

Andrew Peynetsa's account of some aspects of Zuni hunting, collected (July 1971), transcribed, & edited by Dennis Tedlock.

## WHEN THE OLD TIMERS WENT DEER HUNTING

The old timers  
when they went deer hunting  
when they got hungry--  
as soon as you kill a deer  
everything's still hot inside:  
you know that blood inside  
the body  
the blood inside--  
they took a handfull and drank it.  
They used to do that, the old timers did.  
And they ate raw lungs  
RAW.  
They said they tasted good, they said "OLHTI"  
to mean it tasted good, yeah.  
That was the old timers.  
That old man Shananapti:  
he always gave us a story on that, he told us what he used to  
do when he  
used to go hunting.  
You know way back in 1800 to 1700  
you know these deer were  
scattered all over and they were scarce.  
There were not many deer the way there are up-to-date now,  
you know.  
Well these hunters  
would make a plan that they were going wa-----y out to  
Springerville.

They took the horses, got the burros  
got their lunches on them and they went over there.  
Probably they'd stay there about a week.

If they were lucky  
each man killed his big  
deer.

Maybe they'd stay one whole week.  
And there had to be somebody to make jerky out of it, so that  
guy had to be there too:  
as they killed it, why he made jerky out of it  
sliced them you know and  
hung them on the  
wood, sticks  
to let them dry off.

And they  
dug the ground and put the hides in there  
and they  
got almost, I guess, almost rotten you know  
and that  
hair came off.  
Why it was almost just like, well it was a buckskin  
but it wasn't tanned yet  
but they brought it home you know.  
They divided it up too:  
they divided it up before they left the camp. Suppose they  
wanted to come home:  
why they put  
this  
buckskin  
in layers, however many guys there were, they put their  
hides in there.  
They got that jerked meat out, they divided it up:  
they went around with the meat  
to each man  
and the next time bones  
whatever they had  
cut up  
dried up  
why they divided it all up.  
Maybe they had about  
one deer, it looks like one deer was all dried up already  
and they tied it up with that  
hide.

And the  
guy that was making jerky:  
he got something too.  
And then they came.  
They used to do that.  
Well they  
figured on killing a lot of them  
so they stayed there about one week probably.  
Well at that time  
they always used to make camp  
and that same night they made little  
hills, you know.  
And that's where, between those two hills  
they made a hole right in the center there  
and they  
fasted right there with those prayer sticks  
so that they would get those deer.  
They made  
an entrance on both sides:  
one entrance on this side and an entrance on this side  
where, if they were lucky--  
they said that if they were lucky--  
the deer tracks would be coming in  
to that hole.  
But if there was BAD LUCK coming  
maybe the BEAR tracks would be coming in there, that was  
a dangerous  
sign on it  
see.  
If an animal like a  
wildcat or something put a track in there where that hole was  
that was danger, they say  
because they might see a  
bear  
or a lion  
or maybe a wolf:  
those things were dangerous in those years.  
So they put up that thing to get a sign:  
they might get some design on it.  
(How big was it?)

Oh about that big (about a foot high)  
about so:  
little, small hills you know.  
And they made a hole between those two hills  
and that's where they planted their prayer sticks  
and they fasted right there every morning:  
put the corn meal on it  
and every night they checked  
or the next morning they went over there and checked it.  
If they were lucky  
the deer tracks would be coming into that hole at BOTH ENDS:  
that was their  
sign.  
It showed they were going to get the deer.  
And sure enough they'd be killing deer.  
Why, as soon as they got enough  
and everything--their meat, all those bones--was all dried  
why they divided it up  
then they came home.  
That's the way they used to do that.

But later on around  
1800  
well around  
1890-something or 1880  
that was the time  
there got to be so many deer around here.  
I know one man named Kaskala, he used to live down below  
where that Chauncey's wall is (points out the window).  
Well back of it there used to be houses around there  
and that's why my father always visited this guy:  
a deer hunter.  
Where we went up to Henry's yesterday  
right up to--  
you haven't been there to that spring? (No.)  
Well there's a spring over there, they used to live up there  
you know  
in those cornfields  
with their sheep you know

and this man, old man Kaskala:  
he was a deer hunter.  
He always killed a deer  
up there because nobody  
ever  
saw him, because  
he would just go out a little ways and kill one.  
They used to live that way.  
When they lived down here  
my father always went over there and visited them, probably  
they'd killed a deer  
and when the visitor came there they  
gave him some meat.  
That was the first time I tasted deer meat.  
My father always went to visit him you know.

Then in those days  
suppose the deer hunter came in about this time  
bringing the deer  
on his back  
and he always had something to spare  
or a little meat  
to eat, he'd already cut it, or else the lungs  
or the heart.  
Then suppose the old ladies were getting the water from this  
creek  
and maybe that deer hunter came around before he crossed  
the creek.  
There were no bridges like this you know:  
well, we just crossed, and maybe the women were getting  
water from the creek  
and the hunter came around.  
If she saw that he had a deer on his back  
the woman would say, "Kesh ton aawiya?"  
she'd say that.  
That means they're coming.  
Well  
the hunter  
whatever he had to spare

he'd give it to the lady  
and then the lady would think about  
what she was going to give to him  
back to him  
to thank him for it, you know, for getting the meat.  
Then the next morning or evening  
she'd bring a  
bowl of  
corn meal flour:  
"chuuk'ina" they call it.  
They put this chuuk'ina, they  
put it in the water and  
stir it and then you drink it raw.  
That's the way they used to do.  
Sometimes  
they brought a bowl  
about so (about a foot in diameter), not a big bowl, and put the  
flour in there  
so it could be fed to this  
ky'apin ho''i  
deer.  
That's the way they did it, see.

NOTES. Springerville is 80 miles s. s. w. of Zuni. By "fasted" it is meant that the hunters prayed and made offerings. "About this time" means late afternoon, the time of the narration. "Kesh ton aawiya" means "Are you (plural) coming," and is thus addressed to both the hunter and the deer. "Ky'apin ho''i" means "raw person," that is, a person who, unlike a human, does not depend on cooked food.