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CHAPTER 5

Hopi Social Structure as Related to *Tihu* Symbolism

Alice Schlegel

> "Life is the highest good; in an environment where survival requires constant effort, ... the richest blessing is abundance of food and children."

Kachina dolls, those representations of the dancers who impersonate the supernatural kachinas, have captured the fancy of many art lovers for their colorfulness, the skill with which they are frequently made, and the variety of kachina forms they represent. To the collector, they are art objects, to be appreciated in terms of color, design and quality of craftsmanship. To the historian or museum curator, they are representative of the kachinas; as such, they are classified and their history and distribution are traced. The dolls have become the object of study in this regard by such authorities as Colton (1959), Erickson (1977), Fewkes (1894), and Wright (1977).[1] But rarely has the doll been analyzed as a symbolic object in a gift exchange between two types of kin, going from father to daughter. This analysis is not concerned with the doll as an art form or as a representation of particular kinds of kachinas; rather, it will observe the doll as an artifact and attempt to answer two questions: Why is it the duty of a father to give the doll to his daughter? And why is the gift a representation of a kachina rather than something else?

Let us first look at the circumstances of the gift. Dolls are usually given indirectly by fathers to daughters. The father arranges for a kachina dancer to present his daughter with a doll. The relationship between giver and recipient can be any of the father-daughter relationships that exist in the Hopi social world: the "real" father of the female, any man of his clan whom the female addresses as *father* in the clan sense, or any man who is addressed as *father* because he is the brother of a ceremonial *mother*, a woman who has sponsored the female through an initiation into a ceremonial society. The term *female* has been selected because it is not just a girl who receives dolls; she is given her first doll shortly after birth and can go on receiving them throughout her entire life.

The dolls are kachina representations, and they are most frequently given at the two great kachina ceremonies: Powamu, or Bean Dance, and Niman, or Home Dance, the last dance of the kachinas before they go "home" to the San Francisco Peaks and to their dance cycle in the underworld. Both of these ceremonies have agricultural connotations: The Bean Dance anticipates the planting season, with the forced sprouting of beans a foretaste of the good crops to come; while the Home Dance anticipates the harvest as the kachina dancers bring melons and other foods into the plaza to distribute among the onlookers.

With these two facts in mind, the relationship of giver and recipient and the nature of the gift, an exploration of the father-daughter relationship and the special meaning of kachinas for females becomes more significant. In addition, the gift itself—its derivation and content must be analyzed.

The kachina doll is referred to by the Hopi as *tihu*, which is also a formal or ritual term for child, as in the phrase *tihutnaa nawakna*, literally translated as "children are desired," or in more poetic translation, "let us all multiply." *Ti* itself is the common term for *child*: *iti*—my child, *itaati*—our child. The term *tihu* refers specifically to the doll and never to the kachina or to the kachina dancer. The doll is often presented tied to a cradle board. The kachina doll is thus a sort of baby, and so it is used by little girls. Some small girls open their dresses and place their kachina dolls at the nonexistent breast in imitation of nursing, and the dolls, when not considered too valuable for this purpose, are used as baby dolls. The elaborate doll suitable only for display seems to be a recent development, probably not predating 1870.[2]

Girls are given their first tihus, the *putsquat tihu* or flat doll, at the first Bean Dance or Home Dance after their birth. The second type of doll, also a flat doll but with a more elaborate face, is given at the next appropriate ceremony. At about age two the female receives dolls with a block body and arms lightly carved in bas relief against the body. The fourth type of doll, a simple standing doll, is received while the recipient is still small. In recent times, the fancy human-like dolls are given to the older girls and women, and these are carefully hung on the wall. This custom dates back at least to 1902, which is the date of the Vroman photograph of the interior of a Hopi house that displays several dolls hanging or standing on a wall shelf. The interior of a kiva, photographed in 1901, also shows dolls hanging on the wall.[3] But many dolls, and in earlier times perhaps most dolls, are the toys of girls and women. Why then should these dolls take on the form of kachinas?

It is clear that a doll is not in itself a sacred object. No songs or rituals accompany the making of the doll. It may have a pedagogical function in training girls to take care of sacred objects, but this is a minor function, for people of both sexes ceremonially feed and otherwise care for ritual objects. If this were the main purpose of giving the doll, then dolls would be given to boys in preparation of their future role as "fathers" or caretakers of the kachinas. Rather, the doll is a special kind of toy, one that can be played with by the little girl as a baby doll and yet has a special meaning for her.

Books have been written about the types and classification of kachina figures: the majestic Eototo, the benevolent Jemez, the fearsome Soyoko, and the comical Mudheads.[4] The variety of forms, each with its own character, seems endless. But the kachinas as a class, a category of beings, do have certain features in common. They are all associated in some way with the world of the spirits and the dead, when they dance they bring delight to the people, and as beings who inhabit the realms of the clouds, they bring rain. They are in fact the very embodiment of rain: it is said that one drop of their body moisture (*paala*) will make the crops grow. Thus, along with their individual characters and ceremonial roles, they are, as a group, bringers of fertility.

The concept of fertility is central in Hopi thinking. It applies not only to good crops but to the general multiplication of good and desired objects and beings. With the high value placed on life in Hopi religion, whatever promotes and nurtures life is good. This concept is embodied in the verb *titia* which means both "to give or have given birth" and "to multiply." For example, when children bring food home from the ceremonial dances that the kachinas have given them, they are supposed to sprinkle it with cornmeal (as a blessing or prayer) and take a pinch of it away from the house to offer to the spirit beings. This gives the mother the chance to bring out more food, which she had hidden away, to add to the pile on the floor. When the children return, they are told that everything the kachinas touch – *titia* - multi-

plies. Thus, as women give birth to the people and cause them to multiply, so do the kachinas cause food and other blessings to multiply. Kachinas bring fertility to women as well as to crops: it is especially important to give a woman a kachina doll (of no special type) at Powamu or Niman if she desires to conceive. In this case, the husband might make it.

This knowledge of the kachina blessing explains in part why kachina dancers present dolls to females and why these dolls should take the form of the kachinas. When she is a little girl, the doll is her baby, a special representation of the child she will someday bear. Small Hopi girls have other dolls as well, objects made from animal bones representing people, with which they play house. But the baby doll, the object which is carried about and nursed and mothered, is the *tihu*, which acts as her baby when she is small and brings her real ones after she matures.

A second question considers the meaning and symbolism of kinship relationships. Why is it a "father" who, through the medium of the kachina dancer, presents the kachina doll to a "daughter"? The Hopis are one of those few societies in which girls are preferred to boys, although parents are quick to point out that they want children of both sexes. To her mothers and uncles, the newborn girl promises continuity of the matrilineal clan.[5] To her parents, a daughter provides insurance against the future, for she and her husband will care for her parents when they grow old. Since a Hopi husband goes to live in the home of his wife and her parents, it is the son-in-law who replaces the father as the provider for the house, performing as farmer, herder, and hunter. Thus, a daughter is essential if the household is to maintain itself, and daughters will be adopted from among the sisters of a woman if she herself fails to bear one.[6]

But aside from these practical considerations, there is an ideological reason for preferring girls, one that has to do with the Hopi concept of life. Life is the highest good; in an environment where survival requires constant effort, and starvation and high infant and maternal mortality are real-life threats, the richest blessing is abundance of food and children. This blessing is a sign that the supernatural beings are pleased with the Hopi people and are granting them their hearts' desire. To bring about this blessing, to please the deities, however, means the hard work and self-discipline of prayer, fasting, and arduous ceremonial participation. It also means constant attention to maintaining a "good heart," that is, by refraining from quarrels or selfishness that upset social harmony, and by casting out angry or disturbing thoughts that upset the harmony of the individual.

In their role as feeders and as bearers of children, Hopi women are the source of life on earth. Men also feed and give birth in the spiritual sense; the kachina fathers "feed" the dancers by sprinkling them with sacred cornmeal, and men symbolically give birth to the initiates at the Powamu and Kachina Societies initiation. But the real foods that sustain physical life and the spiritual food, the sacred cornmeal, that sustains spiritual life are prepared by women, and it is women who hear the children.

As the source of this precious life, women are more valuable than men and should be protected by them. It is the duty of men to stand between women with their children and anything in the outside world that might harm them. The grim duty of warfare, with its violation of the Hopi ethic of peace and the preservation of life, was a necessary evil that had to be undertaken in defense of the villages. The hardships of ceremonial participation and the self-sacrifice this entails fall particularly heavily on men, for they are the spiritual as well as physical protectors of women and children.

While this duty to provide physical and spiritual protection to women and children applies to men generally, it is particularly applicable to men while acting in the role of father, *na'a*. This term does not only apply to fathers in the true biological or kinship sense, the real father and his real or clan brothers; it has an even more extensive meaning. It applies to the man who sponsors an initiate into a ceremonial society, a ceremonial father, or to the brother of a female ceremonial sponsor (a "mother"). It also applies to the village chief, who is father of the village, and collectively it applies to the men who sit together as advisors to the chief. Superficially, this may not seem very different from Anglos who speak of godfathers, political leaders as fathers of their country, and of leading male citizens as city fathers. The difference lies in the nature of the father-child relationship that exists between actual fathers and children and its extension metaphorically to life situations.

Unlike the European, non-Hopi notion of father, the Hopi father is not the authority in the household. This authority rests with the mother or female head who owns the house. She is holder of the land her husband farms, and she allocates the food supply once it has been brought into the house. Most of this food goes to feed the family, but there is a significant surplus that is used for ceremonial exchange and for trade with other tribes; this surplus and the subsistence portion are both under women's control. Thus, authority over the principal economic resource for both survival and exchange rests with the female household heads, even though men do almost all the labor of farming, herding and hunting. This very fact of male subsistence labor, of course, makes women dependent upon men and mitigates the authority of women in the house; as husbands prove their worth they become increasingly influential over their wives and children.

Nevertheless, the husband is not the final authority in the house, nor is the father the final authority over his children. While fathers do train and discipline their children, punishing them when necessary, the maternal uncle is regarded as the principal male disciplinary figure. As an adult member of the same clan as the children, he is called in when necessary to remonstrate with or punish a recalcitrant child, and children are trained to listen with special respect to the admonitions of their uncles. Fathers, on the other hand, have principally the duty of protecting and providing for their children, seeing to their physical and spiritual well-being. Children are expected to feel both respect and affection for fathers and uncles, but toward the uncles there is more distance and deference while toward fathers there is more intimacy and relaxation.

The same relationship is implied in the metaphorical extension of the term for *father*. The village chief, the village leaders, the kachina father, the ceremonial father—all of these roles imply protection, gained through prayers and arduous ceremonies for the benefit of the "children." There is a further metaphorical extension of *father* that makes this point very clearly. Wild plants and animals may be called "our fathers," because they were put here on earth to provide for us.

While fathers protect both sons and daughters, daughters receive special attention because they are not only children but also female. A father gives a female the kachina doll at the same time he gives his sons miniature bows and arrows. Like the bow and arrow, the doll is a toy that prepares the child for an adult task—in the case of the boy for hunting and warfare, in the case of the girl for motherhood. Hopi liken childbirth to warfare; both are life-threatening, blood-letting activities, and the purification for the battlefield killer is similar to that of the woman after parturition. The giving of bows and arrows stops after puberty, while the giving of kachina dolls continues throughout a woman's lifetime. This practice symbolizes more than just the protective and affectionate attitude that fathers have for children.

Clearly kachinas are associated with abundance, and kachina dolls in particular are associated with fertility. The gift of the kachina doll from father to daughter implies, therefore, that fathers are not only protectors of their daughters in general, but also specifically guardians of their fertility.

The role women of the father's clan, the paternal "aunts," play is one of guardian of fertility.[7] At the naming ceremony after birth, these women rub the newborn infant of either sex on their bare thighs, thus assuring the child's fertility when an adult. It is these women who take the adolescent girl through the ceremony that moves her from childhood into social adolescence and prepares her to reach adult status through marriage. The sexual joking that takes place between a boy and the women of his father's clan can also be explained by the association between fertility and the father's side of the kin group. The gift of the kachina doll to the daughter, then, is merely another aspect of this association, between the father's side and the individual's precious fertility.

Since the fertility of the woman benefits her clan, her mothers and "uncles," and not her father's clan, her fathers and "aunts," why should the father's side be given this special responsibility of guardianship?

To answer this question requires an understanding of Hopi natural philosophy, particularly concerning gender. It is basic to Hopi cosmology that there are masculine and feminine principles according to which natural objects and forces can be classified. The earth, Mother Earth, is feminine, as is her most important product, corn. The earth is the repository of life, but life must be activated by such masculine forces as sun, rain, and lightning. These are dangerous forces, for while they activate life they can also bring death if not controlled: intense sun can burn the young plants, heavy rains can wash them away, and the same lightning that fertilizes the fields can blast the crops or kill those whom it catches. The masculine principle in nature, then, has its destructive as well as its nurturant side, just as men must kill in battle or the hunt as well as tend the crops and provide for their children. But this principle is necessary to bring life, inherent in feminine objects and creatures, into being.

Thus, Hopi symbolically associate the mother's side, her clan, with the female principle, and the father's side, his clan, with the male principle. The mother's clan is primarily responsible for the child's social welfare: mothers and "uncles" train girls and boys to take their proper places in clan affairs and clan ceremonial duties. But it is the father's clan that guards the person's physical self: the father provides the food, the "aunts" ceremonially wash the individual at birth and again at death, and the fathers and aunts are guardians of the person's fertility, the life force that permits the people to multiply. In his duties as farmer and father, the man activates the life force that is inherent in Mother Earth and the living mothers of the people; through his prayers and by keeping a good heart, he brings down the blessing of the gods and the kachinas in the form of rain and other benefits without which his hard work would be wasted. It is only within the context of beliefs about fertility that the gift of the kachina doll can be understood.

This discussion has gone far beyond the kachina doll. Discussing any aspect of Hopi symbolism is like touching a node in a spider web: the tremors move out along the threads and are ultimately felt in every other node. So it is when one takes any symbolic object as the point of departure: one is forced to look at the total pattern of the social system and the ideology that supports it. The total meaning of the kachina doll is embedded in all the Hopi principles of kinship and the proper relations between kin, and in the Hopi view of the nature of the world and the parts that people and supernatural beings play in it. It is within this briefest of outlines that those aspects of kinship and of beliefs must be understood in order to appreciate the social and symbolic meaning of the kachina doll.

Notes

1. See Harold S. Colton, *Hopi Kachina Dolls* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1959); Jon T. Erickson, *Kachinas: An Evolving Hopi Art Form?* (Phoenix: The Heard Museum, 1977); Jesse W. Fewkes, "Dolls of the Tusayan Indians," *International Archive of Ethnography* 7 (1894): 45-74; and Barton Wright, *Hopi Kachinas: The Complete Guide to Collecting Kachina Dolls* (Flagstaff, AZ: Northland Press, 1977.

2. See Erickson, *Kachinas*.

3. William Webb and Robert A. Weinstein, *Dwellers at the Source: Southwestern Indian Photographs of A. C. Vroman, 1895-1904* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1973), plates 32, 91.

4. For information on Eototo and Soyoko, see Barton Wright, "Kachinas: A Life Force," *Infra*. Jemez, or ripened corn kachina, is most often seen in the Niman or Home-Going ceremony. It is the first kachina to bring mature corn to the people indicating that the corn crop is assured.

5. A matrilineal clan is a group of men and women related through the female line.

   A person's own (mother's) clan:

Generation	*Terms for men*	*Terms for women*
+1	uncles	mothers
0	brothers	sisters
–1	child—woman speaking sister's child—man speaking	

   A person's father's clan:

Generation	*Terms for men*	*Terms for women*
+1	fathers	aunts
0	fathers	aunts
-1	fathers	aunts

   A matrilocal household is a family group that lives together, consisting of a woman and one or more daughters and the husbands of these women, plus any unmarried sons and daughters of any of the women.

A typical Hopi household consists of a married pair, one daughter and her husband and children, and possibly one or more unmarried sons and daughters of the oldest couple. At marriage, sons leave the household for their wives' homes and sons-in-law come into the household. One daughter usually inherits the house; the husbands of the other daughters build houses contiguous to or near the original house.

6. Fred Eggan, *The Kinship System and Social Organization of the Western Pueblos* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950); Jesse Walter Fewkes, "The Kinship of the Tusayan Villages," *American Anthropologist* (o.s.) 12 (1910); and Robert H. Lowie, "Notes on Hopi Clans," *Anthropological Papers*, American Museum of Natural History, vol. 30, part 5 (New York: 1929).

7. Alice Schlegel, "Hopi Joking and Castration Threats," in M. Dale Kinkdale, ed., *Linguistics and Anthropology: In Honor of C. F. Voegelin* (Lisse, Netherlands: Peter de Ridder Press, 1975).