NOTES ON SARSI KIN BEHAVIOR

by

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Apart from reports by Goddard and Jenness (1) Sarsi culture has remained a severely neglected object of ethnological inquiry. In the summer of 1944, following field work among the Athapaskan-speaking Slave Indians at Fort Nelson, B.C., the present author spent two weeks on the Sarcee Reserve near Calgary, Alberta, collecting material on the culture as it existed around the time of white contact (2). The following notes report some of the regularities of kinship behavior, including mode of marriage and patterns of friendship pertaining to that dateline. These data amplify the picture which Jenness has given of the Sarsi and illustrate the rather thorough assimilation of Plains culture that occurred in about one hundred and fifty years. One caution may be suggested, however. We do not doubt that the informant, Pat Grasshopper (through the interpreter, Oscar Otter,) gave us as accurate a description of aboriginal and early contact lifeways as possible. On the other hand, the patterns of behavior which he described, while redolent of Plains Indian ethos and values, might have been carried out by the Sarsi with qualities somewhat different from those of their Blackfoot and other Plains neighbors.

The name Sarsi apparently originated from the designation bestowed upon an Athapaskan people by their contemporaries. Originally, according to Pat Grasshopper, the Algonquian-speaking Blackfoot referred to the Plains latecomers as "saxsiiwak," a word said to denote "real (or "true," i.e., bush) Indian." But Dick Starlight said that the original designation was saxsii, meaning "hard language." We suspect that Grasshopper is more nearly correct and that the root of the word Sarsi is the Algonquian sookii, conveying the idea of strong, powerful, mighty. Combined with the plural, animate suffix, -ak, we get "strong ones" or "hard people," possibly referring to the hardiness of these bush people who had only recently moved out of the forest and into the lusher plains. Formerly the Sarsi no doubt referred to themselves only as "people" (tina). The word for tribe, tsotina, signified "everybody." (3).

Grandparents. Between alternate generations social expectations stressed the respect and restraint which the young owed to the dignity of age. Only a "bad" boy would tease or play practical jokes on his grandfather in the manner found among Northern Forest Athapaskans. Apparently levity on the part of the old man was also considered inappropriate (4). Grandparents deserved respect and deference because of their richer experience, authority, and ceremonial roles. Among the more northerly Athapaskans, with their atomistic social structure, age did not heighten prestige. In the northern forest, where old people were sometimes abandoned to die when they could no longer keep up with the mobile band, any pronounced attitudes of respect might have complicated the struggle for survival by making the obnoxious necessity of abandonment even more conflictful. The intensity of relations was apparently greatest between grandparents and grandchildren of the same sex. It would also appear that a tendency toward cross-reciprocal terminology existed between these relatives, although this was not admitted by informants. That is to say, a person tended to classify his grandchildren of either sex (isua, m.s., icuga, w.s.) with the grandmother (isu) and grandfather (isiga). Grandfather gave his grandson beneficial advice and exhorted him to be brave and kind while an old woman taught her granddaughter herbal medicine.

Parents. The Sarsi family constituted an important institution for learning. In the language of an informant: "We gave our children a great deal of advice on Indian ways; how to be good-natured, gentlemanly, and generous, so that in the future the boy would win respect from the band. If he got respect from the band the people said: 'He has a good father, and the father will win respect.'" (5). A mother was no less a teacher than her husband but she directed her counsel primarily toward her daughters, from whose future public conduct she also hoped to be rewarded.

At birth the mother received assistance from three or four women, one of them an unrelated person experienced with parturition and in herbal medicines. Also present, but not engaging in the work of delivery, were the mother and mother-in-law of the woman in childbed. Men were excluded from the scene, which always took place inside a dwelling (6). To facilitate delivery, the midwife prepared beverages which the mother drank. These were also supposed to heal the body. The oldest woman in the group cut the cord

after which the afterbirth, wrapped in a piece of skin, was cached in a tree or buried in a badger hole. No food taboos followed childbirth and informants denied that any were observed during pregnancy. For a short time after birth women attempted to round the infant's head by molding it with the hands. Twins were happily greeted by both parents. Two or three days after delivery the child's father called a shaman to the tipi to pray for the new individual's survival. At the same time he bestowed a name on the infant, basing his choice on a dream without consulting the parents. The name, which contained advantageous properties, was retained forever. Sometimes a practitioner gave two or three names to a baby, only one of which would be used by the parents. The father paid for the services of the shaman, the payment depending on the family's economic status (7). Throughout a person's career, parents and associates might designate him by various nicknames based on idiosyncrasies of behavior. Thus, the "true" name of the persons could be displaced by competing nicknames and only on ceremonial occasions would the original name be employed. A newborn baby or young child wore no amulets.

Customarily a mother nursed her baby for about two years but sometimes birth of a sibling necessitated earlier weaning. The breast was immediately offered to soothe a crying baby and, should the mother lack sufficient milk, the child often went to another woman to suckle. The wet nurse received clothing and moccasins in return for her services. To aid weaning a woman smeared the nipple with nicotine obtained from a pipe. "When a child tasted this he never liked to nurse again." A woman carried her baby supported in a moss bag and the cradle board was not used. At the age of about one year she discarded the moss bag and the child rested against a carrying belt when being transported. These two stages of packing children still occur among the Slave and Kaska Indians in northern British Columbia. As soon as the child began to speak, parents exerted increasingly direct pressure on his social development. They did not expect that a young child would immediately respond with mature discrimination; so many departures from desired norms continued to go unpunished. From this age children also began to come under the domination of like sexed parents (8). A boy, for example, came to be increasingly exposed to his father's moral advice. The youth's economic activities were also encouraged, his first successful killing of game

being rewarded with a feast to which many poor people and friends of the family were invited. The occasion obviously brought prestige to the parents as well as to the embryonic hunter (9). Pat Grasshopper gave the following account of the feast that his parents had prepared for him (although the events occurred after contact with Euro-Canadians, they probably represent persistence of traditional custom:)

> I shot a prairie deer and father and mother gave the feast. I tied up the legs and packed it home on horseback. I was happy to bring it home. When I got near my father's tipi my father came to meet me. He asked: 'Who killed that deer for you?' I answered: 'I killed it my own self because I am a man.' Then I brought the meat home. My mother took the meat off the horse and set it on the ground. She cut it up. There were five tipis in camp. My father called them all together. There was a big boiling pot. My mother had some saskatoon berries. The whole mess was then boiled. Then they went to a medicine woman. She came into the tipi and dipped into the food and held it up to the sun, praying for my health, long life, and good luck. After that everybody ate. Ever since then I've had good luck in hunting till right today -- every winter.

As long as a youth remained unmarried he contributed the products of his hunts to parents. The mother in turn often made presents of game to friends "because she was glad and proud that her son brought home meat."

With approaching puberty the father concerned himself with a son's ritual life. A renowned shaman regarded this period as of particular importance because he hoped that the boy's successful power quest would earn the latter the privilege of acquiring his father's store of ritual. Apparently all adult men possessed some supernatural power. A mother taught her daughter skills like sewing, cooking, and tanning. No special attention was paid to the onset of menstruation and knowledge of the event remained confined to woman and child. A woman, however, explicitly stressed to her daughter the necessity and advantages of chastity. Sexual virtue held an important place

in the value system of the Plains Sarsi, a position it did not occupy in the northern forest. Chastity opened the way for considerable prestige rewards in a girl's later life. Reinforcing the mother's advice concerning chastity was the encouragement held out by the father, grandparents, and brothers. So the girl came to know that she faced disownment by her family if any evidence of unchastity came to light. Such drastic punishment almost automatically doomed her to a career of promiscuity and social obloquity, for notorious women were not regarded as desirable wives. These sanctions against unchastity are partly related to the fact that an unvirtuous girl destroyed her own magical value. On the other hand, a virgin's participation in the Sun Dance earned supernatural blessings for everyone. Ideally the rule of premarital continence also applied to boys and was also supposed to be a prerequisite to Sun Dance participation. Unlike a girl, however, a youth was not as strongly catechized or supervised. Inherent conflict would seem to have been contained in these divergent emphases. Induced by youths, some girls surrendered their virginity and received the standard punishment for an offense at least partly the responsibility of their seducers. Illegitimacy, of course, brought serious disgrace. "We don't like that," said Oscar Otter. "Today lots of them do it. In the old days both the mother and the kid were kicked out." Anyone who married an unmarried mother paid no bride wealth, indicating that the marriage gift symbolized in part appreciation for virginity. An illegitimate child continued to be dubiously regarded even in later life and felt shame because he lacked a social father. Hearing people comment on his status he sometimes went to his mother who would point out her lover. The youth went to the man and said: "You are my father." The latter might then help his illegitimate offspring. As a result of the sanctions directed against illegitimacy, a girl tried desperately to rid herself of an unwanted pregnancy. Abortion, however, counted as murder and an unwished for foetus was said always to be particularly hard to abort. Should the elders discover evidence of abortion they would punish their daughter. Masturbation in either sex met with parental horror and disgust. The behavior was described as "beastly" and any occurrence earned severe punishment.

Parents conducted their children's marriage negotiations. Customarily a youth's sister, mother, or father formally requested the bride from her

father (10). Before agreeing to the match the latter turned to the girl inquiring: "What do you think, daughter?" The girl held back with a patterned demurral. "Well, father, it's up to you," she said. "If you want me to marry that boy, I agree, because you're my father." The parent then turned to the emissary and added his consent. Should the girl have disliked the proposing youth, the father would have withheld his consent out of fear lest he "spoil" his daughter's life by sending her to a bad home. Only an evil father forced his daughter into a marriage of which she did not approve. Parents did not forget a married daughter even though she no longer lived in their home. Cruelty or non-support by an indifferent hunter provoked a father to recall the unhappy girl. For a man, marriage meant shifting his economic responsibilities and now he began to hunt for his family of procreation. Since he customarily added his family to that of his parents, he continued to give the latter food. He also assumed the responsibility of sending meat to the home of his father-in-law, the wife packing it to her former domicile. There was nothing unusual about a woman paying extended visits to her family.

Consideration of the relative age of descendants played a role in the disposition of a man's goods following death. A very rich person with four or five children made a verbal testamentary deposition in the presence of relatives. Wealth, chiefly consisted of horses that descended to children of both sexes. Regardless of sex, an older child inherited more animals than younger siblings. Lacking children, a man's property passed to his siblings or, if these were also lacking, then to the widow. Women's possessions always descended to daughters. The tipi, however, remained to the husband, unmarried daughters continuing to reside there. In time, if a man remarried, the dwelling would be turned over to a new wife. (11) It became the duty of a son or daughter to care for an aged or widowed parent. Such people were never abandoned but moved along with the camp supported on strong young arms or, for long distances, riding on travoix.

Siblings. Great respect characterized the relations of siblings of opposite sex. Between them "shyness" or avoidance obtained. Informants explained this by saying merely that the two had been "born of the same woman." The sons in a family slept in the rear of the tipi, opposite the entry, while girls

slept on the left of the house separated from their brothers by the father and his principle wife. As long as at least one parent remained alive, siblings retained residence in the household, although undertaking frequent visits to the camps of paternal uncles and aunts. If both parents died, unmarried girls quit the house and left it to their brothers. An unmarried orphan girl might, however, join the family of an older, married brother. Gifts between siblings of opposite sex continued to be exchanged throughout life, the brother giving robes and an occasional horse, the sister returning moccasins, leggings, or a fancy costume. As already pointed out, a man exercised considerable interest in his sister's conduct and could legitimately kill her for premarital unchastity. Should it happen that a husband failed to punish his wife for an act of adultery then the woman's brother, out of disgrace and frustration, might undertake punitive action. Men also advised their sisters concerning a prospective marriage but a brother's influence was subordinated to the father's decision.

Between brothers the age differential played a considerable role in regulating behavior, the younger being expected to follow the advice of the elder. In later years the terminological distinction of lesser age was abandoned and the elder brother term, gina, came to be used reciprocally. Possibly this usage correlated with the fact that from now on the older ceased to order the younger sibling to the degree that this had previously been customary. A brother also acted for his sibling in jural relations, claiming indemnity for an injury or avenging the latter's slaying. During their lifetimes brothers held the levirate in view. A man with children, who feared that he might soon die, told his brother: "If I die, I depend on you, brother. You can marry my wife so that you will look after my children in the future. I depend on you. If my wife married another husband he will treat my children rough. Second husbands always do this."

Parents' siblings. Although the elder brother term was extended to both the paternal and maternal uncles, a nephew enjoyed a somewhat different relationship with each of these men. Both uncles supplemented the father in giving advice and encouragement to a boy. The father's brother, however, seems to have demanded less extreme respect; at any rate joking was common between them. Thus the paternal uncle might tell his nephew: "There's a big buffalo

(or bear) coming." Startled the youth would look around only to perceive the hoax. Like the grandfather and elder brother, the father's brother also sought to promote a youth's endurance of cold and discomfort by tossing him into cold water or rolling him in snow. When camp moved a paternal uncle sometimes invited parents to leave the boys behind. The man then mounted a horse and ordered the lads to run before him. One by one the runners played out and fell down panting. The uncle each time dismounted and refreshed their bodies by covering them with snow. Only the hardier boys ran until they reached the next campsite. Their endurance promised that they would be powerful men in later life. Another ordeal involved men (paternal uncles?) placing small boys on the ground face down and naked except for the breech cloth. Thick strands of unseparated sinew were then employed as a lash for pounding the boys' backs. No attempt was made to provoke the youths to cry out. Such treatment developed the back muscles and gave the boys strength to pack heavy loads of buffalo meat without becoming exhausted. From his paternal uncle a nephew received gifts and might even inherit a costume. As might be expected, under conditions of patrilocal residence interaction with the father's brother occurred more frequently than with the mother's brother. A maternal uncle also gave his sister's son gifts, including horses.

Toward the father's and mother's sisters, behavior remained at all times respectful. Sexual topics were never discussed between these relatives and hardly would a nephew dare to fondle or wrestle with either of these women. Following a lengthy absence it was customary to shake hands with an aunt, but this behavior probably also occurred toward other kin. Our information does not state that the mother's sister was classified with the mother; possibly the informant could not recall the pattern and it no longer occurred (12).

Parents' siblings' children. Relations between cousins approximated behavior between siblings. Sibling terms included both parallel and cross cousins and marriage between them was forbidden. Speaking of the relationship of a girl to her mother's brother son one informant said: "We respect each other -- more than our own sister, because we didn't grow up together nor were we born of the same woman." An enthusiastic comraderie obtained between parallel male cousins reared together in the patrilocal extended

family. Like brothers, these men sometimes exchanged clothes and encouraged each other toward virtues like bravery and courage.

Husband and wife. Two kinds of girls were "about the best" that a boy could hope to marry: the daughters of chiefs and the daughters of parents who, through having given a Sun Dance, had won wide respect. Marriage with a chief's daughter permitted a man to use his father-in-law's excellent horses in hunting and war. This suggests the possibility that matrilocal residence may sometimes have accompanied marriage to a headman's daughter or that bilocal residence constituted the norm. The daughter of Sun Dance celebrants was likely to be a girl who had absorbed the earnest teachings of her exemplary parents and so could be trusted not to deceive her husband by philandering. Successful war records also brought prestige to a family, including its daughters. The personal qualities desired in wife included that she be an industrious and skilful worker, attractive, and, of course, of undisputed chastity. Such a girl, by observing expectations of marital fidelity, might someday be able to celebrate the Sun Dance and thus win long life and good fortune for all the people. Band endogamy was not the rule and marriage also took place outside the tribe. Extratribal marriages sometimes resulted in a spouse going to live with another people. Girls who had acquired a local reputation for unchastity took the opportunity to secure a mate in an area where they were not well known. Since girls generally married when they were fourteen or fifteen years old, such early unions constituted another means that helped to forestall premarital promiscuity. By nineteen or twenty most of the women in the society had already wed. Boys, however, rarely thought of marriage until they were considerably older and possessed a war record able with which to claim desirable girls. When he had achieved these conditions he began to court eligible girls who exchanged gifts with him (13). Never, it was maintained, did Sarsi youths engage in the custom of "pulling pegs" whereby a boy crept under a tipi cover to fondle or cohabit with a girl. The Blackfoot were said to have been "bad for this." Marriage was sometimes preceded by a kind of betrothal or bride service during which the man hunted for his father-in-law and gave the older man gifts of horses. If at a later time marital relations became disturbed, leading to divorce, only the horses given at the time of marriage (i.e., the bride wealth) need be returned

but not those which had been turned over in the betrothal period. With bride service the mother-in-law avoidance came into effect.

Spouse's siblings or parents carried on marriage negotiations. Proceedings often began when a young man returned from a successful war party enriched with captured enemy horses. Proud of his achievement he would see a desirable girl and, picking the best of his mounts, requested his father or brother to take them to the girl's father. Acceptance of the gift indicated that a man consented to consider the suitor. No nuptials were celebrated. On the day of his marriage the groom, perhaps assisted by relatives, presented horses and an amount of clothing, buckskin, and weapons to the father of his bride. The number of horses a parent could expect for his daughter depended partly on his own wealth and rank as well as on the economic status of the groom. A rich man or a man with many relatives who all contributed toward the bride wealth, offered more for a wife than did a poor man. A large marriage settlement conferred prestige on the payee and on his cooperating kin. Because of the close association between economic status and expected bride wealth, rich men and the sons of rich men tended to marry daughters of wealthy families. Thus a degree of class endogamy appears to have characterized Sarsi social relations. Other considerations also motivated a man's readiness to offer a large marriage gift. One of these was the undisputed virginity of the girl. Also, the amount of bride wealth partly determined a man's freedom to punish his wife without fear of a father-in-law's interference in the event that she should deceive her husband. Public opinion became very severe toward an adulterous wife whose marriage had been accompanied by great bride wealth. By recalling his daughter a man became committed to returning the bride wealth which he had received. Sometimes it happened that even the unjust cruelty of a husband went unreprimanded because his wife's father had dissipated the bride wealth and so could not recall the girl. On the other hand a husband might not be willing to give up even an unfaithful wife in return for the bride wealth.

An instance of post contact behavior in divorce is given in the following narrative:

> Pat Grasshopper's oldest sister married a man while she was still quite young. She lived with him for a number

of years. They never had any children. The husband was a good natured, kind hearted man. He died and his widow lived alone for three years. Then one day a man came to Pat and offered him a good horse, asking if he could marry Pat's widowed sister. Pat went to ask the woman, who consented. She lived with her husband for one year. During all this time Pat held on to the horse. Then this fellow, who was a heavy drinker, hit his wife in the eye. The next morning the woman came to Pat and told him to return the horse to her husband, who, she claimed, had been drinking and beating her for some time. Pat gave back the animal and the woman never again returned to her husband.

It was explained that if the second husband had been rich and had paid heavily for the woman, Pat would have had to save all the marriage gifts, or make them up, before he could have secured his sister's freedom. Should a horse have died during the course of the marriage, then an animal of equivalent value had to be handed back in event of divorce. The system here outlined did not always run smoothly. Frequently divorce took place by a cruel husband driving his wife away or by an irate father himself ordered a mistreated woman to leave her spouse. In such cases the wife's father resisted any attempt to force him to return the marriage settlement "because the girl had slept with her husband." Similarly, if divorce followed from a husband's proven adultery, the wife's father also escaped returning the bride wealth.

To her marriage the girl brought a dowry of hides, that provided material for the new family's tipi. Sometimes a completed dwelling was provided through the cooperation of both affinal families or the girl's parents might move into a new shelter leaving the old one for the couple. Following presentation of the marriage gift by the groom, the girl, dressed in her best apparel, went to her parents-in-law carrying a pair of men's moccasins. Entering the tipi she sat alongside her husband-to-be, removed his footgear, and placed the new moccasins on his feet. The marriage could then be consummated. Marital residence was taken up near the husband's family but never in his parents' dwelling.

Prospective spouses encountering parental disapproval sometimes eloped. The elders did not try to break up such a union once it had been accomplished. Therefore the young man still faced the obligation of paying bride wealth. If a poor youth who had eloped could not accumulate the required amount, his parents-in-law might take back the girl, even though she was thereafter regarded as unchaste (she had done a "crazy thing".)

A variant pattern of marriage arose out of the Grabbers' Dance. The Grabbers constituted an association which met in the spring every three or four years (14). Membership was limited to unmarried and divorced warriors but largely included men who, because they were n'er-do-wells, could not secure wives. Jenness implies that membership was purchased (15). Every third spring the group elected a leader and planned a dance. Scouts were sent to all the bands for the purpose of inviting the tribe to assemble. Women who heard about the plans generally became apprehensive but the unmarried men looked forward to the event. The sodality, totaling about thirty or thirty-five members, pitched two tipis in the middle of the camp circle, alongside the chief's lodge. The participants painted themselves with red paint and divested themselves of all clothing except the breech cloth. Then for four days they danced, carrying weapons (bows and war clubs) and a three foot long, red painted pole of saskatoon willow decorated with eagle feathers. On the first two days, beginning late in the day, they danced "all mixed up" outside of the lodges. On the third evening following this dancing they entered the lodge and lined up while one man asked each member to name the woman he wanted for a wife. Unmarried women were the objects of choice but not all of the dancers nominated a girl or took part in the subsequent tipi visiting. The men then quit the tipi and, beginning at one side of the camp circle, proceeded from one dwelling to another searching for the women who had been named. As each was found she was asked to marry the warrior who had selected her. If she assented she followed along behind the crowd of men and women returning to the Grabbers' lodge. Here the members danced with the women who had been "grabbed." Following this dance the men proceeded to their tipis with the women. A woman who refused to accept her Grabber might be seized during the night unless the claimant instructed his fellows to leave her alone. Only the "tough guys" pursued

an unwilling girl. On the fourth day, after a feast provided by the parents of the men and women involved, the association disbanded, the participants going off with their wives for whom they now owed bride wealth. It was said that sometimes fear compelled a girl to accept a Grabber whom she really did not wish to marry. After about a month she would leave him. A girl's father or brothers stood ready to resist any ruffian who sought to force an unwilling girl to follow him. The Grabbers therefore appear to have reserved their choices for women who had shown them favors previously or who could not secure husbands from among the more desirable warriors. It may be significant that Chiefs and members of the Police Society did not join the Grabbers. Chiefs also avoided interfering with the sodality's activities lest they provoke disorder. Members of the Police, all leading warriors, remained too proud to secure wives in this fashion -- if, indeed, they had any need to. Parents might flee the camp circle when they knew that a Grabbers' Dance was scheduled or else they removed their daughters from camp for the duration of the event. The Grabbers probably served to accommodate individuals who failed to find adequate satisfaction in several areas of life, including political activity and family relations (16). The sodality was probably formed primarily from the lower status levels of the tribal community.

Jealousy keynoted relations between husband and wife. "A man and woman, if both were good looking, were very jealous of each other. Each was afraid to go to another man or woman. They watched each other. This often caused trouble between them." Such attitudes served to complicate plural marriages with women other than a wife's sisters. A man who brought home a strange woman could expect his angry wife to attack the visitor. Sometimes a first wife left her polygynous husband. She would then try to remarry as quickly as possible in order to spite the previous spouse. Captured enemy women, perhaps because of their clearly defined subordinate status, were more successfully accommodated as co-wives. Such captives were either kept by the captor or presented to a brother-in-law. "If our sister had a husband we would give this woman to him to be his wife so that she could serve our own sister. If I had no brother-in-law then I could take a captured woman as my own wife. My wife will be glad for my brave deed because she (the co-wife) is an enemy woman. Now she will have lots of help." Only a "bad" or cruel man mistreated a captive woman but rarely did anyone

reproach such behavior.

Severe penalties often followed adultery. Sometimes an offended husband cut off a delinquent wife's ears or nose, a piece of her scalp, or some hair. He might also kill the paramour or claim several of the latter's best horses. In addition the husband might divorce his offending spouse. Failure to protest his wife's adultery in a suitable manner earned a man the disapproval of his wife's brother, who would brand him a coward. Fear of a brother-in-law's criticism, therefore, partly determined a man's severity in dealing with an adulterous wife. In part too his reaction depended on whether the marriage had produced children. If so, a husband proceeded cautiously against an offending wife. Despite men's easily provoked jealousy (and some men often became jealous without cause) female adultery was not rare. The informant explained that some women were born adulteresses. "They would always do it, no matter how you punished them. That's why you killed them. If you left them alone they would never quit and would always bring disgrace on their parents." Women, did not show greater tolerance of their husbands' sexual liaisons. Jealousy led a married woman to attack her unfaithful spouses as well as his paramour with anything from bare hands to knives. As women grew old and less attractive they could less and less rely on their husbands' continued faithfulness. This is illustrated in the following incident, which occurred after contact with Euro-Canadians. The anecdote was told by Oscar Otter.

> When Pat Grasshopper was still a young man he once got a horse and went around to see a young woman he knew. He was married but his wife was getting old. He set a date with the younger woman for a time when the people would move to the hay camps. He told her to stay behind and not move with her parents. One day the people left. He had been to Calgary on a horse and when he got back he saw his tipi and outfit gone. That night he went around to the girl's parents' tipi. She came out. He told her to come with him. She got in front on his saddle and they beat it away in the night. They got down twenty-five miles to Okatokis (Okatoks, Alberta.) It was just getting

> daylight. People coming from the south met them. One man had a democrat and Pat went on with it, the woman riding. They stayed together for a week. They then came back to the reserve. Pat bought a new tent and went to the hay meadow where his old wife was. When his old wife heard he was coming she left right away.

On this occasion the former wife did not return to her husband and took with her the tipi and her other possessions. There were no children. Otherwise, when couples broke up, female children went with the mother and boys remaining with the father. Babies of either sex accompanied the mother. Later, when a boy was grown, he returned to the father. Divorce also followed for a wife's barrenness but the community was not always ready to condone such action. Under no circumstances was a divorcée considered virtuous enough to celebrate the Sun Dance. Informants somewhat unclearly reported women "kept" by men (married to the men?) who were rented for sexual purposes. These prostitutes enjoyed marked lack of respect.

The roles of men and women in marriage complemented each other. Men assumed such tasks as hunting, fishing, scouting, fighting, carrying for horses, ceremonial and political leadership, and protection against wild animals. A man made the tools necessary for hunting, fighting, and domestic industries. In cold weather he volunteered for the job of driving the buffalo into a corral and also went ahead of the moving camp to build a fire that would warm the travelers on their arrival. During a flood, if the people had to cross a river on rafts, four or five swimming men pulled each vessel with a length of rawhide. The women on the raft chanted, "li, li, li, li, li," thereby praising the courage of the men. A man also painted his tipi with efficacious designs derived from dreams (17). In these dreams appeared certain symbols and animals. The dreamer regarded this experience as furnishing him the right to use such designs. Figures were constantly added to the walls in the course of a man's life, some of them even deriving from a wife's dreams. Painted tipis (tipi painting rights ?) could be sold for large sums. Pat Grasshopper asked ten horses from his brother's son, Oscar Otter, as the price for his tipi (18); Pat thereupon dreamed designs

for a new lodge.

A woman's duties included skin tanning, manufacturing clothing and the tipi, root gathering, and cooking. In late summer a wife prepared pemmican for the winter and dried saskatoon or other berries for storage in untanned calf-hide bags. Sometimes she pounded the berries on a flat stone and set them on a hide to dry, afterwards they were stored in a rawhide bag. Grease was also preserved. After boiling marrow from cracked bones the skimmed substance was set aside to cool and solidify for winter consumption. A woman set up and dismantled the tipi and also prepared the frame supporting the cover. She hauled wood, built the fire, made birch bark baskets (the material being purchased from more northerly tribes like the Cree and Stoney), cooperated in the domestic tasks of other women, aided old men who did not have anyone to provide for them, and cared for her own children. During menstruation she warned her husband not to approach her sexually but neither spouse quit the dwelling at that time. In pregnancy a husband cared for his wife, performing many domestic duties lest the woman injure herself and thereby incur a miscarriage. Nothing was learned concerning sexual avoidance during pregnancy but following delivery the couple avoided coitus for about six months (19).

It happened that sometimes an attractive woman and her husband feared that children would make them appear prematurely aged. In such cases they conspired to drown an infant or to abandon it in a badger hole. The informant reported female infanticide for the Blackfoot claiming that a Sarsi who found an abandoned infant from the former tribe had raised it in his family. Description of the couvade provoked laughter, informants reporting that men worked hard after a child was born in order that the mother could rest. Spouses never avoided sexual intercourse intending thereby to show respect to children. Certain occasions, however, required short periods of abstainance. Most important were the four days before the Sun Dance when the fasting celebrants were required to sleep apart. Members of the Police Society also avoided sexual intercourse during the annual season when they governed the camp.

Other affinal relations. A man and his father-in-law maintained a somewhat shy attitude toward each other and communicated as little as

possible (20). The older man felt "ashamed" to look at his son-in-law but the latter sent frequent gifts to his wife's parent. Sharper avoidance marked a man's relations with his mother-in-law. A man would not go near this woman's tipi or even look at her features. She, seeing her son-in-law approach, quickly made off in the opposite direction. A youth who inadvertently saw his mother-in-law's face had to present her with a valuable gift, like a horse. Neither of these affinals ate in the other's presence and necessary communication between them took place through the wife. The latter also conveyed her mother's gifts of moccasins and fancy apparel to her husband. These were gifts designed to reciprocate the steady stream of meat which a man contributed to his father-in-law's household.

In contrast a woman interacted more freely with her parents-in-law. From her husband's father she heard encouragements to chastity and industry and was treated with great kindness. These two relatives freely ate together. A wife seeing her father-in-law's moccasins torn, offered to repair them and in return received a gift, sometimes even a horse. Mother-in-law and daughter-in-law cooperated in domestic duties, the extended family thus coming to be marked by economic cooperation. Toward his wife's brother a man remained cordial and deferent, carefully avoiding obscenities. With a wife's sister a man "always had a little joke;" even sexual teasing not uncommonly occurring between the two. One or more of a wife's sisters might someday become the secondary wives of a capable hunter. While the kin term for wife failed to be extended to the wife's sister, a man called his own and his wife's sister's son by the same word. The levirate as well as the northern Athapaskan pattern of control by a brother-in-law are indicated in the remark that a wife "belonged to" her husband's brother who might espouse the widow. In this event the new husband also gave horses to the woman's father and brothers. Warm cooperation existed between a woman and her husband's sister. When a couple celebrated the Sun Dance the husband's sister presented quantities of moccasins and decorated clothing items to her sister-in-law. These were then distributed to tribespeople.

Friends. Close loyalty marked the relationship of two youths who had grown up together. Remembering the pleasure they had afforded each other as playing children, they took an oath of friendship to the sun, stars, moon, mountains, "or anything dangerous" (i.e., powerful.) Friends addressed one another reciprocally as "brother of the same age." A partner in such a relationship enjoyed a certain permitted license with the other's wife, whom he called "my wife's sister." Married friends sometimes exchanged wives, particularly when one of the pair had been absent for a long period. On his return he would be told: "Brother, you can sleep with my wife to-night." The other replied with a similar invitation. Horses were also exchanged between them at this time. The wives of two friends enjoyed a special relationship and gave one another small gifts. A husband never questioned his wife when she returned from having spent a night with his friend. A friend who had slept with his comrade's wife thereafter called the woman by the wife term. Jealous men did not "trade"wives. Regrettably we did not learn if wife exchange reflected on a woman's chastity, thus barring her from putting up a Sun Dance.

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FOOTNOTES

(1) Goddard, P.E., Dancing Societies of the Sarsi Indians. (Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History, vol. XI, pp. 461-474, 1914); Notes on the Sun Dance of the Sarsi (Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History, vol. XVI, pp. 271-282, 1919); Sarsi Texts (University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology, vol. XI, pp. 179-277, 1915), and Jenness, D., The Sarcee Indians of Alberta (Bulletin of the Canada Department of Mines, National Museum of Canada, vol. XC, pp. 1-98, 1938). See also Honigmann, J.J., "Morale in a Primitive Society" (Character and Personality, vol. XII, pp. 228-236, 1944), "Northern and Southern Eschatology" (American Anthropologist, n.s., vol. XLVII, pp. 467-469, 1945), and "Parallels in the Development of Shamanism among Northern and Southern Athapaskans" (American Anthropologist, n.s., vol. LI, pp. 512-514, 1949).

(2) For making comfortable my stay and facilitating field work I am indebted to Dr. Thomas F. Murray, Indian Agent, and to Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Hetherington, Farm Instructor. Funds for field work were generously provided by the Department of Anthropology, Yale University; the Peabody Museum of Natural History, Yale University, and a fund established by Mr. and Mrs. William A. Castleton.

(3) Cf. Sapir, E. "Personal Names Among the Sarcee Indians" (American Anthropologist, n.s., vol. XXVI, pp. 109-119, 1924), p. 110.

(4) Among the Fort Nelson Slave, for example, the grand-father was expected to instigate teasing behavior in order to make "the kids friendly," according to Honigmann, Ethnography and Acculturation of the Fort Nelson Slave (Yale University Publications in Anthropology, No. 33, 1946), p. 69. This was also true for some of the Kaska Indians aboriginally. See Honigmann, J.J., The Kaska Indians: An Ethnographic Reconstruction (Yale University Publications in Anthropology, No. 51, 1955), pp. 77, 79.

(5) Unless otherwise noted the informant is always Pat Grasshopper, Oscar Otter interpreting. Pat was born in 1872 of a father who lived eighty years. Oscar Otter also served as informant. He was fifty years old at the time of interrogation. The degree of his sophistication may be gauged from the fact that he freely used concepts like "power" and confessed to having borrowed from the Calgary Library many books dealing with the Plains Indians.

(6) Jenness (op. cit., p. 26) mentions a birth tent.

(7) According to Jenness (op. cit., p. 18), in the case of a girl baby "the midwife or her assistant, a medicine woman," upon request of the father, sometimes selected and conferred a name immediately after birth. Naming of boys was usually delayed for a week or two after which "some old medicine man or successful warrior" performed the service.

(8) This is not necessarily in contradiction to Jenness' statement (op. cit., p. 18) that "the child, whether boy or girl, remained inseparable from its mother until it attained the age of 9 or 10."

(9) Jenness (op. cit., p. 19) says that after the age of nine or ten a boy was "enrolled in his father's band," although in later life he could revert to his mother's or another band if he chose.

(10) We have here only one (and perhaps the most preferred) of several patterns of marriage negotiation. Mentioning the pattern here described, Jenness (op. cit., p. 23) also describes a variant in which a youth proposes to a girl who communicates the request to her mother who, in turn, tells the father.

(11) The husband's proprietary interest in the tipi is perhaps related to the fact that it was he who decorated the structure with supernaturally derived designs that enhanced its intrinsic value.

(12) Jenness (op. cit., p. 24) says that mother and mother's sisters were classed together.

(13) After the arrival of the Hudson's Bay Company, boy's gifts sometimes consisted of rings made with snare wire and worn on any finger of either hand. In return a girl gave her lover a beaded bracelet. This exchange constituted a promise that each would remain true to the other until marriage was practicable. For evidence of romantic love see Sapir, "The Discipline of Sex," in McDermott, J.F., The Discipline of Sex (New York, 1931), pp. 12-13.

(14) The last Grabbers' Dance was held about 1880.

(15) Jenness (op. cit., p. 42).

(16) It is because of this function that the group appears to meet the definition of an association given by Chapple and Coon: "Individuals who need to interact with someone to compensate for disturbances in the institutions in which they habitually interacted, do so along channels already in existence ... The disturbed individual will secure an adjustment in tangent relations ... Now when a number of people have established tangent relations with each other, and have begun to interact regularly on this basis. The system thus formed is called an association." (Chapple, E.D. and Coon, C.S., Principles of Anthropology (New York, 1942, p. 418).

Jenness (op. cit., pp. 44-46) furnishes a considerably different description of the "nakoltcujna" ("those who make others their associates") sodality. According to him the members dressed in wolf-skin head, wrist, and ankle bands, while the leader carried a black pipe and wore a decorated tanned buffalo skin across his left shoulder. The dances took place in the lodge and after the fourth day the members ran outdoors "and tore the clothes off any man they found outside his tent." One of the tales he publishes as an explanation for the society is congruent with the description of the ceremony that we received from Pat Grasshopper. In this story a widower sets off to visit the country where his deceased wife had gone. He experiences a supernaturel visitation in which he is offered food which, when eaten, will earn him his heart's desire. After dancing for four days and nights his wife appears and he is told to take her home without

looking back.

Goddard in Dancing Societies (op. cit., p. 469) designates the association, "nagultc'ujna" ("preventers"). His description likewise does not mention the "grabbing" of women but he says: "All the people were much afraid of the society. They had to do whatever its members directed. If their demands were not obeyed, they pulled down and cut up the tipis of the disobedient ones. This, however, could only be done when the society was having a dance" or when the group was assisting the Police during the Sun Dance. The association was probably related to the Blackfoot Catchers, a disciplinary group. (Wissler, C. Societies and Dance Associations of the Blackfoot Indians (Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History, Vol. XI, pp. 363-460, 1913), pp. 402-404.) Its activities also recall the Lumpwood and Fox societies of the Crow. Cf., Lowie, R., The Crow Indians (New York, 1935).

(17) According to Jenness (op. cit., p. 91) only shamans could paint their lodges. "Indians who were not medicine-men obtained their painted tents only by purchase."

(18) Jenness (op. cit., p. 92) states that only in former times did the owner fix the price for a painted dwelling. More recently the purchaser decided the amount.

(19) Jenness (op. cit., p. 26) suggests that pregnancy restrictions endured for the last six months of pregnancy.

(20) "After marriage a man and his father-in-law no longer kept aloof," says Jenness, (op. cit., p. 25).