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Though Your Body Perish

In 1882 Frank Cushing arranged the long-awaited trip to the East Coast for Pedro Pino and several other Zunis. He arranged the trip so that he might obtain more funding for his research at Zuni, impress the Zunis with American might, and allow himself to be initiated into some secret Zuni orders which he had been unable to enter. Cushing also managed to find an American wife, thus avoiding any further problems with marriage at the pueblo.

Pedro Pino had long been promised (by various government officials) the chance to visit the great American cities and see the actual ruling body of the country. This hardy old man was not completely through with his career. Before he passed on, he participated in one further adventure, one which to him was perhaps the greatest adventure of all. Though ninety and some years of age, he consented to go. Cushing reported,

When reminded of his great age and infirmities, of the immense distance to be traveled over, and of the possible consequence of change in food and climate, he remarked: “I have but a few days, as it were, to live. If disappointed, I must die ere the return of the pilgrims. If permitted to join your party, through the happiness of my heart and the joy of meeting my brothers of old Washington times, it may be I shall grow young again. Or, if I should die! What Matters it? At best, I have but a few days to live.”

Thus, in February of 1882, Pino, aged and wrinkled, and about one hundred years old, joined the party to the East Coast. Cushing described the rest of the group:
Nai iu tchi, First Cacique of War, Master of the Esoteric Priesthood of the Bow and Warrior of the Order of the Cactus, or Surgeon.

Ki a si, Second Cacique of War, Second Master of the Priesthood of the Bow and Warrior of the order of the Wolf, or Hunters.

Lai iu aih tsai lun kia, Second Cacique of Peace, and Master Medicine man of the order of Fire. (My [Cushing’s] father by personal and clan adoption.)

Pa lo wah ti wa [Patricio Pino or Ba:lawahdiwa], Governor or Head secular Chief of the Zunis, and Warrior of the order of Fire. (My brother by clan and war adoption.)

One other participant in the journey to Washington, D.C., was Nanahe, described by Cushing as a Hopi “who had been adopted into the nation by marriage, a youthful-looking man of thirty-five years, and a member of the Order of the Lesser Fire.”\(^3\) Cushing described Pedro Pino as “former Head Chief of the Zunis for more than thirty years (Father of the present Hd. Chief) and warrior of the order of Great Coals.”\(^3\) Newspaperman Sylvester Baxter’s account of the journey denoted Pedro Pino as “governor of Zuni for thirty years, now a wrinkled old man of between eighty and ninety years.”\(^3\)

Near Fort Wingate, where the railroad had recently been completed, Pedro saw a locomotive for the first time. Though it must have seemed a monstrous sight, he never flinched but performed the prayers and ceremonies which his religion dictated. The party then boarded the train and departed for the “ocean of sunrise.” The people had packed large quantities of Zuni food, fearing that the American food might disagree with them. Sure enough, when one Zuni tried too much of the rich, foreign cuisine, he commented, “My inside is not only filled with food but also with much fighting.” The Zunis’ assessment was that “they thought the Americans ate too many things and dared their insides.”\(^3\)

Food aside, Cushing was gaining his desired effect: The Zunis were suitably impressed. On the second day of their journey, at the engineer’s request, Cushing brought Nai-iu-tchi to the engine. According to Baxter, the chief priest of the bow, “who was always ready for anything, stood unmoved while the whistle was blown at
its shrillest, and regarding reverently the action of the locomotive, he exclaimed: ‘The Americans are gods, only they have to eat material food.’”372 The group made headlines as it crossed the country. Newspapers commented on every step of the journey, with one article mentioning another of Cushing’s motives: “He hopes to get an increase in their allotment of territory as their herds and flocks have not sufficient grazing range.”373

The group first stopped at Chicago, where the Zunis marveled at the architecture and commented that their hotel was a pueblo in itself. Then it was on to Washington. Pedro Pino, long the ally of the Americans and political leader of the pueblo, felt that he had reached the pinnacle of his career. The crowning moment of his life came when he met President Chester A. Arthur and was able to grasp his hand and breathe a prayer onto it. He was moved to tears.

His emotion was greater, though, when he visited Washington’s tomb at Mount Vernon. There, said Cushing, Pedro Pino wept uncontrollably: “He regarded Washington as the Great Cacique of the American chiefs he had known during the prime of his life, and mourned that he should never have had an opportunity of grasping him by the hand.”374 Then he climbed to the top of the Washington Monument against Cushing’s strenuous advice. Cushing said that Pino was “too feeble and must not climb to the top of that ‘Standing White Rock’ of Was´-sin´tona.” But Pino waited until Cushing was gone and, claiming that he was “a mere youngster, anyway, and had no business to forbid his praying to the Sun Father whencesoever he pleased,” sneaked out and made his trek. Some time later Washington police brought the old Zuni leader home. His companions reported that “a little while ago some Me-li-kana-kwe in blue breeches and yellow buttons [policemen] brought him home and said much, but we could not understand them.”

Evidently the climb was a severe ordeal because, when Cushing arrived on the scene, “the old man was stretched out on the floor groaning piteously and writhing under the bony hands of Lai ia-ah-tsai-lun-k’ia, the medicine-man of the party. The others were sitting around looking dark and out of sorts.” In fact, one of the others, fearing that Pino had brought shame to the
Zuni nation, commented, “May the old burro be reduced to the eating of cedar-bark!”

Pedro’s son, the present Governor Patricio, had a somewhat different perspective on the “Standing White Rock.” He climbed to the top of the monument, looked out at the scene before him, and commented, “No longer the powerful Americans, but little men like ants creeping around on the ground below, and horses no larger than mice, and instead of the great Potomac, a little stream hardly larger than the Zuni River.” Patricio was impressed with a comic opera he attended, *The Mascotte*, which provided him with tunes he sang at Zuni for months after. But, he said, the great numbers of people in Chicago caused him bewilderment and wonder.

Nai-iut-chi, the chief priest of the bow, sounded more like a tourist when he later recalled Jumbo the elephant and said he was the most wonderful animal he had ever seen, and bigger than he supposed the gods created them. Then he added, gleefully, “I have his picture in my little treasure box.”

When asked what pleased him most of all he saw on the trip, Nai-iut-chi supposedly responded, “The sea lions at Lincoln Park!” This was, according to one account, because “they were the first creatures carrying life in their breasts he had ever seen that came from the ocean, which the Zunis worship. Like other people they worship that which they deem most precious. With the Zunis it is the water of the sea, the river and the spring; that which alone stands between them and starvation in this parched and arid land.” When asked which of the white man’s ways was most impressive, Nai-iut-chi replied, “The ease with which they can get water. The white man takes the river into the walls of his house. By turning a little iron stick he can get that which we pray for all our lives.”

Unfortunately, Pedro Pino missed seeing the sea lions, the “ocean of sunrise,” and the “sleight of hand men” or jugglers in New York who so impressed the others in the group. The elder Pino grew sick from all the exertion and had to stay with Colonel and Mrs. Stevenson in Washington while the rest of the party went on to Boston and the Atlantic seacoast, where ceremonies were performed by the ocean. But he recovered after only a few days in
Washington and quickly took to the customs of the Americans, even deigning to use a finger bowl and adapting to silverware. Undoubtedly Stevenson’s wife, Matilda (Tillie) Coxe, was already becoming enamored with the ways of the Zunis from her talks with wise old Pedro. After her husband died, she eventually moved to Zuni and wrote one of the more thorough ethnological studies on the Indians (although the Zunis find many inaccuracies today).

The elder Pino continued to make the acquaintance of many notables around Washington. After meeting the president of the United States, he spoke with the speaker of the House of Representatives, the Honorable John G. Carlisle. Later, after returning to the pueblo, Pino received a package of garden seeds from Carlisle, with a note attached, “Hoping that you may live many years yet to counsel and help your people.” Years later, when near death, We wha, a prominent Zuni, remembered the gift and called the congressman “Captain Carlisle, the great seed priest.”

Through the years that he had dealt with the Americans, Pino had noticed that these people kept photos of their dead and paintings of their admired leaders and famous citizens. Earlier in the year at the pueblo, when he had watched the artist Metcalf paint a portrait of his son, Pedro had said to Patricio, “Though your body perish, nevertheless you shall continue to live on upon the earth. Your face will not be forgotten now; though your hair turn gray, it will never turn gray here, I know this to be so for I have seen, in the quarters of the officers at the fort, the faces of their fathers, who have long since passed from the earth, but still were looking down upon their children from the walls.” While in Washington, old Pedro Pino had another memorable moment. He sat for photographic portraits before the camera of John C. Hillers, Powell’s well-known photographer, the first person to photograph the Grand Canyon.

The visit to Washington was not without its humorous moments. Pino and the other Zunis believed that they would insult their hosts if they did not eat each meal, and even each course offered to them, including a liberal amount of the condiments on the table. During one meal, aboard a train out of Chicago, a member of the Zuni party complained about the American food’s spiciness.
“Would you have me cover my nation with shame?” retorted Pedro Pino, as he accepted a lemon which a generous passenger had just given him, meaning that he was obliged to try either everything offered to him or nothing and maintain himself on his Zuni corn food.

“What though we be wafted in this swift wagon as on the wings of the wind!” he continued, pulling out his hunting knife and flourishing the lemon. “Is it not a house with many sitters?” he commented on the train as he examined the fruit. “It must be some kind of little melon,” he finally decided and severed the lemon.

Pino, of course, had never tasted anything like a lemon, nor even a spoonful of acid, save such a mild suggestion of it as might have lodged in a green peach or resulted from the fermentation of meat stew. . . . he buried his toothless gums in the major half of it—but the next instant the lemon was rolling on the floor, and he off his seat! He seized his chops with both hands; tears oozed from his close-shut eyes; he wriggled, groaned, hawked, bent far over the aisle, retched, heaved—and one of his companions remarked, “Well he has covered his nation with shame after all!” But the old man did not hear.

Though sick and worn out from the journey east, Pino returned to Zuni without complaint and within a short time had recovered his health. The trip had made a strong impression on the old man. He had been taken by everything the Americans represented (the only thing the Zunis said the Americans were second best at was painting: The Japanese excelled them). Pino continued to use his influence at the pueblo. It is unfortunate that the last mentions of him show that he was, after his return from Washington, placed in the midst of a flowering controversy among the people of the pueblo.

General John A. Logan, soon to be a candidate in the presidential election of 1884, visited Nutria, one of the springs of the Zunis. He and a group of his relatives determined that the spring, town of Nutria, and farmland were not strictly inside the reservation boundaries, though the description had clearly intended them to be. They filed claims on the land. Thus, the powerful Americans
whom Pino had befriended were now attempting to steal what land
the Zunis had left, and this particular area was some of the more
important acreage the Zunis still owned. Even worse, from Pino’s
view, than the actions of Logan’s relatives were those of the
President. President Arthur vacillated with the pressures of election-
year politics, and, even though the Zunis had met him and breathed
prayers on his hand, he did not support them. After the election, in
one of his last acts in office, Arthur signed an executive order which
apparently allowed the Logan group to keep the Zunis’ land.386
Cushing and his friends in the East eventually managed to save the
land for the Zunis, but not before Logan forced Cushing out of the
pueblo387 (he would return with the Hemenway Southwestern
Archeological Expedition a few years later).

The involvement of the Zunis in national politics did not help
their tribal affairs at home. Pino was now, in his last years, in the
center of developing factionalism at the pueblo His old “friend,”
Colonel Stevenson, reportedly said of the Zunis at this time, “They
are wretchedly ignorant and degraded by the crudest superstition.
They are today the most religious people on the continent.”388
The latter statement is a strange insult, but no stranger than the
statements in the New Mexico papers, which attacked Cushing for
siding with the Indians, saying he was “the greatest fraud and
biggest ass that ever crossed her [New Mexico’s] borders.” When
his ineptitude was brought to the attention of the Bureau of
Indian Affairs, one article surmised that Cushing would have to
“take off his ‘gee-string’ [and] once more don the habiliment of
civilization.”389 In the heat of the national election, it was charged
that the Zunis were “worthless lazy vagabonds” and had never used
Nutria Springs.390 Even more absurd was the suggestion that, if
the Zunis had had any ambition, they would have filed a claim on
the springs themselves.391

So Pedro Pino’s last days were evidently filled with this terrible
controversy in the pueblo. The very friends he had cultivated in
Washington seem to have turned against him and his people.
Shortly after, his son was replaced as governor, and voices in coun-
cil urged violence against the Americans. Although this violence
never materialized, the controversy which began during Pino’s
tenure continued for many years.
A perusal of Pedro Pino’s papers reads like a history of the Southwest—Ives, Whipple, Beale, Wheeler, Cushing, Sherman, Bourke, Washington, Pfiéffer, and many others. Cushing obtained those papers and included them as part of his own personal collection of manuscripts. Later Frederick Webb Hodge made them part of the archives of the Southwest Museum, where they remain today.

Pino survived capture and imprisonment by the Navajos, servitude among the Mexicans, another near-servitude in the Catholic mission school at Zuni, decades of war with the Navajos and Apaches, the Mexican War, and the War of Rebellion. He saw three corrupt conquering governments and parlayed with each, meeting the foremost leaders of each country and representing his people well. But during the last of his life, he watched his people’s land be reduced from millions of acres to a few square miles. Frank Hamilton Cushing lectured throughout the eastern United States for the next ten years and longer about the “fraud and aggressions” of the United States and reported that

with a sneer of impatience, a gesture of injured deprecation of the narrowness of his present possession, any middle-aged Zuni will define minutely its [the province of the Zunis] boundaries. These were, to the eastward, the plains at the foot of the Gallo Mountains above Agua Fria [Cushing evidently considered the Zuni Mountains as part of a larger range] ; to the northward the Trans-Sierra Valley of the Rio Puerco, from the Longitude of Mount Taylor to the Colorado Chiquito; on the west, in Arizona the latter river nearly to its sources; on the south, after the conquest of Marata, the valleys of the Salt Lake and Rito Quemado, which lie along the bases of the Sierra Datila and Sierra Ladrone. Thus the Cibolan dominion had, from west to east, an extent of one hundred and fifty miles; from north to south, of seventy-five or eighty.392

Though Pino watched this great tragedy befall his people, he always met newcomers with hospitality and friendship. The goodwill of his people was often rewarded by American hatred, envy, and jealousy, if not outright theft. He saw his people die of violence, starvation, and foreign disease. And threats from the Americans only increased in future years, when there were attacks,
even more serious in nature, on the very beliefs of the Zunis, their religion, and culture.

It is hard to imagine that the strong-willed old man’s “heart wore out,” but reports and photographs indicate that in old age, he did have “snow upon his head, moss upon his face, bony knees, no longer upright but bent over canes.”393 To the end, whenever Pino’s path intersected with another’s, he made the commitment: “Sit down. Now speak. I think there is something to say. It will not be too long a talk.”394 One must assume that his “road came in safely,” that he traveled on to dwell with the gods beneath the waters of Kolhuwala:wa.

Exactly when old Pedro Pino died is unknown, but he was surely buried by his clan, the Eagle Clan, in the traditional manner of the tribe. Shortly after death, the body was anointed and buried in the sacred graveyard. Cushing described such a burial, saying it ended as the people hastily lowered the body “into a shallow grave, while one standing to the east said a prayer, scattered meal, food, and other offerings upon it; then they as hastily covered it over, clearing away all traces of the new-made grave.”395

Reflecting on Zunis’ death and burial beliefs, Frank Hamilton Cushing summed up their outlook: “A man is like a grain of corn—bury him and he molds; yet his heart lives, and springs out on the breath of life (the soul) to make him as he was, so again.”396