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SENU TUKARIA BWIKAM
ONE NIGHT OF SONGS

DEER SONGS may be sung by almost anyone—man, woman, or child—in informal settings in Yaqui communities. In this way, although they may never perform them at a *pahko*, some women become known for their ability to sing deer songs. Especially among children and young men, these informal performances often take on the mood of practice sessions. Giddings writes that "in Sonora, not only the deer-singers, but also various individuals (including members of the younger age groups) know and sing deer-songs for pleasure."[1]

But within Yaqui communities, deer songs are most often performed during a *pahko*, a ceremonial occasion when Yaquis gather to perform religious observances and to celebrate. Most Yaquis translate the word as "fiesta," but others object that a *pahko* is not the same kind of event that the Mexican term implies.[2] Therefore, we use the Yaqui word throughout. Don Jesús and other singers we talked with remembered the *pahko* was originally a part of a ritual carried out before the hunting of deer, and, for that reason, they pointed out that the deer singers have a central place in most *pahkom*. During a *pahko*, the deer singers must create, in Don Jesús' phrase, "one night of songs."

The mood of the *pahko* is festive, as Yaquis gather to eat and drink, visit and worship. The pace of performances during the *pahko* is oceanic, ebbing and cresting throughout the long night. Each time the deer dancer explodes out of the swell of the *pahkolam*'s dance into the center of the *ramá*, he carries the *pahko* to a crest, and it foams with his color, sound, and motion. Dipping delicately as if to drink; erect, curious, then bounding with the *pahkolam* in their play; or suddenly motionless and coiled with tension, alert to some new movement in the darkness—the dancer's ability to suggest the movements of a deer can be astonishing and mesmerizing. But the dancer can only move to the music of the deer singers. Their water drum is said to represent his heartbeat, their raspers his breathing, their words his voice. Through their song he becomes the real deer person.

The role the words of the deer songs play in dictating the movement of the *maaso* has not been widely recognized outside Yaqui communities. Wilder writes that "regardless of the song being sung, [the *maaso*'s] dance does not vary."[3] This is true of *lutula weme bwikam*, straight-going or "regular" songs. But there are other kinds of songs, and in some of them the dancer must interpret the words being sung in his dance. *Wikit bwikam*, bird songs are an example. *Wikit bwikam* are always *yeu bwikam*, play songs. When they are sung, the *maaso* must interpret the words in his dance. The hovering of a buzzard in a deer song may in this way become a sweeping whirl by the *maaso* with his arms outspread. Anselmo Valencia, a deer singer in southern Arizona, describes the relation of the dance to the song in this way: "The best deer dancer will follow the beat of a song with his feet, the raspers with his hands and waist, and his deer head will do what the words of the song call for whether it is a bird or an insect, or an animal."[4] Deer singer Loretto Salvatierra put it this way: "That animal *[saila maaso]* walked around in the wilderness world in the beginning, that the people put into a song, so that now the animal is able to play with the song with his body, with the birds and the other things of the wilderness world."[5]

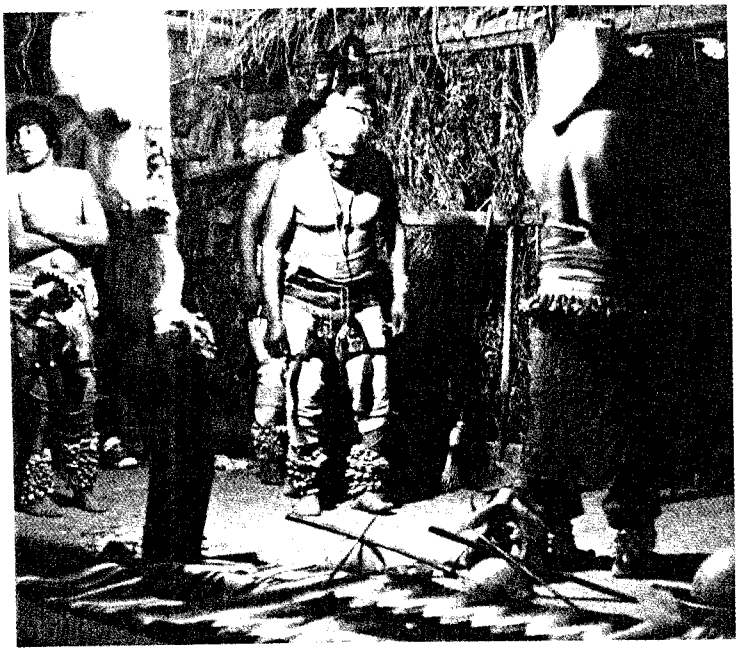
A *pahko* may be held at the household of an individual family on such occasions as the anniversary of the death of a relative, called a *lutu pahko;* the funeral of a child, a *usi mukila pahko;* the observance of the ritual for the Departed Souls on November 1, an *animan pakoriawa;* or to mark the completion of a special vow made in thanksgiving, a *manda pahko.* The whole village gathers for a *santo* or *pweplo pahko* to celebrate the Saint's Day of the village patron. *Santísima Trinidad,* Holy Trinity, is, for example, the Saint's Day celebrated as a *pweplo pahko* at Potam, while at Yoem Pueblo, a *pweplo pahko* is held on San Juan Day.

There is a provocative mention of another formal occasion when deer songs may have been sung in Yaqui communities. Lucas Chavez, a *maehto* from the village of Pascua in the 1940s, remembered some details of an early, formalized context for telling *etehoim*—stories in which deer songs were sung to punctuate the storytelling. Ruth Giddings reports that Chavez recalled that, in Sonora, gatherings were held three times a year when people from neighboring rancherias would gather at the house of a leader. Yaqui governors and soldiers would come too, and they would be greeted formally by the group. None of the religious aspects of the *pahko* were present, nor were there *pahkolam* to entertain the people. Special food was served unlike that usually prepared for a *pahko.* Chavez recalled that "five wise old men spoke alternately from dusk until dawn. They spoke of the past, told stories, and discussed the future. These men were skilled in the magic uses of smoking native cigarettes *(hiak' vivam)* and, by their use, were said to be able to receive messages from people who

were in distant pueblos." At intervals throughout the night, in between the talk of the old men, "a deer dancer and his musicians would perform."[6] Gatherings of this sort have not been held in Sonora or Arizona in recent times.

The usual setting for a *pahko* is within the village in a *ramada*, a shelter with a flat roof and one or more open sides. The place is called *heka* or *ramá* in Yaqui, and is divided not by any walls but by the way in which the space is used. On one side, the *maehto* and other Baptized Ones worship before an altar covered with statues and other holy church objects which are transferred from the church for the event. This side is sometimes referred to as the *santo heka*, holy canopy. The *pahkolam* and their musicians, the deer dancer and the deer singers, together with their respective managers, hold forth on the other side, which is often referred to as the *kolensia*, a word from the Spanish *querencia*, a favorite place or haunt. Thus under the single roof of the *pahko ramá* Yaqui priests and performers give voice to the two strands of their tradition which they carried away from the encounter with the talking stick. The *maehto* and his assistants voice the words of the Baptized Ones in Yaqui, Spanish, and Latin; the deer singers and the *pahkolam* bring the traditions of the wilderness world into Yaqui words with such force that the whole *pahko ramá* is said to become the flower world during their performances. The people gather around both sides to witness and to celebrate.

17. Angel Duarte anticipates ...



18. Pakola Francisco Alame'a dances ...

❀ The crowd settles in after 2 A.M. From where I stand leaning against the side of a house not far from the front of the *ramá,* I can see the deer dancer and the deer singers without obstruction. Felipe has gone off to visit someone in the kitchen. I watch the dancers and singers and think over what he has told me about how they work together. Two Yaqui men come slowly across the plaza and stand in front of me. They look me over, then ask the Yaqui leaning on the wall next to me if he knows me. He says no, then turns to introduce himself: I'm Joe, this is my friend Mr. Matus. The third pushes closer to touch my hand. His name is Chuy. Chuy really wants to talk and to explain things to me. This is what we used to do before we went after deer, it's our religion, we may look poor, but... like that, he continues with help from Joe. I tell them I'm from Tucson and have been to a *pahko* there. Joe wants to know where I learned to call it that. I tell him Felipe is my friend, and he has taught me a few things. Mr. Matus announces that Larry is *his* friend and that he wants to talk to me. Joe shuts up. Chuy keeps babbling, more insistent all the time.

Mr. Matus is telling me that he is blind. I hadn't noticed the closed eyes behind his dark glasses. White goatee, hair swept back, navy blue warm-up jacket, suede boots, he looks like I think a '50s hipster should. He's telling me something about the dancing. They are all dancing the same thing he says. What do you mean? I don't get what he is saying. Chuy is continuing to talk into my left ear, whole left side really, on and on. He begins to tug my arm. Something about Joe. Joe tries to explain. He is going to marry Chuy's daughter, so Chuy is explaining that he will be Joe's father-in-law. They teach me the words for the relationship. I forget when they try to test me. My head is over on the right side with Mr. Matus. I try to turn that way, then realize that the visual cue is wasted.

Joe tells Chuy to back off. Chuy comes on stronger, talking steadily now, not fast but faster than before. I nod, grunt now and then. Mr. Matus says Larry is my friend. Joe puts his arm around Chuy and says Chuy is going to be his father-in-law. Mr. Matus begins to talk again about the dancers. Look, he says, look. If you don't know what the song says just watch the way they dance. First the violin will play a song and then the flute will play the same one and then the deer singers on the ground over there will play the same one. They all play the same song and the *pahkolam* and the deer will just dance what the song says. Look, just look. See, watch them, they are birds.

The *pahkola* is spreading his arms like a bird in his dance. I remind myself that Mr. Matus is blind. I ask if he can see it in his mind. Chuy has got something to say about women, Joe takes him by the arm and says let's us go to the weeds. Mr. Matus says Larry is my friend. I want to tell him how the Yaquis could get the hostages out of Iran.

We settle back against the wall and I listen to Mr. Matus describe old and exotic weapons as I watch the deer dancer whirl and glide through the song.

Masobwikame: The Deer Singers

The deer singers occupy a space near the center of the *ramá* throughout the *pahko*. Usually there are three, and they sit together in a row facing the *kolensia*, the area where the deer dancer performs. Some say that they should face the east as they sing, but the singers we have seen seem to sit on one side or the other of the *ramá* according to village, family, or even personal custom. The *hipetam* (bamboo mat, a blanket, or an old piece of carpet) gives them a little cushion and a place to stretch out and rest between songs during the night.

The *masobwika yo'owe*, lead deer singer, sits in the middle. He chooses the songs to be sung and begins each one. The other singers follow along. As they sing, each plays an instrument which rests on the ground in front of him. The lead singer and the singer on his left play *hirukiam*, wood raspers, which rest on *bweheim*, half-gourd resonators. The third singer plays a steady beat with a *hiponia*, a drumstick wrapped with corn husks, on another half-gourd which he floats in a *soto'i*, basin of water. The instrument is called a *va kuvahe*, water drum, and the singer is known as the water drummer. It is common for three men to make a regular group and always perform together. The three deer singers and the *maso* are in the care of a manager known as the *maso moro*. He makes arrangements for them to perform and sees that they are cared for during the *pahko*.

Deer singers usually make their own instruments, but some buy them from other singers or craftsmen. The *hirukiam* are carved from pieces of hardwood. *Huchahko*, Brazil wood, is a preferred material, but *hu'upa*, mesquite, and other hardwoods from the desert may be used. The choice of material seems largely based on availability. "When I can go to the mountains, I use *huchahko*," Don Jesús told us, "if I don't want to go to the mountains, I use *hu'upa keka'a*." Two raspers are carved. One, long and flat, is cut with shallow notches at regular intervals perpendicular to its length. It is called *hirukia*, rasper.[7] A second shorter length is smooth, narrow, and rounded. It is called *hirukia aso'ola*, baby rasper, or just the rubber. The number of notches a singer cuts into his *hirukia* is variable. Don Jesús told us that "the elder people say that there should be the same number of notches as the mysteries of the rosary," that is, as the number of beads on the Yaqui rosary. "Those people," Don Jesús went on, "say that there are prayers in there, that each of the notches has a prayer. That is why we put a cross on each end." He cautioned us, though, that the custom is not always observed: "The elder Yaqui singers speak about it like that, but we just make the raspers and don't worry too much about it."

Pahko Vichame: Those Who See the Pahko

Don Jesús believed that *pahko vichame*, those who see the *pahko*, the audience, could affect the deer singers greatly. If someone in the audience had bad thoughts or hatred in their heart for the singers, the singer might make mistakes in the songs or even forget them completely. To protect himself from these *erim*, bad thoughts, Don Jesús believed that a deer singer should carry a small cross carved from Brazil wood, a piece of blessed palm, and a seed pod from a plant called *tamkokochi*, a variety of Devil's claw, all in a pouch.

Before a singer began to sing, Don Jesús said he should pray to God for guidance, and then to past deer singers, asking their permission to sing their songs once again. In this way, a deer singer would more easily remember the deer songs throughout the night. In the morning, at the end of the *pahko* as the raspers and gourds are being picked up, the deer singers of the past should be thanked for their help during the *pahko*.

The relationship which the deer singers have with the audience at a *pahko* is significantly different from that of the other performers with whom they work. The *pahkolam* are literally "the old men of the *pahko* " and functionally ceremonial hosts and clowns. In their expansive way, they are always interacting with the audience which is drawn to them. During their joking and repartee, they constantly play to their audience and expect laughter and verbal response. Even when the eldest *pahkola* delivers the opening and closing sermons, he expects the audience to respond with the formulaic affirmative "*heewi*." By contrast, the deer singers never call for, nor do they expect, any verbal response from the audience at a *pahko*. Their single interest is to attend to the rhythms and words they provide for the *maaso*'s dance. In fact, they have a special kind of deer song called *tohakteme*, bouncing ones, which they can use to protect themselves from those in the audience who want to get too participatory and join the dance. A *tohakteme* is a kind of song with a rhythm that is more difficult to dance to. Don Jesús explained: "It is a deer song, but not a dance song. It is something we hit them with, the ones who want to be proud of themselves and show off by dancing. Some of them [in the audience] always want to borrow the gourd rattles and dance. When they do that, we hit them with this kind of song."

Being too proud of one's abilities is something to be avoided not only by the audience but by both the *maaso* and the deer singers themselves. "The deer, too," Don Jesús told us, "can like himself too much. He too can be too proud. When we see that, we hit him with the *tohakteme* too. And he will roast." In the same way, a deer singer should not call attention to himself by singing too well. Those who do so run the risk of losing their voices. At the same time a singer should not be sloppy or slovenly about his singing either. As an example of a poor performance, Don Jesús spoke of a

singer who was so drunk for one of the *pahkom* that he just sang the following fragment over and over:

sewata tuleka sewata tuleka
ai la la la la la la
sewata tuleka
ai la la la la la la

loving the flower, loving the flower
ai la la la la la la
loving the flower,
ai la la la la la la

A good singer, according to Don Jesús, concentrates on his songs. He sings with a high voice. He can take his voice up to a high pitch and carry it through the longest lines of the song without pausing. This is especially important in the performance of the first part of the *tonua*, the concluding stanza, which may be very long in some songs. Of one such song Don Jesús said: "It has a long *tonua*. It is beautiful only if you have a *tuik kutanak*, good throat." Don Lupe told Felipe to pay attention to the end of the song: "When it ends with "aa" or "ee" the sounds should be carried out. Don't cut it short. Carry it out."

Wilder writes that "a good deer singer is one who sings with much gusto, and can make his song carry over the combined noise of the rasps, water drum, *maso* gourd rattles, rustling of the *tenevoim* of the *maaso*, pounding of his feet, as well as over the various accompanying musical sounds of the pascola dance which is performed at the same time as the deer dance."[8] To this litany of sounds we should add others. It is likely that as the deer singers begin their song, the *maehto* and the *kopariam* will be chanting out their prayers before the altar just behind the deer singers and that the *matachinim* will be diligently working through the rustle of their dance just in front of the altar side of the *ramá* to the stringed harmonies of their own musicians. On some occasions in Sonora, the distant rhythm of the flat drum and the sounds of a coyote song may be heard as members of the Coyote Society perform in the area out beyond the *matachinim* as well.

Amid all the other sounds coming out of the *pahko ramá* during the time the deer singers perform, the words of the deer songs are sometimes difficult to hear. Amos Taub, a commentator on the literary value of the words of deer songs, found them "practically incomprehensible in actual performance."[9] Yet, given the kind of vigorous singers described above, that part of the audience who is actually interested in listening to the words of the deer songs usually has little trouble. These people gravitate to the areas close to the singers.

✠ Whenever I am invited to sing I think about what songs I will be using. I don't worry about anything but getting sick. When the *pahko* is a few days away, the songs will be running through my head. A deer singer plays with his mind. He picks out his songs and arranges them. We do this when we are working in the fields or somewhere else. Sometimes I may be thinking about songs and arranging them when I am around my house relaxing or working. Sometimes when I am thinking this way a song may come out, and others may hear it. I have fun doing this, because I am getting excited about the up-coming *pahko*, and I just can't wait to sing for the crowd and the dance group inside the *ramá*.

On the actual day of the *pahko*, I must be ready to go with the *moro* at a set time. Usually we all are taken together to perform at an hour that the *moro* chooses. Down in Río Yaqui country, the *moro* comes on foot, while here in Arizona he may have a pickup truck to haul all his people. People want it to work this way but sometimes it doesn't. Sometimes some of the performers aren't ready, and sometimes the *moro* doesn't pick up everybody. This holds up the *pahko* and keeps it from starting at the appointed hour.

When we all arrive with the *moro* at the *pahko*, we are greeted by the ones who are giving the *pahko*, the *pahkome*. They give us a place to rest. If we bring wives or children, they are asked to rest too in any *ramá* that is available. After a while the *pahkome* get a table set, and they invite the whole group with wives and children and anyone else we brought along to move to the table and eat. Usually they give us *waka vaki*, Yaqui beef stew, with tortillas and coffee. Everybody eats with much enjoyment, and there is much joking around among the men at the table. People must not laugh out loud. They are supposed to suppress their laughter when a good joke is told. "Long time ago," one of the deer singers might say, "there was a time when the Yaquis were very poor, but being Yaquis they always had their *pahkom* anyway. Well, anyway, when they had a *pahko*, they usually borrowed cow bones from each other to throw into the *waka vaki*. If somebody threw one of these bones away by mistake, somebody else would run over to pick it up and put it away for the next *pahko*." Then the deer singer might take some of the *waka vaki* he is eating in his spoon, maybe some with a little bone in it. "That is why these bones are so white and shiny," he might say. Usually the kitchen ladies will overhear the conversation and will laugh, but the people at the table must not. "I am irrigating sugar," says a deer singer as he stirs his coffee. "You must be melting and washing it away," says another deer singer. "No. Not that kind of sugar, sugar beets," says the first one. We may make fun of each other, too, at the long table, but only because all should have a good sense of humor and be in a good mood before we start the *pahko*. All the joking around helps us to not be nervous before we start singing.

After everybody finishes eating, the kitchen helpers remove the dishes. If any food is left over, usually the people at the table send it home, or they have it sent to a friend who is close by somewhere. Then the eldest *pahkola* gives a talk of

thanksgiving, thanking God, the kitchen people, and the *pahkome* for the food and for allowing us to come together for this *pahko*. After this we will go out and sit down in our place in the *ramá* with the other musicians, the violin and the harp and the *tampaleo*. When they are ready, the *pahko* starts with the song called the *kanariom* which is played by the harp and the violin; then the *kanariom* moves to the *tampaleo*, and then to us and we sing our first deer song. The deer dancer is not supposed to come into the *ramá* until the third song. That is when he begins to dance.

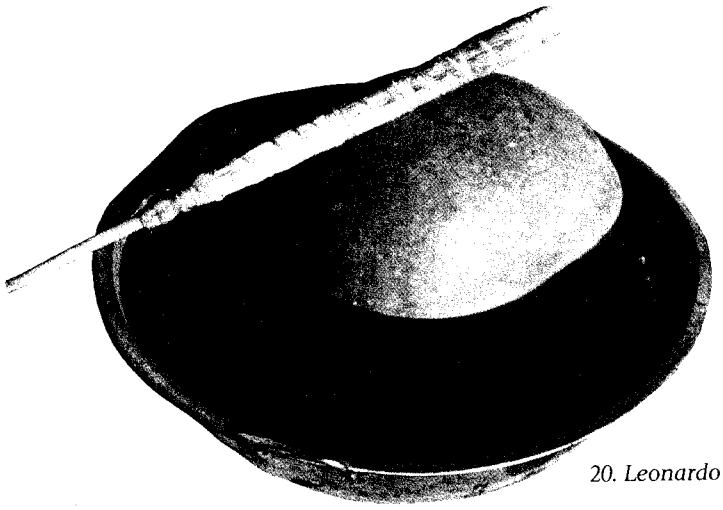
In the early evening or the afternoon, when the *pahko* is getting started, usually there are many people around. They are anxious to see the deer dancer and the *pahkolam* dance. Everybody seems excited. There is happiness in the air while the people talk and socialize and watch the other people at the *pahko*. During this time, we try to sing our loudest, so that the people can enjoy the songs. People who understand the Yaqui language try to stand close to us to listen to the words of the songs and to watch to see if the deer dancer dances the meaning of the songs. Some people like the songs so much they just stand there behind us all night. Some of them record the songs on their cassette machines so they can listen to the songs later in their houses. Yaquis admire a good deer dancer and we tend to criticize a bad dancer. A dancer needs good, loud singers and good songs to dance well.

19. The pahkome, those who sponsor the pahko, serve ...

U Masobwikame Weiyawa: Carrying Out the Deer Singing

Deer singers may know as many as three hundred or more deer songs; however, during a *pahko* they will only have an opportunity to perform a fraction of their repertory, perhaps eighteen or twenty, certainly no more than fifty.[10] The choice of which songs to sing is restricted by Yaqui tradition in a number of ways, but finally it is the lead deer singer who decides.

It is not the deer singers but the *pahkolam* who are the first performers as the *pahko* opens, however. Wearing their masks, stumbling, their *moro* leads them into the *pahko ramá* as the violin and the harp play the first of three opening songs. During the first song they perform a ritual which is said to purify the space where they and the deer will spend the night dancing. At the conclusion of this first song, which is called the *kanariom*, the eldest *pahkola* delivers a sermon in which he talks about the inheritance he and the other *pahko* performers have received from God and how they will be working with it during the *pahko*. He asks the permission of those present to begin. They answer with the formulaic Yaqui affirmative "*heewi*." The antiphonal traditions of the *pahko* require the deer singers to answer each of these three songs with one of their own. Don Jesús said that he always sang the same three songs during this opening part of the *pahko*. He called these *naate bwikam*, beginning songs. According to Don Jesús, it is during the third beginning song that the deer dancer comes into the *ramá* to dance for the first time. However, at *pahkom* in southern Arizona it is common for the deer dancer and the *pahkolam* to come into the *ramá* together without observing any special opening ritual. When they do that, the deer dancer will dance from the first song on.



20. Leonardo Bultimea's water drum ...

✠ Nowadays, some of the old customs are changing or being neglected. One place where change has occurred is in the opening ritual of the *pahko*. The last time I saw a complete opening ritual at a *pahko* was in *Se chopoi* (Sand Hill), near Chandler, Arizona. My grandfather was invited to dance at a *lutu pahko* (death anniversary fiesta). I was about eight years old at the time. Much later, when I was about fifteen, my grandfather explained everything I had seen. At the time I was too young to understand what was going on and, besides, I had my mind on other things like playing with the children. However, I vividly remember my grandpa, Luis Ka Tomela, and Cipriano as *pahkolam*, and Juan María Maso as the *maso*.

The *moro* led the *pahkolam* from the bushes that were south of the southward-facing *pahko ramá*. The *moro* leads the *pahkolam* like this because they are not humans at this time. He finally took them into the ramada, where he walked them around three times in a circle and then stood them in front of the *labaleo* and the *aapaleo*. While the *pahkolam* stood there, they started to swing their hips so that the bells were constantly ringing to the music of the violinist and the harpist, who were playing the *kanariom*, or opening piece. They started to say things that popped into their minds—crazy things, because they were still on the side of the Devil. Things like: "With this nose I can smell great distances"; "With these ears I can hear far away"; "I am a baker"; "I am a farmer." I also noticed that they made the sign of the cross awkwardly, sometimes touching their heads all the way down to their knees. Grandpa told me they said and did these things because they were still confused and still people of the Devil. Then they said: "Watch out harp player, these legs have killed many harp players," and then they named dead harpists that I knew, and others from before my time. "Prepare yourself, because they will constantly want to dance."

After this confusing routine they turned around and shouted. Grandpa told me that this was because they were trying to scare and frighten away the Devil, who was lurking in the area around the fiesta ramada. At this time I pictured the Devil standing back and starting to run away from the *pahko ramá*, falling and tripping clumsily.

After the *pahkolam* had finished with that ritual, they started all together to dance to the *kanariom* that the musicians were playing. As soon as the *labaleo* and the *aapaleo* had finished their tune, the *tampaleo* began to play his *kanariom*. As they had done to the other music, the *pahkolam* all danced to the *tampaleo* at the same time.

When they had finished dancing to the *tampaleo* they started to bless the ground. They stood toward the east, home of the Texans, and they asked for help from *santo mocho'okoli* (holy horned toad). Each *pahkola* marked a cross on the ground with the bamboo reed with which the *moro* had led him into the ramada. Then they stood toward the north and said: "Bless the people to the north, the Navajos, and help me, my *santo vovok* (holy frog), because they are people like us," and they marked another cross on the ground. Still they stood toward the west and said: "Bless the *Hua*

Yoemem (Papagos) and help me my *santo wikui* (holy lizard)," and they marked another cross on the ground. Finally they stood toward the south and said: "To the south, land of the Mexicans, bless them and help me my *santo vehori* (holy tree lizard)," and they marked the last cross on the ground. The head *pahkola* said: "My holy crosses, we have marked you on the ground so that you can protect us from all evil that might harm us."

Putting the bamboo reeds away, the *pahkolam* said to them, "Wait here for me until the *aki* (organ pipe cactus) fruit have ripened. I will use you to *hiahwa* the *aki takam* (pick the cactus fruit)." Finally they put their reeds among the ceiling beams of the *pahko ramá*. Now that the ground had been blessed and purified, the *pahko* was ready to begin. The deer dancer would arrive shortly, and the people were ready to enjoy and be blessed by the *pahko*.

After the beginning songs are sung, the *maehto* and the other church people come and get the deer dancer and the *pahkolam* to accompany them in a formal procession which brings the saints and other holy objects from the village church to the *pahko ramá*, where they are placed on a small table which serves as an altar. At the end of the *pahko* in the morning, the holy objects are returned in another procession. During these two processions the deer singers must sing what Don Jesús called *kaminaroa bwikam*, procession songs. They are deer songs which often incorporate Christian references or themes within the standard deer-song format. These two processions frame the *pahko*, and they are notable as the only times during the *pahko* when the deer singers and the *maehto* coordinate their singing in a formal way. Between the two processions, the deer singers and the other performers who share the *kolensia* go their own way, while the *maehto* and the church people go theirs before their altar on the other side of the *ramá*.

The hymns which the *maehto* sings during the *pahko* are called *alavansam*, and those *bwikam* which the deer singers sing as the *maehto* is singing take the same name. When we asked Don Jesús what the difference was between *alavansam* (hymns) and *bwikam* (songs), he replied, "They are *bwikam*, just *bwikam*. The violin player has his *alavansam*. The harp player has *alavansam*. The *tampaleo* has *alavansam*. And the deer singers too have *alavansam*. They are just *bwikam*." Yet while both the songs of the deer singers and those of the *maehto* are commonly known by the same term, there seems to be no formal effort between the two sides to coordinate who sings what when. And sometimes the *maehto* and the deer singers end up singing at the same

time. One woman from Potam, a veteran of a lifetime of *pahkom*, pined to us at length how she loved to listen to *all* of the *alavansam*, those of the *maehto* and those of deer singers. Because their performance so often overlapped, however, she felt it was impossible to give a good hearing to both.

By contrast the performances of the deer singers are very consciously orchestrated with the other musicians who share the *kolensia*, their side of the *ramá*. The *pahko* proceeds in repeated sequences of music and dancing. The violin and the harp players play together and begin each sequence, and, when they do, each *pahkola* takes a turn dancing to their stringed music. There is a break during which the *pahkolam* may joke with the crowd or among themselves; then, one of them may call for the *tampaleo*, the flute and drum player, to begin. A small bed of mesquite coals is kept at the side of the *tampaleo*. He uses these coals to heat and tune the head of his drum. The sharp distinctive sound of the *tampaleo* searching for the right tuning on his drum is a signal that a deer song will soon be sung. And when they hear it, the audience concentrates around the edge of the *ramá*. Once the *tampaleo* has begun his song, the *pahkolam* each take a turn dancing to his music, this time with their masks covering their faces. It is as the *pahkolam* begin to dance to the music of the *tampaleo* that the deer singers finally begin. Usually a deer song is sung two or three times. When the deer dancer has performed and the deer song is over, everything stops. There is a more extended break. The violin and the harp players begin a new song and the sequence is begun again. So it goes throughout the *pahko*.

As it is the violin and the harp players who begin each of these sequences, they are said to *vata weiya*, carry it first. In addition to the temporal order of the sequence, this means that the violin player chooses the songs, the *alavansam*. If the violin player chooses an *alavansa* titled, say, *wichalakas*, cardinal, then the *tampaleo* is supposed to follow with a cardinal song on his flute and drum, and the deer singers in their turn should choose a cardinal song from their own repertory as well. Only the deer songs have words, but the *alavansam* of both of the other sets of musicians are known by titles.

In addition to choosing the songs, the violinist "carries it first" in another way. The violin and the harp use three different tunings during the *pahko*.[11] Felipe, from conversations with both Don Jesus and Don Lupe, identifies the following names and associated times: *alavansa:* from the beginning of the *pahko* until an hour or so before midnight; *partiyo:* the hours around midnight when it is said "the world turns"; and *kompania:* from around 1 A.M. until the close of the *pahko*. It is said that certain kinds of *alavansam* are traditionally performed during each of these portions of the *pahko*. This appears to be a general pattern which individual singers interpret and define in their own ways over the course of their careers.

Don Jesús talked about his choices of deer songs in the following way. He began a

pahko with a sequence of three *naate bwikam*, beginning songs, which he referred to as the *kanariom, kanariom saila,* and *maso yeu weye* (the deer comes out). Always, he said, he sang the same three songs to begin. Similarly, he always closed the *pahko* with two songs which were always the same: a *hilukiam tovoktane bwikam* (pick up raspers song) and a *sakawame bwikam* (a leaving song). A *kaminaroa bwikam* (procession song) always followed the beginning songs and followed the closing songs. Within this frame, Don Jesús felt a great latitude of choice. Any *alavansam* could be used there he told us: "After the procession song, we can sing anything." However, he then went on to say that he usually began with a sequence of songs about *saila maso,* little brother deer, followed these with songs about the flowers in the wilderness world, moved in the middle of the *pahko* to songs about animals, and finally to bird songs as dawn approached. He named these groups as *hubwa kupteo bwikam* (early evening songs), *nasuktukaria bwikam* (middle of the night songs), and *matchuo vicha bwikam* (toward the morning songs).[12]

Don Jesús and other deer singers we talked with preferred to discuss the sequence of deer songs they sang during a *pahko* not as a taxonomy but as a narrative. Don Jesús consistently returned to the idea that the deer songs represent the voice of *saila maso.* At the same time the songs describe him, they describe what he sees and encounters as he goes out into the wilderness world. Deer singer Loretto Salvatierra describes the way he thinks about the sequence of deer songs during a *pahko* in this way:

When we are moved, we sing the beginning songs. Three songs there must be. In the yard that is made ready, the animal that has come will start to move around. With the movements it has while it is alive and walking, it will start sounding and it will have the hour.

Then during the hours of the dusk, all the wilderness flowers will be sung. When it falls to night, the animals in the wilderness: the mountain lion, a little cottontail or a jackrabbit, even a little rat, all the ones that are alive and walk around, they will start to sound. The animal that has come sees them and they will be sung about from there until the world turns.

From where the world turns until the dawn wind, the ones you see when you are walking in the wilderness will be said, and the birds will also be imitated. They will be known and can be said.

Toward the morning the song is said of the animal, the one that loves the dawn wind and is walking, the animal that stands under the palo verde. Under it he will stand and rub his antlers with that wind. He loves it so, that dawn wind.

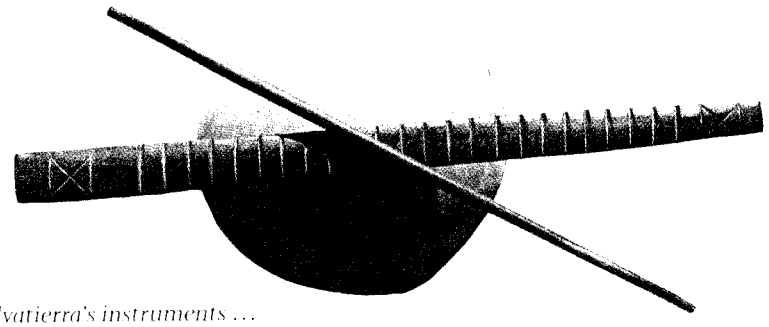
From there we will sing the morning service song, and then the procession song, and it will end. Yes, that is it. All that he should talk about, that is what we sing, that is it. He does not talk, but he talks in an enchanted way.

Sewau Hotekate: We Sit Down to the Flower

Deer songs are most commonly performed within Yaqui communities, then, not individually but as a part of sequences that individual singers create, sequences which each fill one *pahko* with songs. Accordingly, we believe the most appropriate way to present deer-song words for appreciation is not in a catalogue but in such sequences.

During the time we worked recording songs and talk about songs, Felipe was increasingly invited to perform as lead deer singer at both family and community *pahkom*, as well as at various functions outside the Yaqui community.[13] During these performances he began to incorporate the songs we were recording into his own repertory.

What follows is one sequence of songs which Felipe Molina, Timothy Cruz, and Felipe Garcia sang at a *pahko* held at Old Pascua in 1984. Many of the songs which Felipe chose to sing were learned from Don Jesús, Don Lupe, and other singers we worked with in Potam, Sonora. The sequence thus indicates one way in which their songs continue in contemporary Yaqui tradition. From this perspective it is a living anthology of their work. Out of respect for the *pahkome*, we did not record the songs that night, but sat down together to write down the songs and work out these translations later. We repeat the first part of each song the same number of times Felipe remembers singing them, and after each song we give the comments which Felipe made on the songs as we wrote them down. These glosses may be viewed as a step toward the oral literary criticism for which many have called.[14] They seemed to both of us an inseparable part of the songs as soon as they were said.



21. Loretto Salvatierra's instruments . . .