my face is brilliant, it is properly arranged, it is shining. My face is all painted, it looks like the Sun." So he goes around singing, he goes beating the drum, he goes deceiving them. That is how he is.

3. HOW KÁUYÚMARI DECIDES TO KILL KIÉRI TÉWÍYÁRI

Káuyúmari enters the picture in the third story of the myth cycle. He spies on Kiéri in order to learn his secrets, for knowledge is power and Káuyúmari will have to muster all of his power in order to defeat his rival. Not only does Káuyúmari realize he will have to eliminate Kiéri Téwíyári as a false mara'akáme and leader of a cult of sorcerers but the gods themselves encourage the rivals to fight it out.

Ah, others are looking on seeing what he is. Others see this, they hide, watching. They follow him to all these places. What kind of thing is he yelling? "Ah," one says, "look, they are eating snakes, they are eating vipers, they are eating crawling things as they go along." Káuyúmari and Tatewari hide there, watching him. "I will go up there, I will hide there." Káuyúmari speaks. "I will wait quietly. I will see what he does. I will make my decision."

What on earth happened there? As I am telling it to you, that is how it was. This is the story of the Tree of the Wind and the ascendance of the real mara'akáme. The ascendance of Káuyúmari. When the Tree of the Wind was born, he wanted to be more than Káuyúmari. He wanted to be in competition with him. To beat him. They were rivals and he wanted to defeat him. But no, he could not do this. Because Káuyúmari is more powerful. Very, very. They
had an ill feeling toward one another. They became enemies. From that day, when he was born, they became enemies. Because one did not want the other to be more powerful than he. Because Káuyúmari aids Tatewarí. All those most powerful one. He has his horns. He has his arrows. He has his peyote.

They were in competition, rivals. Kiéri, that Tree of the Wind, was singing. He deceived them. He sang it wrong. False things. They believed it. Then those most powerful ones, Our Father, Our Grandfather, all those most powerful ones, they asked Káuyúmari, "Why do you let him get the better of you?" They asked, "How is it that he tries to be more powerful than you? That Tree of the Wind?" They said, "No, it should not be like that." He becomes angry. And they said to the Tree of the Wind, "Why is it that you let him get the better of you? How is it that you let him be stronger?" So they spoke to that Tree of the Wind, to make him angry. They set them against each other so that they had a dispute, so that they should meet in combat. So that Káuyúmari should beat him.

Káuyúmari said, "Ah, I have been ready for him ever since he was born." He said, "I will watch him, I will see what it is they do. I will learn his secrets. All his wisdom. What he is thinking, what he is saying. What he does. How he does these things. Everything, everything." He did that, getting control of it, capturing everything.

He was copying it. He followed him. He saw how he did these things, deceiving them. He learned everything, everything. He acquired it for himself. He saw where they went, how he travelled. And that other one, he had no knowledge of it. He did not suspect. Thinking he was all alone. That he was the only one who was going to do these things. He did not know.

Our Father asked, "How can he be this way? How can you let him be this way?" Our Grandfather asked, "How is that you let him be this way?" Káuyúmari is angry. Oh, he is angry. He says, "I am spying on him. I am learning his secrets." He says, "No, it cannot be this way." He takes his arrows. He says, "It cannot go like this. I am going to see how I can kill him. I must leave him fallen wherever it may be. I will shrivel him up, that Tree of the Wind. I will burn him as I have killed him."

So he spoke as he went spying on him. Looking where he can do it. He arrives at the ranch, where they sit in a circle. Where he sings, there he goes spying on him. His paths, where he walks. The path by which he enters. He waits for him. He does not come. The path by which he leaves. Over here, another path. Ah, where is he? No, it could not be that they were getting the better of him.

He said, "One must take a chance. One must gamble one's heart in this world. There are some things one must do all alone in this world. I will take a chance to see how I will be able to kill
him. Surely this will be my destiny. Surely it is going to be like that.

So he spoke, Káuyúmari. Taking his bow, taking his arrows.

4. HOW KÁUYÚMARI MEETS KIÉRI TÉWYÁRI AND KILLS HIM

The fourth myth records the dramatic encounter between the two adversaries. At first Kíeri Téwiyári attempts to evade his fate by changing his shape, for he has many forms. At last he decides to make his stand and there ensues a debate in which Kíeri claims the support of the Sun Father and then offers all his knowledge and power to Káuyúmari in exchange for his life. But Káuyúmari already knows all he needs to know of his rival's secrets. He wounds Kíeri with a succession of arrows, while Kíeri fights back with all manner of evil things which he vomits up in the form of brilliant colors. Káuyúmari neutralizes his enemy's power by means of peyote and kills him with a fifth and final arrow in the heart.¹²

As I am telling it now, it happened, there in ancient times. A day comes, an opportunity came. Our Father told him, "Now is the moment. It is not possible that he can overpower you." Our Grandfather told him, "That is how it is. The time has come. You will do it like that." So they said to him, to do it, to do it quickly.

He came into the rancheria. He spied on the paths by which he came, the paths by which he went. Ah, where is he, where is that Tree of the Wind? He could not see him. He turned into air. He turned into wind. He blew like a strong wind, he blew from every side. He turned into one wind, another wind, a third wind, a fourth. He changed into a tree. He changed into air. He changed into a person. He had many forms. One could not cope with him.

Ah, that Tree of the Wind suspects something. As one says, he divined it a little bit. He said, "They will take me from here. They are coming for me today. In this place, at this time, they are coming. They are going to kill me."

He began to see how they spied on him. How Káuyúmari had noted everything, everything. With his power, with his arrows. To get hold of it, to control it. Oh, Káuyúmari is greater, he has more power, he is of Our Father, Our Grandfather. They could not beat him. He said, "If it will be like that, if that is my destiny. I know they are coming to kill me." So spoke Kíeri Téwiyári, that Tree of the Wind Person.

¹²The sacred number five signifies completion, wholeness, everything being "in its place" in the Huichol world view. In relation to the cardinal points the fifth direction is the center.
They were meeting at last. Káuyúmari says to him, "I have been ready for you ever since you were born." He was on to him with his arrows, with the arrows that kill. With his horns, with his power. Thus they meet, face to face, at last.

That Tree of the Wind Person, he was afraid. He came up at him like a demented man. He said, "You are pointing your arrow at me!"

"Yes, I am pointing my arrow at you."
"Please do not point your arrow at me."
"You are going to die. I am going to kill you."

So they spoke. That Tree of the Wind, he was afraid. He was begging. "Let me go, let me go! Do not point your arrow at me. Let us talk." And he said, "My Father and I are here. I am acting under his orders."

"I am going to kill you."

That other one says, "I might have known that this is what you are like. Let us see what Our Father says about it. What his attitude is."

Káuyúmari speaks. "Ah yes, let us see what he says about it. Let us see where he dwells. Where does he dwell, anyhow?"

"Where I was born. I am of Our Father."

Káuyúmari says, "Where were you born anyhow?"

"I was born in a cliff." So speaks the Tree of the Wind, who was born on the wind.

"Ah, so that is how it is. As you say." And he says, "Why have you acted badly toward us? You have acted badly. Your thoughts are bad. That is why I am going to kill you."

"Our Father would not harm me!"

"You have not truly learned about Our Father, Our Grandfather. You have not taken their true paths, their true ways. You do not listen to Our Mothers. You have not followed Our Grandfather. You have not listened to them. You have an evil heart. That is why I am going to kill you."

He says to him, "Tell me your secrets. Tell me all your secrets." He tells him, how he does it, how he does this and that. Káuyúmari has noted it all down. He has it all, he controls it. He says, "Yes, I know your life. How you are. You have acted badly and that is why I will shoot an arrow into you."

He has his bow ready. He has his arrow ready. He says, "Ah, how delicious the blood of the Tree of the Wind! How well it
tastes." He pulls the arrow through his mouth, wetting it. He says, "This is how I want to take you now. Because you are very bad."

The Tree of the Wind creeps away, he tries to escape. He grabs him, pushes him from side to side. He says, "No, you are not going to escape. I will kill you, I will shrivel you all up." He tells him, "No, I am not going to forgive you, I will not let you go." He pushes him here and there he brings him over here. "Now you will see how it is going to go with you." And the Tree of the Wind says, "Please do not kill me. I turn my whole life over to you. All the souls I have under my power I give to you."

Káuyúmari says, "No, I need nothing from you. I have no part in what you do." The Tree of the Wind begins to cry, "Let me go, let me go, please".

"This 'please' will not work. There are no favors here. Let it happen what is going to happen."

He tries to escape. He retreats.

Káuyúmari speaks after him, "Go ahead, try to escape, I shall kill you wherever you are. My arrows will find you, wherever you are." So he speaks, pointing his arrow at him. To shoot him there.

That other one turns back, with pain in his heart. His hard heart softened. He looks about. No one. All have deserted him. All those sorcerers, those who were with him, they have left. No one stayed. He saw how it was, as he stood there.

"I am speaking, I, Máxa Kwaxi, Káuyúmari. My arrow knows you." In saying this, he draws his bow. He lets his arrow fly. Kátsia! It has found him. It has hit him.

"Aaaaaahhhhh... he has hit me... aaahhh, so that is what your arrows are like!"

The arrow has hit him on one side. He is down, down on his hands and knees, "Aaaahhh, he hit me, aaaahhhh what pain!" He is trembling, that one, he is vomiting up deadly things... He is collapsed. "Ah, you are killing me, I am dying. I am going." He vomits up yellow things... He vomits up green things...

Another arrow. It hits him on the other side. "Aaaaahhhhh, please don't kill me! Aaaahhh, what pain, what pain!" He vomits up poisonous things. Crimson things come out of his mouth... blue things come out of his mouth.

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13Tamátsi Máxa Kwaxi, Our Elder Brother Deer Tail, a deity who merges with Káuyúmari but who is also named as a separate member of the family of gods, all of whom are addressed or referred to by kinship terms. There is no word for “god” or “gods” as such in the Huichol language. Despite the use of kinship terms, such as Our Grandfather, Our Father, Our Mother, etc., the gods are neither affinally nor consanguinely related to one another.
Káuyúmari begins to choke, to cough. "Oh, strong, bitter, horrible." He coughs, he chokes. Then he takes out his peyote, ground like pinole. He puts it on his hands, his mouth, his face. He stops choking. The peyote has more power, it stops the bad things of the Tree of the Wind.

Káuyúmari says, "So much the less will I let you go. Because it is a bad thing which you are doing." And he looses another arrow at him. Zinnnnnnngggg! Kátsa! Into the other side. One arrow, two arrows, three arrows. He says, "This is so you will suffer for your sins."

"Ah, he hit me again, uuuuhhhhh, there is another one stuck in here. I am full of them, look at me, I am stuck full of your arrows. Ah, what pain! So that is what your arrows are like, what you are like. I am growing cold. Look what you have done, look what your arrows have done. My knees are weakening. I am collapsing." So he speaks, that Tree of the Wind. One arrow, two arrows, three arrows in him. "Ah," he says, "I am still alive, I have still some things in me to throw at you."

"Throw them if that is what you are like." That other one gives one mighty heave, he vomits up purple things, black things, yellow things, crimson things. But Káuyúmari, with his power, with the peyote, he is not harmed by them.

He says, that Kiéri Person says, "I will go to the wind, I will not die. Here I will not die. I will go there, by my own efforts, to the place where I was born, to the place where I came from. I will transform myself... aahhhhh... he got me again, there, another arrow." The fourth arrow was in him. He vomits, he howls, he screams, he yells. Those animals, those foxes, those wolves, those owls, those vipers, they yell. One, two, three, four arrows.

Káuyúmari says, "Ah, he is evil, that one. I can taste his blood. His blood, it tastes well, how sweet the blood of Kiéri Téwiyári." He draws another arrow through his mouth. The fifth. Zinnnnnnngggg... Kátsa!

"Ah, he has got me!" He falls forward, he crumples. Still talking. "This is what you might have expected. This is how it must be. This is my destiny. This is how far my life has reached. You surely have more power, through Our Father, through Our Grandfather. You surely have more power." So he spoke, dying, the fifth arrow in his heart. He is on his back, looking straight up.

It has worked out well. "My Divine Mothers, My Grandfathers, the ones who are all around, in their places, in their present abodes. It has worked out well. I, Káuyúmari, am speaking to you. I lay down your arrows, I put them in their places."

That is how it is. That is just how it is.
5. WHAT HAPPENED WHEN KIÉRI TÉWIYÁRÍ DIED

In his death agony Kiéri Téwiyári afflicts mankind with a multitude of diseases which he scatters into the world in the form of brilliant, shimmering colored lights. The fifth story in the cycle thus accounts for many of the illnesses which plague man, his crops and his animals. It also describes how it was that when Kiéri Téwiyári falls dead with the fifth arrow of Káuyumári in his heart he does not really die. Rather, he is transformed into a plant, the "Tree of the Wind," another name for datura. As the Tree of the Wind Person he establishes himself in the countryside, and here he is followed by those whom he has bewitched and those who, as sorcerers, acclaim him as their teacher and leader.

This Kiéri, who is called Kiéri Téwiyári, who is called Tuta-kúri, was born. He was born far, far away, where only the wind is, where the wind speaks. Where the wind says xeriririririri, where the wind speaks like that. He was born on the wind. After he was born he did those things of which we speak. After he had done them he thought, "Ah, perhaps I am going to die. Oh, this must be my destiny. I must be dying." Right there where he was, in Tuitári, he spoke those things.

Those others with him, those sorcerers said, "If he dies, we are done for. When we are done for, what in the world are we going to do? What will we do?"

Kiéri tells them. He says, "Oh, it looks as though I will die. You will know it. When I die, I will cry the way a deer cries, like a screech owl cries, as a red-tailed hawk flies over the countryside. As the fox cries, that is how it shall be. When someone dies, that is how it will sound, how he will hear it."

He told them, "I will whistle like a deer, five times," tsiu, tsiu, tsiu, tsiu, tsiu. I will range over the countryside like that, whistling like a deer, so that he will know it. Thereafter, like the owl cries, the screech owl, going bikúri xúa, bikúri xúa, bikúri xúa (that's it, that's it, that's it). And the one who sits over there, the red-tailed hawk, who says kwiiiiii, kwiiii, kwiiii xuí'a, xuí'a. There also, the one who goes bënuuu, bënuuu, bënuuu, as he goes ranging over the countryside. And another one sitting there, cãuupuuuuu, cãuupuuuuu, the fox, as he comes up close to you, there..."

That is from when he died, when he told them these things, those sorcerers. So when one dies today one hears these sounds, one sees these animals, many fierce animals. They are of the sorcerer, those bats, the fox, the wolves. They remain here on this earth from that time, the time that he died.

Those others, they saw it when Kiéri became ill, when he had those arrows in him, those arrows of Elder Brother Káuyumári. He
beat him with his power, with the peyote, with his horns, with his arrows. As he said, "Ah, my heart aches, oh, my head aches, oh-oh-oh," he cried like a fox, he cried like an owl, he cried like a jaguar. Like different animals, because he was the Tree of the Wind. He carries many things, many things, because he is a sorcerer, he is the chief of the sorcerers. They follow him. That is how when he died different things came from him, from his mouth. He threw them out, he vomited them. From his mouth he threw out colors. The people who remained covered their faces with their hands, because they could not bear to see that. He threw glimmering lights, blue things, yellow things, crimson things, black things, all these he threw out. He threw them out into this world, he threw them at Káuyumari. But that one had more power.

He was dying, he seemed to be dying. "Ah, my stomach hurts. It is certain I am going to die. They have beaten me, here in this world." So he spoke. It could not be that he should be more powerful than Our Father, Our Grandfather. More powerful than Elder Brother Máxa Kwáči, who is Káuyumari. Ah, different voices came out of him. That of the deer, crying, tsíu, tsíu, tsíu, tsíu, tsíu, five times. He acted like the fox, like the screech owl, like the barn owl. It meant he was going to die. That is why now owls make this sound, that is why when he died all this remained.

Ah, his death is terrible, terrible. He acts like all these animals. Many things to hear, many things to see. Through his mouth, from his eyes, his nose, his ears, through his feet, through his hands, from everywhere he throws out these things, terrible things, brilliant colors, shimmering lights. He throws them like dust. It is the most terrible thing on this earth.

They are diseases, these things he throws out as he dies, illnesses. Dizziness, catarrh, paralysis. All these things he throws out. The animals that attack the maize, that eat the meat of the maize so that only the spirit is left. Well, everything, it is from the same cause. When you come near him, out there where he is, where he grows, he throws dust at you. You cough. You have to cover your face. The diseases come at you, caused by the evil wind that he throws. In this manner he gives illness to people, he gives death.

When he died, he did not die. Only his soul returned to the wind, where he was born. When he died, when the arrows of Káuyumari killed him, he became transformed. He travelled to a cliff to grow there, to be transformed as a tree. Because Our Grandfather, Our Father, would not admit him anywhere. "You are evil, this is why you remain here in this world." He arrived at the cliff and his soul fell there, fell like a stone. He transformed there into a tree which began to grow, grow upward until it reached the fifth level, a tree with five branches. Then the wind took compassion with him, he blew him here and there, to the five sides. He said to him, "There, in those fields, there it is green, there you can grow."
There he went, into those fields. There went those who acclaimed him, the sorcerers. There they went. Asking as they went, as they followed him, "Where has that tree gone, where is it now?" So that they could go where that Tree had gone, so that they could follow him, follow his ways. Having followed him, they said, "Ah, here you are." He said, "Yes, I am here, what can I do for you?" In some such way. Playing his violin, he sang, "Out here in the field I turn green, the field I am green, full of life."

From there he arose, following his path, playing his violin, deceiving people. He was not yet tame. At first he was like a wild animal, dodging every hand that tried to touch him. Full of hate, hating everyone. But slowly he began to be tame, until at last it was possible for all of us to see him. But that was just acting, so that in this manner someone might follow him, be ensnared by him. In this manner he deceived people. Ever since it has been the most terrible thing on earth.

That is why if we had followed him in those days, if we had made this union with him, there would be no mara'akáme, only persons who are sorcerers. But as Our Father, Our Grandfather, did not permit this, it could not be so. It could not happen that way.

6. HOW KíÉRI TÉWÍYÁRI ENSNARES THOSE WHO ARE WEAK

Though vanquished by Káuyúmari with the aid of peyote, banished from the company of good men and forever identified with the black arts, Kíeri Téwiyári continues to pose a certain threat to the psychic integrity of the community, or rather, to certain individuals within it. The final story of the cycle is a reflective description of the kind of personality likely to fall prey to the bewitching power of Kíeri and the psychological and physical dangers faced by those who forsake peyote for datura.

Well, let's see. This is the story of Kíeri, the Tree of Wind, how he acts now, the tree of the Huichols who are sorcerers, those who became transformed. Those who are weak. Those who tried to go on the road of the mara'akáme, who stumbled, who did not reach the ultimate stage. Those who want to do evil. Those who are deceived. That is the tree which makes and unmakes. Because he possesses a gum, a sap which he expels. He has five branches which are its five symbols. Some come to this tree which makes and unmakes them. They come because he helps them do things. Bad things. Evil things. They think they can fly but if they do, they fall

*The self-training period of the mara'akáme is nominally five years. It may actually take longer but it always involves a minimum of five pilgrimages from the Huichol territory to the sacred peyote country in San Luis Potosi.*
and die. Because there are Huichols who are able to achieve the ultimate stage as they have promised to Our Father, Our Grandfather, and there are others who never come that far. Because when they come to the bridge and they see the animals down below, those that want to devour them, they are afraid. They turn back. They lack balance. They do not wish to fall. Then they turn back. And those that do not attain the ultimate state, they still have some power but not enough. So they come to this tree, and this Tree of the Wind deceives them, ensnares them. Because they come, as one says, in a half-crazy state. They walk by themselves, alone in the barrancas. And this same tree, which is considered their chief, as it was in ancient times, this tree flies to them and bewitches them because they were not able to reach the ultimate stage. They have not completed their vows to Our Grandfather, Our Father. So the tree can influence them, bewitch them. Even though they have not kept their promise, this tree does, because what the tree promises, the tree fulfills. But it is evil. That is how it is.

And when that happens, those who are being instructed in these things dance and sing and play a tune. They are like crazy people. They start to go out and cut toward him because they see the Tree of the Wind is coming, the Tree which is a person, a sorcerer, who is going to take them. But this is at night, when he takes them. They follow this tree which takes the appearance of a person. It is a man, this tree, and they follow that so-called person. He is the one who guides them forward. Those who did not fulfill their vows, those who are weak, they go following him onto the high cliffs, as though they could fly, and it seems that they will throw themselves over that cliff. From time to time, he, that Tree of the Wind, feeds them the Kiëri leaves, which he tells them are like little tortillas, delicious to eat. He keeps giving them these leaves to eat, and that person, that Tree of the Wind, is very happy, very elated, because they become ever more lost. Because he has turned them crazy, mad.

So the chief, himself, that chief of the sorcerers, that Tree of the Wind, he himself takes them out and they stay there for five to six to seven days, eating out there in the Sierra by themselves. They are all alone and sometimes, when they climb the cliff as he calls to them, when they are about to jump down from the great rocks, down into the awful abyss, into the barrancas, because they think they have wings and can fly, that person takes this thing away from them. He unmakes it, as one says. But only for a very small while. For two or three minutes he takes it away, this madness. Then they reflect and ask, coming to, "Where am I? Oh, where am I? Oh, very far, very far away. Our Father, Our Grandfather, look how far! What am I doing way out here?" But then they get lost again because that tree, the Tree of the Wind, does not leave them alone. That evil Tree of the Wind does not let them go, and he sings very happily because he is leading them to and fro, backwards and for-
wards. He plays and sings as he did in ancient times, playing the violin, playing it very well, a pretty song, but intense. And so this is why some who do not reach the ultimate stage, who did not fulfill their vows, become liars, deceivers. Others become evil-looking and others evil-minded, with evil in their hearts, toward everyone, their relatives, their own people, everyone. And that should not be so. Because when you have agreed to train to be a mara’akáme you should go through to the ultimate stage. As you have seen with me, the way I am training, that is the right thing. Not everyone who cannot reach the ultimate stage, who does not travel on that road, becomes a sorcerer. But some do. Some do because it is true that when one has failed to travel the entire road, one becomes vulnerable to the tricks of that tree. Because one wants to have that power, but it cannot be the power of the mara’akáme. That is how it is.

That tree uses great care. He sends word with a little arrow from afar, from far away. It is a little arrow, and that tree must be obeyed. It must be obeyed and one must fulfill one’s duty to it, once one is on that side, that other side. But look, many among us might think that this is a friendly thing, good for one, something that creates pleasant feelings with one’s people, one’s relatives. Something to make one live well and contented, something to see with, something to eat and drink well, to give one good sleep and tranquility on one’s journeys. But no, this thing is dangerous. One must recognize it for what it truly is. To understand what is happening. The thing one must recognize is the song. The song he uses to ensnare them, to make them lose their heads. As if they were lost. They begin to go when they hear the first sound. Then comes the second and they take leave of their senses and become as drunk. Then the third and after this they see the tree not as a tree but as a person, the person which is the tree of the Wind, transformed, as he was in ancient times when he was killed by Káuyúmari, when he made the diseases. And then the tree begins to invite them, to call, “Come, come, let us go, let us go, to such and such a place.” And he with his violin, and the other one, the Huichol, follows him and says, “I have been invited, he has invited me,” and he says, “let’s go,” and follows him, until they finish with that song. And he says, “There is that Tree of the Wind,” and if he is one who has not reached the ultimate stage, if he could not be a mara’akáme, if he made that vow, he says, “I did not fulfill my promise and now he has driven me mad, in my thoughts he has misled me, he has bewitched me with his thoughts and with his heart. And here I am now. High over the rocks, yelling and shouting.” That is how it is.

So that is the story of Kiéri, this Tree of the Wind. Sometimes it is a man and sometimes it is a woman. It is both. It is a man when the one to be bewitched is a woman. It is a woman when that one is a man. It is only the sorcerers who use the kiéri. They use it in their evil work, as a means of defense against the mara’akáme
and for everything else. They learn from this Kiéří. They learn bad things in those days. Kiéří begins by telling him this and that and the other thing. He does everything he is told. First Kiéří takes them. Then he brings them back. Then they are sorcerers. This Tree of the Wind person, he has this sap which he expels. People cough and strangle and retch when they get this sap. It is bad, hot, like very hot chile. Very hot, very bitter. You feel it in your chest. It is bad, bad.

For the mara'akáme who is a true Huichol, there is only the hikúří, peyote. The mara'akáme does not have anything to do with kiéří. Peyote is the heart, the heart of the deer, the heart of the maize. It is both, it is the deer and it is maize. It is our life. It has more power. Elder Brother Káwyámari killed Kiéří Téwyiyáří, that Tree of the Wind Person. He fought him with peyote. He could not resist. Only the mara'akáme can unmake one who has been ensnared by Kiéří. Only the mara'akáme knows. That is how it is, as I have told it to you.

After hearing the stories in their entirety, it seemed to us that here was a myth cycle which might possibly be read as history. The Huichols today are peyote users par excellence and no datura cult as such is known to exist among them or their immediate neighbors, though according to the myths some individuals ("sorcerers") do make use of it. The threat of Kiéří Téwyiyáří to the community is treated with deadly seriousness and unequivocal hostility in the myth cycle. In part this is explainable by the deep commitment to peyote of the narrator, and indeed, any mara'akáme or other religious Huichol. But it can also be interpreted historically. Stories of the evil sorcerer Kiéří Téwyiyáří and the terrible effects, immediate and long-range, of eating datura are not often told, but when they are it is especially in those ceremonies which involve peyote, such as the peyote pilgrimage itself. Hence one might assume some historical rivalry between two cults, or at least between shaman priests adhering to one or the other at some time in the past, since there is no datura using mara'akáme in the present.

Datura in Prehispanic Mexico

Safford, in his classic study of the genus DATURA and its use in Old and New World magic, ritual and medicine, lists a number of varieties or species which are native to Mexico and with were used ritually and medicinally in prehispanic times (Safford, 1922:537-567). Like the Old World DATURAS, including the metel nut and the famous mandrake root, the Mexican Daturas owe their unique narcotic and therapeutic properties to certain midriatic alkaloids, especially hyoscyamine.
and scopolamine, contained chiefly in the petioles, midribs and secondary nerves of the leaves, as well as in the pistils of the flowers and in the mature seeds.

The common term toloáche is derived from the Nahuatl toloátzin, literally meaning "inclined head," because one of the Datura species to which it was applied, Datura innoxia Miller of eastern Mexico, has nodding seed capsules. The flattened seeds themselves resemble miniature human ears, hence another Aztec term, nacazcul. Still a third name was tlapatl, but this was applied primarily to the Datura stramonium of eastern Mexico, the same species which in the United States came to be called Jimson or Jamestown Weed.

The latter name has an interesting history. According to Safford (1922), its origin lies in an incident during Bacon's Rebellion at Jamestown in 1676 when British soldiers who were sent to quell the rebellion collected the leaves of Datura stramonium and cooked them as a pot herb — with predictable results. The soldiers claimed later that it had been an honest mistake, but it is also possible that they had learned of the narcotic effects of the plant from the local Indians who used it in their ceremonies. The datura of the Huichol myth cycle is not actually the true Jimson weed but the closely related species Datura meteloides Dunal, and for this reason we have translated the name Kiéri Téwiyári as Datura Person rather than as "Jimson Weed Man" as did Zingg (1938). It should be noted that the Solanum family to which the genus datura belongs also includes another narcotic plant, tobacco, as well as such important food plants as the tomato, potato and egg plant.

The most widely used the Mexican daturas seems to have been Datura meteloides, which was also the species utilized by the Zunis and other Southwestern Indians (both prehistorically and in recent times) and by some of the Indians of California, especially the Shoshoneans. It is this plant which the Huichols call Kiéri, or Tree of the Wind. Safford (1922) states that the seeds of Datura meteloides were called ololiuqui by the Aztecs, while the plant itself was known as coatlnoxohubqui, roughly translatable as Green Snake Weed. Other students, however, identify ololiuqui as the seeds of various species belonging to the convulvulaceae or morning-glory family of plants which, like the daturas, are also psychotropic. Both datura seeds and morning-glory seeds seem to have been used by the Aztec priesthood of the Sun to place themselves in narcotic trances or to induce oracular visions. According to Sahagún's informants, "sorcerers" administered ololiubqui in the food and drink of their victims, causing them to have "visions of terrible things," but how
much bias is involved in this version is difficult to say. One would be inclined to question whether a plant so sacred would have been used in black magic and other evil works at the same time that it was employed in the service of the Sun deity. SAFFORD (1922:551-552) quotes an interesting early description by JACINTO DE LA SERNA which illustrates the esteem in which psychedelic seeds (either datura or morning-glory) were held:

These seeds, especially the ololiuhqui, they hold in as great reverence as though they were God, burning candles before them and keeping them in small petaquillas, or boxes, expressly made for this purpose; and they place sacrificial offerings to them on the altars of their oratories or on the canopies over them or in other sacred places in their houses, so that when a search is made for them they cannot easily be discovered; or they may place them between the idolillos of their ancestors, which they leave to guard them, or, as it were, chained to them. And all this they do with such respect and reverence that when those who keep this seed in their possession are arrested or are asked for the paraphernalia with which they perform the ceremony of this drink, such as the tecomatillos, or little gourds or cups used to hold it, or for the seeds themselves they protest most vehemently that they have no knowledge of the matter whatever, not so much from fear of the judges before whom they are arraigned as for the reverence they feel for the sacred objects which they do not wish to affront by a public demonstration of the ceremonial use of them...

Some of this sounds almost like a contemporary description of the veneration of peyote among the Huichols.

Toloache is still widely used in Mexico today, not only ritually by various indigenous groups but also as an aphrodisiac or magical love potion, as well as for various physical ills. Toloache roots, seeds, dried flowers or leaves can be obtained at any curandero's or herb doctor's stall in most Mexican markets.

Datura in the Southwest and California

The use of Datura meteloides evidently extended far to the north and northwest at least as early as the Pueblo period which ended about A.D. 1300, since both its seeds and seed pods have been found in considerable quantities in Pueblo stone structures in southwestern Utah (SAFFORD, 1922:553). It is also said to have been used by the modern Paiutes, at least in the last century and early part of this century. MATILDA COXE STEVENSON (1904) described its importance among the Zuñi of New Mexico and SAFFORD provides the interesting additional informa-
tion that some of the well-known flower designs which students of the Zuñi and Hopi have identified as the "squash blossom" is in reality the flower of Datura *meteloides*. The Indians, of course, are only too pleased to perpetuate the erroneous nomenclature since the datura flower is very sacred to them. And as the Navajos copied the same flower from the Pueblos for their silver jewelry, it follows that some of the famous silver "squash blossom" necklaces in reality represent the flower of the hallucinogenic datura.

The context and technique in which the California Indians used Datura *meteloides* differs fundamentally from its utilization in Mexico. Almost everywhere among the California tribes (mainly the Shoshonean-speakers but also some Penutians) the taking of datura seems to have been limited to a single ritual context, that of boys' initiation ceremonies, and to a single group, the initiates themselves, which sets this datura-using area clearly apart from Mexico and even the Southwest. According to KROEBER (1925:856) it is possible that the datura cult as such may have succeeded in gaining a foothold at least among the Southern California tribes only in historic times, that is, since the establishment of the missions, because European influence had by then already sapped the strength of older religious cults.

**Peyote, Datura, and Huichol History**

It is possible to treat the *kiéri* myth cycle simply as a set of morality tales which point up the superior qualities and power of peyote and which relate the heroic and moral qualities of the culture hero Káwyú-mari. If, alternatively, one reads these myths as history (which in itself does not negate their value as morality stories), there are several possible interpretations of its significance. In order to evaluate these it is necessary to place the Huichols into some sort of historical perspective, however conjectural. And more than a conjectural history we are not able to give them, since even comparatively recent times lack reliable documentation.

The first European contact with the Indians of Jalisco and Nayarit occurred 1524 expedition of FRANCISCO CORTES DE SAN BUENAVENTURA, a relative of HERNAN CORTES, who ostensibly came in search of the legendary Amazons. The actual conquest of the area (excluding the most rugged parts of the Sierra) was not achieved, however, until the infamous NUÑEZ DE GUZMAN burned and pillaged his way through Jalisco and Nayarit to Sinaloa in 1530-31. The conquered territory with
its decimated and demoralized Indian population then became the Spanish province of Nueva Galicia.

The early sources do not mention a people called the Wixárika, which is the actual tribal name which the Huichols use for themselves. This is hardly surprising since a number of frontier tribes in the general area of the modern states of Jalisco, Zacatecas, Aguascalientes, etc., were known to the Aztecs, and subsequently to the early Spaniards, under the collective name of Teochichimecas, to distinguish them from the Chichimeca tribes who were held in slightly higher esteem. The Chichimecas, loosely translatable as "lineage of the dog," were seen by the Aztecs and other sedentary cultivators of the Valley of Mexico as northern "barbarians" who had adopted some of the customs of civilization. The Teochichimecas were viewed as wild hunters and collectors living in beehive huts and brush or rock shelters.

Some Teochichimeca peoples evidently had a peyote cult which in its known aspects resembles that of the modern Huichols. For example, there is a brief but suggestive description of a Teochichimeca peyote gathering ceremony in Book Ten of Father Bernardino de Sahagún's *Historia General de las Cosas de Nueva España* (The Florentine Codex). The peyote gatherers are described here as circling the peyote and weeping profusely as they do so, which is precisely what the modern Huichols do when they discover the first peyote on their pilgrimages. Unfortunately the 16th century account does not identify the particular tribe nor its precise location, although it seems likely that the setting was not far distant from the sacred peyote country, the high desert of San Luis Potosí.

The noted Mexican ethno-historian Wigberto Jiménez Moreno has suggested that the Huichols are related to the Guachichil, a Teochichimeca hunting tribe which once lived in the general region of Zacatecas but which has disappeared (Jiménez Moreno, 1943:41-44, 128-130). Their neighbors were the Uto-Aztecan-speaking Uacateca and Tepehuan, both late arrivals; the latter now persist in southern Durango and northern Nayarit, west of their former homeland and north of the Coras and Huichols, both of whom also belong to the Uto-Aztecan language family. "Huichol," the name the Spaniards applied to the peyote-using Indians they met in the Sierra (and possibly earlier in the Chichimeca frontier country north of Guadalajara) certainly sounds more like a corruption of "Guachichil" than it does of "Wixárika."

There is no evidence whatever to support the claim of some writers that the Huichols migrated into the Sierra from the coast. On the con-
trary, the Huichols themselves have a vague tradition according to which they came from the east or northeast into their present homeland after first settling for a time in the region north of the barrancas formed by the Santiago River, a few miles north of the present city of Guadalajara. There is archaeological evidence of a prehispanic occupation of the valleys and mesas of their present territory in the Sierra de los Huicholes and also of the Mesa del Nayar of the Coras but this is evidently pre-Huichol and pre-Cora. The movement into the Sierra by the Huichols themselves seems to have been rather late, perhaps motivated by a desire to escape from the effects of the Spanish conquest.

Our informant RAMON mentions one specific origin tradition according to which the "ancient, ancient Huichols" lived by hunting deer, rabbits, rats, birds and other game with bow and arrow and by utilizing a wide variety of plants, such as the maguey and nopal cactus. As he puts it,

In those times they grew nothing, nothing. They did not know about maize, about beans, about squash. They did not have any animals, just the dog. Everything they ate was wild. It grew wild. They had no houses then, only shelters made of brush to keep them warm, only caves. They wore no clothes, as they do now. Only skins and maguey fibers.

When asked where the Huichols lived in those times he pointed eastward and said, "In the desert, far away, in Zacatecas, and in San Luis Potosi." These, he said, were stories which his grandfather had told him. The tradition of an origin in sacred caves in north-central Mexico, which some writers have mentioned, was not known to him.

The authors' participation in the peyote journey northeastward from Jalisco through Zacatecas to San Luis Potosí has convinced us that the tradition of a desert homeland and a migration from east and west is a matter of history as well as myth. Not only is the route across Jalisco and Zacatecas into the peyote desert of San Luis Potosi retraced step by step in the mythology and in the corresponding ritual peyote pilgrimage, but every major feature and many minor ones along the way — especially mountains and perpetual spring and water holes in the desert — are known by Huichol names and sanctified as the "places" of the gods.

It would seem that the ancestors of the modern Huichols migrated originally into the arid inner plateau of north-central Mexico from some northern homeland, possibly located in the Southwest of what is now the
United States. As heirs to the old Desert Culture they would have hunted small game and collected wild fruit, living in encampments of circular beehive-shaped huts, as well as brush and rock shelters. These, along with stone tools, are in fact, mentioned in myths and traditions we collected. They may have lived in the north-central desert region for a considerable time until internal and external pressures, and the vacuum left to the south by the collapse of the great Classic civilizations of Mesoamerica, swept them up in the ensuing confusion of "barbarian" invasions, migrations and displacements which marked the onset of the post-Classic period in the 9th-10th Century A.D.

At some point in time and space they came into contact with sedentary agricultural people on the ever-shifting frontier between the farmers of the south and the hunters of the north, eventually, adopting maize cultivation themselves as their mainstay of life. Where and when this might have been is impossible to say, especially since there is increasing archaeological evidence that at various times the northern frontier of prehispanic civilization extended much further north than it did at the time of the Conquest, and that areas formerly thought to have been either uninhabited and even uninhabitable or purely Chichimeca country did in fact support sedentary agricultural groups with a well-developed ceramic art and technology. Therefore one cannot rule out the possibility that the ancestral Huichols became cultivators, or were at least acquainted with the techniques of cultivation, before their settlement in far-western Mexico. What is definite, however, is that even though on the economic level the transition from hunting to farming took place many centuries ago, on the ideological level it is far from completed even now. Essential elements in the Huichol culture today unmistakably suggest the retention of a considerable component of a hunting ideology. Most important among these is the mythology with its stories of the first times in which men and animals were one — a typical feature of hunting mythologies. Other "archaic" elements are the emphasis on the deer as the sacred animal, companion of the deities and of the mara'akame; the indispensability of the hunt of the deer and its blood to the success of agricultural pursuits and all ceremonial activities in the agricultural cycle; the running down of the deer and the use of nets and noose traps in ceremonial deer hunts; the propitiation of the slain animal (and even the harvested maize) by the hunter who speaks to it and explains why it had to die; the pursuit of the sacred peyote cactus with bow and arrow, as on an actual hunt and the oneness of the peyote with the deer (as well as with maize);
the oneness of the culture hero Kāuyūmari with the Sacred Deer;\(^{15}\) the importance of deer horns in relation to shamanism and the peyote cult, etc.

This view of the Huichols as a culture in transition, from relatively recent hunters of the arid and semi-arid desert to maize cultivators, would also account for the sacredness in which they hold all bodies of water, but especially the extremely rare water holes and perpetual springs located so far from their present homeland in the deserts of Zacatecas and San Luis Potosí. It would also accord well with the absence of a stratified social system, the relative lack of political centralization and the independence of local groups, all features characteristic of the Huichols and of course all more typical of people who live by hunting and collecting than that of those who cultivate the soil. Even the circular dwellings which, though rare today, were still common in the time of LUMHOLTZ, could be derived from the beehive-shaped huts used by many of the northern desert hunters as late as Aztec times.

With this admittedly hypothetical history in mind, we may now consider at least three alternate explanations of the Kiéri myth cycle. The first is that the ancestral Huichols originally knew neither datura nor peyote until they came into contact with both somewhere along the northern frontier of Mesoamerican civilization. In that case there could have been a protracted rivalry between adherents of these two hallucinogenic agents, which induce entirely different psychic states,\(^{16}\) until eventually peyote, with its capacity to give one an expanding vision — a view of the entire world gently opening up before one — gained the upper hand and became a psychological focal point of the culture.

The second alternative is that the ancestral Huichols were datura-users before they turned to peyote either through contact with a peyote cult or as the result of independent experimentation with the hallucinogenic cactus which they found growing in their desert environment. Eventually the older datura cult might have been replaced by peyote, and very much in the same manner that early Christianity relegated the older religions of pre-Christian Europe to the position of witchcraft, so the ritual use of datura came to be identified with black magic and sorcery among the Huichols.

\(^{15}\) Indeed it is hard not to recognize in Kāuyūmari — especially in his most frequently invoked form as the anthropomorphized Sacred Deer — that familiar supernatural being of so many hunting cultures, the Master or Owner of the Species.

\(^{16}\) That the Huichols are well aware of these differences is obvious from the myth in which datura users are described as being seized with madness, loss of control, a desire to fly and even involuntary suicidal impulses. Datura can, in fact, be dangerous; the Luiseño of California, for example, speak of fatal overdoses in initiations of boys.
The third possibility is that the desert-dwelling ancestors of the Huichols were traditionally adherents of peyote but that datura began to threaten the stability of the peyote cult after contact with datura-using groups. In that case the myth cycle can be read to mean that the peyote cult proved strong enough to resist the encroachment of datura, but that perhaps some shamans did adopt datura and left, taking part of the tribe with them. Having deserted the true religion — the peyote cult — they would understandably be anathemized as sorcerers. For in one of the stories of the cycle we learn that even though Káwyümari killed Kiéri Téwyári after first neutralizing his evil power (datura) with peyote, Kiéri did not remain dead. Rather, he transformed himself, and as the Tree of the Wind — the hallucinogenic plant of sorcerers and black magicians — flew away into the fields, followed by those who had earlier acclaimed him as their "chief."

It is this last alternative which to us seems the most plausible. First of all we know that certain "wild" tribes of the north-central deserts, among them the Teochichimecas whom we assume to be the ancestors of the Huichols, were peyote-users.¹⁷ On the other hand, the sedentary agricultural peoples of central and eastern México appear to have used datura as their main ritual hallucinogenic. Also, the extent of the integration of peyote in Huichol culture and its utilization by men, women and even children indicates a very long history.¹⁸ Further, the priority of Káwyümari, who here personifies the peyote cult, is made explicit in the Kiéri stories (as it is also in other myths). When Kiéri is born, for example, he "wants to be more than Káwyümari." In another story of the cycle, Káwyümari says, "Ah, I have been ready for him ever since he was born," and this he also repeats to Kiéri when they meet in face-to-face combat, from which one might assume that datura was the intruder.

¹⁷Peyote has also recently been discovered in prehistoric rock shelter sites located near the confluence of the Pecos and Rio Grande rivers in southwestern Texas; some of these shelters contain paintings which students of rock art suggest might have been connected with peyote rituals (David S. Gebhard, 1967, personal communication).

¹⁸The common name peyote comes from the Nahutl peyotl, by which the plant was known in prehispanic times among the Aztecs and other peoples of Central Mexico. The Huichols, however, have their own aboriginal term, hikuri, which has also been adopted by their neighbors, the Coras, and by the Tarahumaras of Chihuahua. The latter regard the plant with great fear and awe, which is partly attributable to the comparative recency of the use of peyote among them. For the Huichols, on the other hand, peyote stands at the very center of religion and ritual, together with the deer and maize, with which it is identified; there is no fear of it whatever and even small children are introduced to it to accustom them to its bitter taste. As a matter of fact, if a small child takes to peyote readily, despite its unpleasant taste, adults often regard it as a sign that it may be called by the deities to become a mara'ákáme.
Peyote, of course, is a desert species with limited distribution. It is found primarily in regions which were once inhabited by fiercely independent tribes, whereas several varieties of datura were (and are) easily available throughout Mexico. As a matter of fact, we have good archaeological evidence that peyote was important also in much earlier times even in the tropical regions of Colima (as well as in Michoacán and Guerrero), for a plant which appears to be peyote is represented on ceramics dating back at least to the early centuries A.D. Colima is even more distant from the peyote deserts of the north than is the present Huichol region, but then, the whole history of trading and diffusion, in Mexico as everywhere else in the world, shows that when people want something badly enough they are willing to pay almost any price in life, limb, time and treasure to obtain it. Of course, for the Huichols both the precise locale for hunting and collecting peyote are dictated by religion and mythology and thus are not to be altered in any way. For them neither the peyote which grows in other desert areas north of their present homeland nor that available in various markets is conceptually or even functionally comparable to that which they collect on their time-consuming and extremely strenuous pilgrimages to San Luis Potosí.

In addition to the historical reasons already mentioned for favoring the third alternative, there are a number of elements in the Kiéří cycle itself which seem to link datura to the various kinds of influences which may have reached the ancestors of the Huichols along with the techniques of agriculture. One of these is the cult of the Sun. As mentioned earlier, datura was used by Aztec priests of the Sun. There are also some allusions in the Kiéří cycle to a relationship between Kiéří Téwiyáří and the Sun Father (Tayaupá). For example, at one point in the confrontation between Káuyúmáři and the sorcerer Kiéří the latter claims that he is of the Sun Father and that the Sun Father would not permit him to come to harm. Káuyúmáři does not reject this, and there follows an exchange in which he questions his enemy about what he knows of the Sun Father and his dwelling place. There is also a mention of the gods encouraging the conflict between Kiéří and Káuyúmáři, and while our narrator insisted that they did this only to ensure Kiéří's downfall, it may also be that someone in the pantheon might have been on Kiéří's side, at least in part. It certainly was not Tatewáři, the God of Fire, First Shaman and leader of the first peyote pilgrimage. Tatewáři established the peyote cult and in the Kiéří myths it is he who aids Káuyúmáři in the latter's efforts to learn all of Kiéří's secrets before destroying him. But it might well have been the Sun. A datura-Sun association is also suggested by ZINGG (1938:212-3), whose informant told him that the
Sun Father protected "Jimson Weed Man" and would not allow him to remain permanently dead after Káuyúmari had killed him. Ramon denies that this could be so, since Kiéri Téwiyári was an evil sorcerer and the Sun Father would not have protected such a person. But here we must remember that in Ramon's home territory (San Sebastián) the Sun Father shares first place in the pantheon with Tatewari, whereas the Sun does not have such an exalted position in some other Huichol regions. Even in Ramon's Kiéri stories, however, the attitude of the Sun is at least in doubt.

It is also true that in general the Huichols seem to be ambivalent in their beliefs about the Sun, even in those regions where the Sun deity is of great importance. Ramon himself admits that unlike Tatewari, the First Shaman and Fire God who is always benevolent so long as the proper sacrifices are made to him, the Sun Father sometimes exercises his power to send illness or misfortune quite arbitrarily. It is then up to the mara'akáme to discover why he has done so. Interestingly, the Sun also has two different and unrelated names, Tayaupá, Our Father, and Tawixikia. It may be that the present concept of the Sun deity combines two different layers of tradition, one older, dating to a pre-agricultural time when the Sun God might have been less important, and the other adopted with modifications from neighboring sedentary cultivators and perhaps even from the Aztecs. It is of course also possible that there was no Sun cult at all in pre-agricultural times, when the old god of fire and the earth goddess Nakawé might have been the chief deities.

The characterization of Kiéri as the "Tree of the Wind" also seems to point in the direction of the Aztecs. The name seems puzzling, since the wind is not generally associated by the Huichols with anything deleterious (for example, the sacred world directions are called "the four or five winds"), unless one relates it to the typical rural Indian-Mexican fear of the illness-causing "aires," or bad winds, which float about at night and in the early morning hours. This belief is a survival in impersonal form of the ehecatl cocoliztle (winds of sickness) of the Aztecs who also personified a similar concept in cosmology and art as the ciupipiltin, female deities with fleshless skulls who travelled about in the air striking children with sickness, especially the respiratory kind.

In this connection yet another tantalizing clue comes from the Aztecs. In Book Four, Chapter 21, of the Florentine Codex, Sahagún tells us that those born under the sign of Ce Ehecatl, One Wind, are destined to become sorcerers. If they are of the nobility, they can become werewolves and also take on other forms at will. If they are ordinary
mortals they are likely to be part sorcerer and part rogue, who dance about with their own kind as they embark on wickedness and mischief. Kiéři embodies both these characteristics. He can transform himself into all manner of shapes, from person to tree to animals, and he is also a woman-chasing rogue who uses music and dancing to deceive and seduce others into following him. And not only is he called the "Tree of the Wind," but he was even "born from the wind," as the myth tells us. This seems to link him rather persuasively to some such concept as the Aztec association of the birth date "One Wind" and black magic.

In view of all this, it is suggested that a cult of the Sun deity may have been introduced to a peyote-using proto-Huichol people in comparatively recent times, probably together with agriculture itself, and that this cult of the Sun god, with its strong emphasis on sacrifice, may have been accompanied by a datura cult. While the Sun god could be integrated successfully (though with a certain degree of ambivalence) into the existing family of deities because of his importance to the success of agriculture, datura could neither co-exist with peyote nor replace it. For we may assume from the contemporary accounts that peyote held much the same position in the religion and world view of the hunters of the north-central deserts as it does today among the Huichols who may well be their direct descendents. If we suppose that the Kiéři myths have historical validity, it is this interpretation which to us seems most acceptable.
The death of Kiéří Téwyúři, as visualized in a wool yarn "painting" by the Huichol artist Ramón Medina Silva. While the fox, the animal of sorcery and death, cries from the rocks at the upper left, Datura Man, lower right, falls backward. The victorious culture Hero Káuyúmary, identified by the antlers of the Sacred Deer on his head, stands in the center. Upper right, the symbol of the datura plant which Kiéří Téwyúři personifies and into which he changes as he dies. Between Káuyûmary and the dying Datura Man are colored shapes representing the diseases which Kiéří, as the chief of the sorcerers, spits and vomits into the world in his struggle with Káuyûmary. These "paintings" of colored wool yarn pressed into a layer of bees' wax were made as illustrations of myths dictated to the authors by the artist. From the collections of the UCLA Museum and Laboratories of Ethnic Arts & Technology. Original size, 60 x 60 cm.
Wool yarn "painting" by the Huichol artist Ramón Medina Silva of the mortal battle between the culture hero Káuyúmari and Kiéri·Téwiyári, Datura Man. Left, the culture hero, wearing the antlers of the Sacred Deer, with his bow and arrow. Right, Datura Man, toppling backwards with Káuyúmari's first arrow in him (the fifth arrow kills him). From his mouth emerge five strings of brilliantly colored lights, symbolizing both the psychological effects of datura and the evil and diseases Datura Man vomits into the world. Below Káuyúmari stands the basket of the marañáame, the takwdtisi, in which are kept the sacred shamanic paraphernalia. The deer antlers identify it with Káuyúmari, who is variously envisioned as a person with deer horns, the Sacred Deer itself and the shamanic basket. Above the takwdtisi, between the two antagonists, is a small flower-like symbol representing the peyote with which Káuyúmari countersact the power of datura. Original in the collections of the UCLA Museum and Laboratories of Ethnic Arts and Technology.
This wool yarn "painting" by the Huichol artist Ramón Medina Silva illustrates the power which Kiëri Téwyári has over men and women who allow themselves to be deceived by him. A woman stands on a high rock reaching out for the leaves and juices of the datura plant while Kiëri floats above her urging her to eat, for the plant is "nourishing, like tortillas." Under the influence of datura, the victim is driven mad or becomes a witch; only the mara'akame is able to restore him or her to sanity. From the collections of the UCLA Museum & Laboratories of Ethnic Arts and Technology.
DIGUET, LEON

FABILA, ALFONSO

GRIMES, JOSEPH E.

GRIMES, JOSEPH E. and BARBARA F. GRIMES

GRIMES, JOSEPH E. and THOMAS B. HINTON

JIMENEZ MORENO, WIGBERTO

KROEBER, ALFRED L.

LUMHOLTZ, CARL

MCINTOSH, JOHN B.
MCINTOSH, JOHN B. and JOSEPH E. GRIMES  

PREUSS, KONRAD THEODOR  

SAFFORD, WILLIAM E.  

SAHAGUN, FRAY BERNARDINO DE  

SIMONI-ABBAT, M.  

STEVenson, Matilda Coxe  

WAX, R. H. and M. L.  

ZINGG, ROBERT M.  