

THE SUN OR GUNELPIYA MEDICINE DISK.

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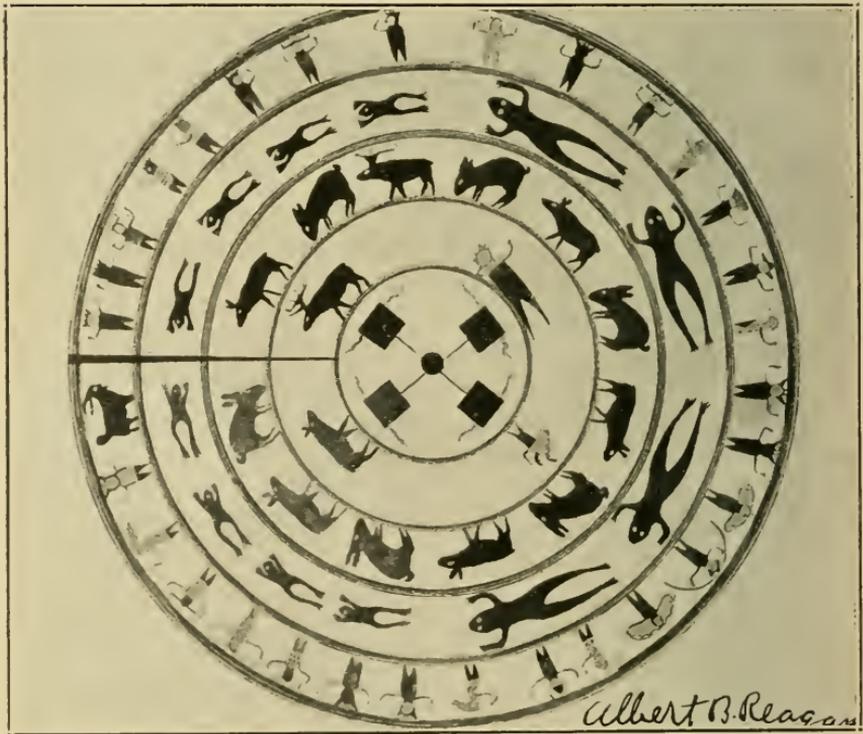
This disk is used as a last resort in the Apache medicine ceremonies. It is drawn on a leveled, sanded spot of ground some sixteen feet in diameter. The materials used in painting the figures are obtained as follows: The green is ground up leaves; the red, ground up sandstone; the yellow ground up limestone; the black, powdered charcoal. The rings separating the concentric spaces are rainbow circles. The central figure is the sun, and the squares associated with the sun are the medicine blocks. The first and second concentric spaces from the central area represent land; the space in which the frogs are swimming, water; and the outer concentric space, the abode of the gods.

This drawing is an Apache prayer in an elaborate form. In it they have all the gods of the universe represented, and on the mercy of these gods they throw the patient. As has been stated this is a last resort. The gods can either make the sick one well or take him to themselves, that is, to the Happy Hunting Ground.

When this drawing is completed, which is always at about four o'clock in the afternoon of the same day in which it was commenced, the patient is carried and placed on the central figure with face toward the evening sun. A medicine dancer wearing a ghost hat then enters the medicine circle, and, carrying a bowl partly filled with water in one hand, he takes a pinch of dust from each of the representative figures and puts it into the bowl. Having completed his dust-gathering, he proceeds to the sick one and daubs him all over with the muddied water. This being completed, he sends a hissing breath through his hands, thus expelling sick to the four quarters of the earth. He then leaves the medicine circle and gallops off into obscurity. When he has departed the chief medicine man, after sprinkling the patient with cattail flag pollen as he prays to the gods, takes up the bowl of muddied water left by the ghost dancer, and daubs the patient as the ghost dancer had daubed him before, while those present chant a medicine song to the gods. When he has completed his task, the oldest woman present takes the muddied bowl and continues the daubing process. Her act completes the ceremony. The sick one is then

carried from the scene and all who wish, gather dust from the representatives of the gods and put it into some containing receptacle, usually a tobacco sack. The dust gathering being completed, the medicine disk is at once obliterated. It must be made, used, and destroyed in a day.

On the night following the Gunelpiya medicine disk performances, the ghost dance is given for the benefit of the sick one. The next day the patient usually dies.



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