



A medicine man with his paraphernalia.

ing, there are diagnosticians who perform this service—these are the hand tremblers, the star gazers, and the listeners who consult the patient and, through their ability, determine the course to follow.

When it has been decided which ceremony is to be given, the medicine man, or singer, as he is more correctly called, who knows that particular ceremony is summoned and preparations are set in motion. Stemming from the Creation Story, more than fifty ceremonies, or chants, of varying range and complexity all lead to the restoration of harmony. Everything must be done in the prescribed way as told in the legends. So it is the spiritual, emotional, psychological, and physical needs, *and in this order*, that are treated to attain this desired harmony and, consequently, healing.

The most revered ceremony, a relatively simple one, is the Blessingway, the Hozhoji, the center of Navaho

religion, in which Changing Woman plays a predominant part. This does not require the elaborate ritual of most of the other ceremonies, and may be performed by anyone who knows it. As its name implies, it is an act of balance, a blessing for a person, a place, or an act, such as the commencing of a new blanket, and it comes from Changing Woman, regenerator of life, the everlasting One.

Many smaller rites, such as the puberty ceremony, the initiation ceremony, the marriage ceremony, and (ceremonials, such as the Mountainway or the Night-numerous others are conducted frequently. The great way, with their variations, are less frequently given. As these particular ceremonies last for nine days and nights, they are very costly affairs requiring much preparation, but others are of shorter duration. While the first days of these long chants usually concern only the patient and family, it is on the ninth day that great numbers of people come from far and near to watch the ceremony of the final night and to partake of its benefits.

During these large ceremonials, sand paintings are executed within a hogan often specially built for the rituals. Directed by the singer, his helpers create the proper design by trickling sand of different colors through their fingers onto a base of neutral-colored sand spread over the hogan floor. Commenced in the morning, the painting is completed in mid-afternoon, when the patient is brought in and placed upon it. The medicine man then takes sand from certain symbolic sections of the design, and rubs it onto the patient to absorb the causes of the illness. When these rites are completed, the entire sand painting is wiped out, but during that brief time when it lies complete on the hogan floor it is an extraordinarily beautiful example of abstract art, every part of which is replete with significance. Hundreds of these designs, some completely abstract, some partially pictorial, all with different purposes, are stored in the memories of the medicine men who direct their execution. Many contain the stylized symbolic figures of some of the Yei, the sun and the moon, or some of the helpers of both gods and men, such as Big Fly (the messenger), Coyote, Bear (which the Navaho revere), or other animals and birds. In many sand paintings one sees the Four Sacred Plants—corn, squash, beans, and tobacco—drawn in decorative designs. Many paint-

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